

**HIST 3080 American Consumer Culture
Fall 2018**

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Course Description

Welcome! This course will explore the emergence of the modern consumer society in the United States. From the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, American culture seems to be defined by the conspicuous consumption of goods. It is important to remember, however, that phenomena like mass marketing, advertising, and mass distribution were not always so entrenched. A historical approach allows us to explore the changing relationship of Americans to consumer goods and the cultural transformation which went along with this change. The course is roughly chronological, with readings organized around a specific theme each week.

The course is designed as a combination lecture/seminar format. Most weeks, the Tuesday meeting of the course will consist of a lecture, and Thursday will be devoted at least in part to discussion. Success in this course requires a number of things: regular attendance, completion of the readings, active participation and prompt submission of written assignments. Students will be responsible for reading the assigned material each week and coming prepared to discuss the main issues raised by each author. This is good practice for taking history seminars; it can also be a lot of fun (really!). Do not be intimidated by the prospect of these class talks – if you are shy, we can work on this together.

Rules and Regulations

It pains me to have to repeat this, but all written work for the course must be original. Do not be tempted to “borrow” materials from the internet or other sources without attribution. If something looks suspicious, I will check! All assignments should be typed and double spaced. Further details about written assignments will be provided in class. You will be provided with some evaluation before the Fall Term Voluntary Withdrawal date of November 19.

Pay close attention to due dates. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, if you contact me directly before an assignment is due. Papers are due in class on the date indicated. Late papers will be penalized 2.5% per day. Students who wish to appeal a grade given for term work must do so within 10 working days after the grade for the term work has been made available to them. Uncollected term work will become the property of the Faculty of Arts and will be subject to confidential destruction.

The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for Disciplinary Action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five (5) years from registration in courses taught in a particular department/program in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty. The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication. The common penalty in Arts for academic dishonesty on a test or examination is F for the paper, F (DISC) for the course, and a one-year suspension from courses acceptable for credit in the Faculty. For more serious acts of academic dishonesty on a test or examination, such as repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department or program in Arts or from all courses taught in or accepted for credit by this Faculty.

Grade Breakdown

Class Participation	10%
Book Review (500-750 words)	15 due October 9 in class
Advertising Analysis (750-1000 words)	20 due November 1
Essay (2500-3750 words)	25 due November 29
Take-Home Final Exam	30 due December 17

Grade Distribution

A+, Exemplary	90 and above
A, Superior	81-89
B+, Very Good	75-80
B, Good	70-74
C+, Slightly above average	65-69
C, Average	60-64
D, Marginal	50-59
F, Failure	below 50

Required Texts

These books are available at the campus bookstore. Other readings are available online or in the folder attached to my office door.

Lawrence Glickman, ed. *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader*

Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart*

Course Schedule**Week 1**

September 6 1) Introduction and Welcome

Week 2

September 11 2) Theoretical Frameworks

September 13 3) Markets and trade in early America
– **assignment sheets handed out**

Readings:

from Glickman, *A Reader in Consumer History*, to p. 77

preface and introduction

Williams, “Consumer”

Campbell, “Consuming Goods and the Good of Consuming”

Baudrillard, “Consumer Society”

Fallows, “What is an Economy For?”

Week 3

September 18 4) Consumption and the American Revolution

September 20 Discussion – also some instruction on upcoming book review

Readings:

from Glickman, 85-144

Axtell, “The First Consumer Revolution”

Breen, “Narrative of Commercial Life”

Appleby, “Consumption in Early Modern Social Thought”

Week 4

September 25 5) Changing technology, changing trade

September 27 Discussion

Readings:

Elizabeth A. Perkins, "The Consumer Frontier: Household Consumption in Early Kentucky," *Journal of American History* Vol. 78, Issue 2 (Sept. 1991) 486-510. (available online at www.jstor.org. You can access this by searching for the article on the library homepage and clicking on "Get It UML."

David Jaffee, "Peddlers of Progress and the Transformation of the Rural North, 1760-1860," *Journal of American History* Vol 78, Issue 2 (Sept. 1991), 511-535 (again, this is available online)

Week 5

October 2 6) Branding and Mass Distribution

October 4 7) Name Brand Case Study: Coca Cola

Readings:

Richard L. Bushman, Claudia L. Bushman, "The Early History of Cleanliness in America," *Journal of American History*, Volume 74, Issue 4 (Mar. 1988), 1213-1238. (www.jstor.org)

Timothy B. Spears, "All Things to All Men": The Commercial Traveler and the Rise of Modern Salesmanship," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 45, Issue 4 (Dec. 1993), 524-557. (www.jstor.org)

Week 6

October 9 8) Leisure at the Turn of the Century
***** Book Review due in class, Ad Analysis sheet handed out**

October 11 9) Shopping

Reading:

William Leach, "Transformations in a Culture of Consumption: Women and Department Stores, 1890-1925," *Journal of American History* 71 No. 2 (September 1984) 319-342. (www.jstor.org)

Week 7

October 16 10) Mass Production

October 18 Discussion
***** Come with questions about upcoming Ad Analysis**

Readings:

from Glickman, 147-206

Cohen, "Encountering Mass Culture at the Grassroots"

Sanchez, "Familiar Sounds of Change"

Heinz, "From Scarcity to Abundance"

Week 8

October 23 11) Region and Retailing

October 25 12) The Ad Man and the Audience

Readings:

from Glickman, 207-240

Swiencicki, "Consuming Brotherhood"

Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart* Ch. 1,2 (pp. 1-35)

Week 9

October 30 13) The Great Depression

November 1 14) Solving Hard Times through Consumption

***** Advertising Analysis due in class**

Essay assignment sheets handed out

Reading:

Sarah Elvins, "Shopping for Recovery: Local Spending Initiatives and the Great Depression in Buffalo and Rochester, New York, *Journal of Urban History* (September 2003): 670-693. Available online.

Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart* Ch. 3-5 (36-85)

Week 10

November 6 15) Economic Nationalism and WWII

November 8 16) Postwar Prosperity

Readings:

from Glickman, 241-273, 298-315

Greenberg, "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work"

May, "The Commodity Gap"

The readings are not long this week – make sure you finalize your essay topic.

Come and see me if you are having trouble selecting a topic.

Week 11 Fall Break

*****November 19: Last date for voluntary withdrawal from first term courses**

By now you should be well on your way to completing your essay.

Week 12

November 20 17) Television and the Mall

November 22 Discussion

Readings:

Lizabeth Cohen, "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America,"

Moreton, Ch. 6-8 (86-144)

Week 13

November 27 18) The Creative Revolution

November 29 19) Feminism and Target Markets

*****Essays due in class**

Readings:

from Glickman, 277-297, 316-325

Moorhouse, "'Work Ethic' and 'Leisure' Activity"

Weems, "The Revolution Will Be Marketed"

Moreton, Ch. 9, 10 (145- 192)

Week 14

December 4 20) Consumption at the end of the 20th Century

December 6 Review

Moreton, to end

Take Home Exam handed out - due December 17 at noon. You must hand a hard copy of the exam in to me in my office. You must also upload an electronic version to UMLearn.

Student Resources**Academic Resources**

You have access to several important resources to help you navigate your classes and university life more generally. There are writing tutors available to help you with your essays through the Academic Learning Centre (ALC): <http://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/>. The History department will also make a writing tutor available exclusively to History students in the department on one day a week. The tutor's schedule & contacted information are to be announced.

The ALC page also has resources to help you with study skills, organization, as well as

assistance for students using English as an Additional Language (EAL). Other issues, including accessibility services, workshops, and tips about academic integrity are addressed at the Student Advocacy Services webpage (http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/).

All of the above services can also be accessed under the heading of Student Resources on the Student Affairs website: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/studentlife/index.html>.

History students can also take advantage of the huge range of academic materials (including primary and secondary sources, as well as pages to help with writing and referencing) made available by the History subject librarian, tailored just for you! They are available on the Libraries page at this link: <http://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/history>. Students who need research assistance can also schedule an appointment with a librarian through the website.

Student Counseling Centre

Contact SCC if you are concerned about any aspect of your mental health, including anxiety, stress, or depression, or for help with relationships or other life concerns. SCC offers crisis services as well as counseling. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling/index.html>

Student Support Case Management

Contact the Student Support Case Management team if you are concerned about yourself or another student and don't know where to turn. SSCM helps connect students with on and off campus resources, provides safety planning, and offers other supports, including consultation, educational workshops, and referral to the STATIS threat assessment team. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/case-manager/index.html>

University Health Service

Contact UHS for any medical concerns, including mental health problems. UHS offers a full range of medical services to students, including psychiatric consultation. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/health/>

Student Advocacy

Contact Student Advocacy if you want to know more about your rights and responsibilities as a student, have questions about policies and procedures, and/or want support in dealing with academic or discipline concerns. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/advocacy>

UM History Student Association (UMHiSA)

UMHiSA is a history undergraduate student run organization that seeks to establish a sense of community for students studying all facets of history, and provide support for them in their academic career. Students interested in fun times, spirited debate, new opportunities, a community of like-minded students, or all of the above, check out UMHiSA on our instagram account www.instagram.com/umhisa_undergrad/ or emailing umhisau@gmail.com.