

Grace Allen
 Syllabus for Mosse Lecture Fellowship
 2/25/2015

From Food to Fashion: Creating Consumer Desire in Modern Europe

We commonly hear that our society prioritizes the selling and buying of products—that we live in a “consumer society.” This course examines the emergence of consumer societies in capitalist and non-capitalist Europe from the early nineteenth century to the present day, focusing on how men and women learned to desire consumer objects through their everyday lives. From public spaces, to popular culture, to our own bodies—including sports arenas and subways, T.V. and the internet, fashion and food—in Europe as much as America, virtually all aspects of everyday life are commodified. Although it may feel natural to us, however, this is a modern phenomenon. Exploring the development of consumer society is therefore essential to understanding modern European society and culture.

This course is split into three parts. Part one investigates the foundations of consumer society in the nineteenth century. We will ask how new production methods and labor practices, the transformation of urban space, and emerging class and gender structures both shaped and were shaped by consumer desire. In part two, we shift our attention to the early twentieth century. Despite the increasing accessibility of consumer goods, Europe also faced traumatic periods of instability and scarcity. We will investigate the links between consumer desire and conflict, discussing empire, the New Woman, hunger, war, and black markets. Finally, in the last five weeks we turn to the post World War II era, when a mass consumer society fully emerged in Europe. Focusing on the politicization of consumer desire, we will compare and contrast consumer societies in Western and Eastern Europe and address contemporary debates about the environment and Americanization. Throughout the course we will also pull apart broader themes, including the relationship between the desire for goods and sexual desire, the extent to which consumption facilitated class, gender, and national distinctions or acted as a homogenizing force, and how individuals and societies have mobilized consumer desire as a form of power.

Structure and Requirements:

We will have two lectures and a discussion each week. Students are expected to come prepared to discuss the reading material every Friday. In addition to a final, there will be two 5 page papers and one 8-10 page paper asking students to draw upon the reading material to explore the course’s broader themes.

Attendance and Participation in all Lecture and Section Discussions (20%)

Two short papers: (both 15%)

One 8-10 page paper: (25%)

One final exam: Essays and Identifications (25%)

Books to Purchase:

Simone de Beauvoir, *Les Belles Images* (Translated by Patrick O’Brian)

Slavenka Drakulic, *Café Europa: Life After Communism*

Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*

Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames*

The rest of the readings will be included in the course reader, which can be purchased at the Humanities Copy Shop.

Class Schedule:

Week one: Introduction

Part 1: The Foundations of Consumer Society in the Nineteenth Century

Week Two: Economic and Philosophical Foundations (Part I)

Mon: The Industrial Revolution and New Production Techniques

Weds: New Conceptions of Time and Labor

Fri: Discussion

Reading:

E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present* 38 (Dec., 1967): 56-97.

"Rules of a Berlin Factory (1844)" in Katharine Lualdi, *Sources of The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures, Vol. 2: Since 1500*, Fourth Edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012).

Week Three: Economic and Philosophical Foundations (Part II)

Colonialism

Capitalism and Liberalism

Fri: Discussion

Reading:

Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret," in *Capital* (1867)

Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (1899) (short selections)

Week Four: Spaces that Produce Desire

Mon: Worlds Fairs and Mechanical vs. Artisan Production

Weds: The Rise of the Department Store

Fri: Discussion

Reading:

Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames* (1883) (selections)

Walter Benjamin, "The Arcades Project" (1927) (selections)

Week Five: Consumption as Distinction

Mon: Class, Taste Makers, and the Bourgeois Home

Weds: Gendered Divisions of Consumption

Fri: Discussion

Reading:

Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886)

Week Six: Critiques and Conceptions of "Pathological" Desire:

Kleptomania and Prostitution

Psychoanalysis and Socialist Critiques of Consumerism

Fri: Discussion

Readings:

Alfred Binet "Fetishism in love" (1887) (short selection)

Michael Ryan, *Prostitution in London* (1839) (short selection)

O'Brien, Patricia , "The Kleptomania Diagnosis: Bourgeois Women and Theft in Late Nineteenth-century France," *Journal of Social History* 17 (Fall 1983): 65-77

Part II: Instability and Conflict From the *Fin de Siècle* to WWII

Week Seven: Destabilizing Boundaries through Consumption

Mon: The New Woman

Weds: Bread, Bolsheviks, and WWI

Fri: Discussion

Belinda Davis, "Bread, Cake, and Just Deserts," in *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 24-47.

"Peace, Bread and Land," in *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and Materials* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 24-31.

Week Eight: Race, Advertising, and Popular Culture

Mon: Advertisements and Empire

Weds: American Products and Popular Culture in Interwar Europe

Fri: Discussion

Readings:

Anne McClintock, "Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising," in *The Gender and Consumer Culture Reader*, ed Jennifer N. Scanlon (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 129-152.

The Modern Girl Research Group, "Cosmetics Advertising and the Politics of Race and Style," in *The Modern Girl Around the World*, edited by Alys Eve Weinbaum, Lynn Thomas et al. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 25-54.

(Pay close attention to the advertisements pictured in these articles and be prepared to compare and contrast them in discussion on Friday).

Week Nine: Mass Production and Mass Culture in Europe

Mon: Fordism and Taylorism

Weds: Film, Leisure, and Critiques of the "Culture Industry" in Weimar

Fri: Discussion

Readings:

Victoria de Grazia, "Taylorising Worker Leisure" in *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 60 - 93.

Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament* (1927) (selections)

Week Ten: World War II: Desire, Commodities and Conflict

Mon: Sex, Cigarettes and Chocolate: Supplying Soldiers in Europe

Weds: Hunger and Black Markets in Concentration Camps and Displaced Person Camps

Fri: Discussion

Reading:

Myrna Goldenberg, "Food Talk: Gendered Responses to Hunger in the Concentration Camps," in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis and the Holocaust* (2003), eds. Elizabeth Baer and Myra Goldenberg, 161-179

Atina Grossman, "Chapter 4: The Saved and Saving Remnant: Jewish Displaced Persons in the American Zone," in *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 131-182.

Part III: Politicization of Mass Consumer Society in the East and West

Week Eleven: Postwar Modernization and Reconstructing Desire

Mon: Home Reconstruction in the East and West

Weds: Women as "Citizen Consumers"

Fri: Discussion

Reading:

Watch: Tati, *Mon Oncle* (1958)

Simone de Beauvoir, *Les Belles Images* (1966)

Week Twelve: Leisure and Luxuries as Cold War Battleground

Mon: Automobiles in the East and West

Weds: American Commodities and the Cold War

Fri: Discussion

Reading:

Jukka Gronow and Sergei Zhuravlev, "Soviet Luxuries from Champagne to Private Cars," In *Pleasures in Socialism*, ed. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, (Northwestern University Press, 2010), 121-146.

Uta Poiger, "Presley, Yes—Ulbrich, No? Rock 'n' Roll and Female Sexuality in the German Cold War," in *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 168-205.

Week Thirteen: Anti-Consumerist Movements

Mon: May 68

Weds: The Green Movement and the Environment

Fri: Discussion

Ernest Mandel, "The Lessons of May 1968," *New Left Review* I:52 (November–December 1968): 9-31.

"Charter of the European Greens," Adopted at the 2nd EGP Congress

Geneva, 13-14 October 2006, http://europeangreens.eu/euroarchive/fileadmin/logos/pdf/pdf_charter/Charter_English.pdf

Week Fourteen: Consumer Desire Beyond Borders

Mon: Commodities and the European Union

Weds: Americanization: Homogenization or Hybridity?

Fri: Discussion

Reading:

Richard Kuisel, "Chapter 4: The Adventures of Mickey Mouse, Big Mac, and Coke in the Land of the Gauls," *The French Way: How France Embraced and Rejected American Values and Power* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 151-208.

"McDonald's 'Italianised' menu: the future of fast food?" *The Guardian*, May 27, 2013.

Week Fifteen: The Fall of Communism

Mon: Nostalgia and Consumer Desire in post-1989 Eastern Europe

Weds: Discussion

Reading:

Watch: *Goodbye Lenin*

Slavenka Drakulic, *Cafe Europa: Life After Communism* (1996) (selections)

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Education

2010-Present

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Modern European History PhD Program

Advisors: Mary Louise Roberts and Laird Boswell

Dissertation Title: "France's Postwar Emporium: French Participation in International Commercial Expositions from 1945 to 1967"

Masters of Arts Completed Fall 2012

MA Title: "Camping, Comfort, and Commodity Culture: Domesticating Nature in Postwar France, 1950 - 1970."

Preliminary Examinations Passed May 2013: Fields in Modern German History, Early Modern and Modern France, Gender and Modern Europe

2006-2010

Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

Bachelor of Arts in History, May 2010

Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, May 2010

Minors: French and Political Science

Magna Cum Laude

Professional and Teaching Experience

Fall 2014

Teaching Assistant, UW-Madison History Department

HIST 201: Historian's Craft: Athenian Democracy

Professor: Claire Taylor

Summer 2011 to 2013

Project Assistant, UW-Madison Graduate School

Program Co-Coordinator for the Graduate Student Collaborative

Developed, organized, and implement professional development workshops and social activities for graduate students.

Spring 2011

Teaching Assistant, UW-Madison History Department

HIST 120: Europe and the Modern World, 1815-Present

Lecturer: Hunter Martin

Fall 2010

Teaching Assistant, UW-Madison Political Science Department

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POL 103: Intro to International Relations
Professor: Jon Pevehouse

Spring 2009
Intern at The Geneva Center for Security Policy
Location: Geneva, Switzerland
Supervisor: Dr. Graeme Herd
Assisted Dr. Herd's academic research,
proof read/edited papers, organized research materials

Language Proficiency

French: Advanced reading, writing, and speaking knowledge
German: Reading knowledge

Fellowships and Awards

Chancellor's Fellow, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Spring 2015

Vilas Research Travel Grant, UW-Madison Graduate School, Spring 2014

Chateaubriand Research Fellowship, Embassy of France in the United States, 2013-2014 (8 month fellowship)

Jeanne Marandon Research Fellowship, Société des Professeurs Français et Francophones d'Amérique (SPFFA) (year-long fellowship), 2013-2014 (declined)

Ouisconsin Field Research Scholarship, Wisconsin Alumni Association, 2013

Council for European Studies/Andrew Mellon Foundation Pre-Dissertation Research Fellowship, 2012

James Watson and Lois George MacDonald Scholarship for History, Miami University, 2009

Publications

"Council for European Studies Sponsored Research: France's Postwar Emporium"
Perspectives on Europe 43:1 (Spring 2013): 79-82.

Conference Papers

"The Development of Campsites in Postwar France," Center for History and the Environment (CHE), UW-Madison, February 2015

"From "Camping Sauvage" to "Hotels de Plein-Air": The Commercialization of Camping in Postwar France," Western Society for French History, San Antonio, 2014.

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"Postwar French Commodity Culture and Seduction at the 1961 French Exposition in Moscow," Council for European Studies Conference, Washington D.C., March 2014.

Activities/Service

Search Committee Member for Early-Modern U.S. Gender Historian, Spring 2015

History Department Harassment and Discrimination Committee, Fall 2012

Graduate Student Representative to the Graduate School Academic Planning Council, Fall 2011 – Summer 2013