

**HIST 3327: Consumer Culture in Modern Europe**

Lisa Tiersten

Fall 2019

Wednesdays, 2:10-4:00

501 Diana

[ltiersten@barnard.edu](mailto:ltiersten@barnard.edu)

Office hours: Milstein 819, Mondays, 2:00-4:00 and by appointment

***Course description:***

This seminar explores the development of consumer capitalism in modern Europe from the eighteenth century to the present, primarily in Britain and France. Topics to be covered include the rise of a market economy and culture, urbanization and the commercial metropolis, changing attitudes toward shopping and spending, the construction of modern gender and class identities through consumption, credit and social trust, and the relationship between consumption and democratic citizenship. Readings will be drawn from history as well as from social theory and cultural studies.

***Course requirements:***

1. Informed class participation (25% of final grade).
2. 1/2-1 page of comments on the reading, to be posted on Canvas no later than 12 pm Wednesday afternoon (20% of grade). Students are entitled to two posting “vacations,” but must let me know in advance.
3. Moderation of the discussion for one reading, together with one other student (20% of grade).
4. A 15-page research paper (35% of final grade). Students will hand in a brief prospectus on October 16 and a bibliography for the paper on October 30. All students should plan to meet with me in mid-October and again in mid-November to discuss their progress. Due Monday, December 9.

***Course materials:***

The readings for the course are posted on Canvas. Readings are also on reserve at the Barnard Library (note that essays in edited volumes will be categorized by the editor of the volume, not the author of the assigned essay).

## *I. The Emergence of a Market Economy and Society*

### **1. September 4: Introduction to the Course: Defining Consumer Culture**

*Texts:* Raymond Williams, "Consumption," *Keywords*.

### **2. September 11: Markets and Material Culture in Early Modern Europe**

*Texts:* Jan de Vries, "Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods: Understanding the Household Economy in Early Modern Europe," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter.  
 Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, Ch. 1, "The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England."  
 Maxine Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, no. 182 (February 2004). **Read only pp. 85-99.**  
 James Collins, "Women and the Birth of Consumer Capitalism," in Daryl Hafer and Nina Kushner, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century France*.

### **3. September 18: The Meaning of Things: Conceptions of the World of Goods in the Old Regime**

*Texts:* Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, Ch. 8, "The Acceptance of Modernity."  
 Rosalind Williams, *Dream Worlds*, Ch. 2, "The Closed World of Courtly Consumption."  
 Amanda Vickery, "Women and the World of Goods" in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter.  
 Joyce Appleby, "Consumption in Early Modern Social Thought," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds., John Brewer and Roy Porter.  
 Stana Nenadic, "Romanticism and the Urge to Consume in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century" in *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe, 1650-1850*, eds., Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford.

## *II. Consumption in the Age of the Bourgeoisie*

### **4. September 25: The Making of the Consumer Metropolis: The Case of Paris**

*Texts:* Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, Chs. 3, “Railroad Space and Railroad Time”; 4, “Panoramic Travel”; 12, “Tracks in the City”; and 13, “Circulation.”

David Pinkney, *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris*, Ch. 1, “Paris in 1850.”

Philip Nord, *Paris Shopkeepers and the Politics of Resentment*, Ch. 3, “Haussmannization.”

Michael Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store*, Chs. 1, “New Stores,” and 2, “The “Grand Magasin.”

Emile Zola, *The Ladies’ Paradise* (1883), Ch. 9.

*Slides:* the nineteenth-century city; nineteenth-century shops and department stores; advertising.

### **5. October 2: Spectator and Selfhood in the Nineteenth-Century City**

*Texts:* Ellen Moers, *The Dandy*, Ch. 1, “Brummell.”

Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, “The *Flâneur* On and Off the Streets of Paris,” in *The Flâneur*, ed. Keith Tester.

Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century” (1935; 1982), *Reflections*.

Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof,” *Capital*, Vol. 1 (1867), Part 1 (81-96).

Vanessa Schwartz, “Cinematic Spectatorship Before the Apparatus,” in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, eds., Vanessa Schwartz and Leo Charney.

*Slides:* fashion plates

### **6. October 9: Gender, Class, and Consumption in the Nineteenth Century**

*Texts:* Margot Finn, “Men’s Things: Masculine Possession in the Consumer Revolution,” *Social History*, vol. 25, no. 2 (May 2000), pp. 133-55.

Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods*, Ch. 4, “In Possession: Men, Women and Decoration.”

Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Ch. 4, “Conspicuous Consumption.”

Paul Johnson, “Conspicuous Consumption and Working-Class Culture in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 38 (January 1988: 27-42.

Guy de Maupassant, “The Necklace” (1884), *Collected Short Stories*.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, “Introduction.”

Tammy Whitlock, *Crime, Gender, and Consumer Culture in Nineteenth-*

*Century England*, Ch. 7, “Solving the Problem of the Criminal Consumer.”

*Slides*: bourgeois interiors

### **7. October 16: Debt, Credit, and Social Trust in the Nineteenth Century**

*Texts*: Erika Rappaport, “‘A Husband and His Wife’s Dresses’: Consumer Credit and the Debtor Family in England, 1864-1914,” in *The Sex of Things*, ed. Victoria de Grazia.

Paul Johnson, *Saving and Spending: The Working-Class Economy in Britain, 1870-1930*, Ch. 6, “Credit.”

Margot Finn, *The Character of Credit: Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740-1914* (2003), Ch. 7, “Market Moralities: Tradesmen, Credit and the Courts in Victorian and Edwardian England.”

Judith Coffin, “Credit, Consumption, and Images of Women’s Desires: Selling the Sewing Machine in Late Nineteenth-Century France,” *French Historical Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3 (1994): 749-83.

Barbara Weiss, *The Hell of the English*, Ch. 2, “The Reality of Bankruptcy.”

**\*\*\*Submit paper prospectus via e-mail (no attachments, please)\*\*\***

### **8. October 23: Empire and the Market**

*Texts*: Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, Ch. 5, “Soft-soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising.”

Joanna de Groot, “Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections: Reflections on Consumption and Empire,” in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, eds., Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose.

Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, Ch.1, “The Empire’s Old Clothes: Fashioning the Colonial Subject.”

Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification: Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe*, Ch. 4, “Manufacturing, the ‘African Market,’ and the Postwar Boom.” **Read only 91-104.**

Thomas Fowell Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (1840), Ch. 4, “Superstitions and Cruelties of the Africans,” 226-45; 267-73.

*Slides*: empire and consumption

## ***III. Consumption and Cultural Crisis in the Twentieth Century***

### 9. October 30: The Interwar Period: Mass Consumption and its Discontents

*Texts:* Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe* (2005), Ch. 3, "The Chain Store," and Ch. 4, "Big-Brand Goods."

Mary Louise Roberts, "Samson and Delilah Revisited: The Politics of Women's Fashion in 1920s France," *American Historical Review*, vol. 98, no. 3 (June 1993): 657-684.

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (1944) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

Sue Bowden and Avner Offer, "The Technological Revolution That Never Was: Gender, Class, and the Diffusion of Household Appliances in Interwar England," in *The Sex of Things*, ed. Victoria De Grazia.

Hartmut Berghoff, "Enticement and Deprivation: The Regulation of Consumption in Pre-war Nazi Germany," in *The Politics of Consumption*, eds., Martin Daunton and Matthew Hilton.

*Slides:* Advertising

**\*\*\*Submit 1-page paper bibliography via e-mail (no attachments, please)\*\*\***

**\*\*\**The Marriage of Maria Braun* (Fassbinder, 1978)\*\*\***

**Wednesday, 10/30, 7:30-9:30 pm, Milstein Center Lower Level 002**

### 10. November 6: Citizenship and Consumption in the Postwar Era

*Texts:* Erica Carter, "Alice in the Consumer Wonderland," *Gender and Generation*, eds., Angela McRobbie and Mica Nava, 185-214.

Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire* (2005), Ch. 7, "The Consumer-Citizen."

Emily S. Rosenberg, "Consumerism and the End of the Cold War," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. III, *Endings*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad.

Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Things Under Socialism: The Soviet Experience," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. Frank Trentmann.

*The Marriage of Maria Braun* (Fassbinder, 1979).

#### ***IV. Contemporary Consumption***

##### **11. November 13: Consumption in the Late Capitalist World**

*Texts:* Lauren Langman, "Neon Cages: Shopping for Subjectivity," in *Lifestyle Shopping*, ed. Rob Shields.

John Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, Ch. 2, "Shopping for Pleasure."

Alice Marwick, *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age*, Ch. 5, "Lifestreaming: We Live in Public."

Evgeny Morozov, "The Death of the Cyberflâneur," *The New York Times*, February 4, 2012.

Shoshana Zuboff, "Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization," *Journal of Information Technology* 30 (2015): 75-89.

**\*\*\*Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price (Greenwald, 2005)\*\*\*  
Tues., 11/19, 7-9 pm, Milstein 202**

##### **12. November 20: The Politics of Global Shopping**

*Texts:* Daniel Miller, "Could Shopping Ever Really Matter" in *The Shopping Experience*, eds., Pasi Falk and Colin Campbell.

Zygmunt Bauman, "Exit *Homo Politicus*, Enter *Homo Consumens*" in *Citizenship and Consumption*, eds., Kate Soper and Frank Trentmann.

Michele Micheletti, "The Moral Force of Consumption and Capitalism: Anti-slavery and Anti-sweatshop," in *Citizenship and Consumption*, eds., Kate Soper and Frank Trentmann.

*Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price* (Greenwald, 2005).

Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution: How Wal-Mart Created a Brave New World of Business*, Ch. 6, "Wal-Mart's Long March to China."

Elizabeth Currid-Halkett, *The Sum of Small Things*, Ch. 5, "Conspicuous Production."

**\*\*\*Thanksgiving Break\*\*\***

##### **13. December 4: Can Money Buy Everything?**

Read five essays from the Michael Sandel Forum. You must read: Sandel's lead essay, "How Markets Crowd Out Morals," Bowles, "How Markets Crowd *In* Morals," and Sennett, "The Virtue of Informality." You may choose any two other essays.

**\*\*\*Paper due Monday, December 9th\*\*\***

**Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity**

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

**Disability-Related Accommodations:**

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with Disability Services (DS). More information on the DS registration process is available online at [www.health.columbia.edu/ods](http://www.health.columbia.edu/ods). Faculty must be notified of registered students' accommodations before exam or other accommodations will be provided. Students who have (or think they may have) a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion at (212) 854-2388 (Voice/TTY) or by email at [disability@columbia.edu](mailto:disability@columbia.edu)