This course will be offered via OnQ and MS Teams

Mondays 11.30 – 1.00pm (MS Teams Office Hours by TA Group)
Thursday 1.00 - 2.30pm (Optional MS Teams Q & A discussion with the Instructor and TAs)

Instructor
Dr. Martin Hand
handm@queensu.ca

Additional Instructor Office Hours: Wednesdays 2.30-3.30pm, or email for an appointment

TAs
TBA

Instructor Availability and Class Engagement

This is a remote class. This means that all the micro lectures, assigned readings, videos and other materials will be posted in OnQ at the start of each week for you to access remotely.

There is a logical order to follow in OnQ each week. Under ‘Content’ for each week, work your way through each micro lecture and activity in order.

Your participation grade is based on your weekly submissions to your group discussion forum in OnQ. You will be placed in one of three groups, each led by the instructor or a TA. A broad question will be posed each week, and you should offer your 250-word answer there, and respond to two of your colleagues’ posts with at least two sentences. This will really help you to follow the content, engage in discussion, and get a sense of what your group colleagues think. More details provided in OnQ under ‘Assignments’.

There is also an optional class-wide Weekly Q and A where you can drop-in to MS Teams and discuss the key question for the week and ask the instructor and TAs any other questions you have. This is not required or assessed, but simply an option for those students who wish to discuss the content further with the teaching team. Guidelines for these Q & A sessions are provided in OnQ under ‘Content’ in the week of 10th September.

For person-to-person remote office hours with your TA or the instructor, use the Monday 11.30-1.00pm time in MS Teams, Wednesday 2.30-3.30pm, or make an appointment on a platform of your choice.
Course Description

A comprehensive introduction to the major theories and empirical studies of consumer culture with emphasis upon the historical, socioeconomic, and cultural aspects of consumption in sociological context; substantive focus upon diverse topics such as food, tourism, the home, children, and marketing. The study of consumption is now central to many of the key debates within contemporary sociology – particularly around notions of markets, choice and inequality, individualization and collectively organized practices, identity and difference, discourse and materiality, and so on. This course will provide students with an introduction to this increasingly important area, allowing them to further pursue aspects of social theory in relation to a wide range of phenomena and practice.

Aims

This course will introduce students to the broad field of consumer culture. Students will engage with historical and theoretical perspectives on consumer culture and apply their knowledge to a critical examination of substantive topics in the sociology of consumer culture.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- draw upon sociological literature to identify and explain the distinctions and differences between concepts of ‘consumerism’, ‘consumption’, ‘commodities’, ‘exchange’, and ‘markets’, articulate these accurately in written argument, and critically assess their explanatory power in relation to a range of contemporary issues.
- identify and articulate at least three explanations for the historical emergence of contemporary consumer culture in relation to modernity.
- identify and explain the similarities and differences between at least three sociological theories of choice in consumer culture, and identify the broader perspectives to which those theories belong.
- identify and explain the key features of sociological debates about advertising and branding in contemporary society, identify the issues of ‘structure’ and ‘agency’ involved in these.
- identify, explain, and critically assess the similarities and differences among a plurality of theories and concepts in the sociology of consumer culture, and draw upon these to critically evaluate at least one substantive topic in written form.
- use abstract sociological concepts with confidence in a variety of written forms to explain contemporary sociological theories of consumption.
- demonstrate the ability to evaluate and synthesize information obtained from a variety of written sources, and communicate relevant information in different ways.

Organization

This remote course will be taught through a combination of recorded micro-lectures, OnQ group discussion forums, MS Teams Q & A sessions, and MS Teams drop-in office hours. There will be scholarly readings, reading guides, videos, podcasts, and other materials provided so that all assignments can be completed to a high standard.
Assessment & Feedback

Weekly submissions to OnQ TA group discussion forums. 250-word submission by Thursdays by 11.55pm, 2 responses to other submissions by Fridays 11.55pm. 24% (2% pass per week)

Paper 1: Pre- and Post-COVID consumption reflection: (5 pages). Due 4th October. 20%

Paper 2: Critical paper on the sociology of consumer preferences (5 pages). Due 1st November. 20%

Take-Home Examination: Answer 3 out of 5 Questions (8 pages). Due 6th December. 36%

For Papers 1 and 2, written feedback will be provided in OnQ within 2 weeks of submission.

More details on all assignments in OnQ under ‘Assignments’ and in Micro Lecture 1.

Grading

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Course Average (Range)</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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Submission

250-word submissions to OnQ discussion boards by Thursdays 11.55pm; 2 responses to colleagues’ submissions by Fridays 11.55pm, graded as follows:

0% - no 250-word submission. If you do not submit this, you cannot submit responses to others.

1% - only 250-word submission.

2% - 250-word submission and 2 responses.

Paper assignments are to be submitted in OnQ by the deadlines.

There will be a penalty of 5% per day for Papers 1, 2, and the take-home examination where the following do not apply:

Queen’s University is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. The Senate Policy for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities was approved at Senate in November 2016 (see https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslcwww/files/files/policies/senate-andtrustees/ACADACCOMMPOLICY2016.pdf). If you are a student with a disability and think you may need academic accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/

Queen’s University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and are interfering with their ability to complete academic requirements related to a course for a short period of time. The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances is available at http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslcwww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/Academic%20Considerations%20for%20Extenuating%20Circumstances%20Policy%20Final.pdf

Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. Arts and Science undergraduate students can find the Faculty of Arts and Science protocol and the portal where a request can be submitted at: http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/accommodations. Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty. If you need to request academic consideration for this course, you will be required to provide the name and email address of the instructor/coordinator. Please use the following:
Instructor/Coordinator Name: Dr. Martin Hand
Instructor/Coordinator email address: handm@queensu.ca

Academic Integrity

Queen’s students, faculty, administrators and staff all have responsibilities for upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity; honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments and their behaviour conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulationsacademic-regulationsregulation1), on the Arts and Science website (see https://www.queensu.ca/artsci/students-at-queens/academic-integrity), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen’s. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Readings

This course uses OnQ to provide all the required resources, including course outline, micro-lectures, videos, all readings, assignment details and submission, and TA information. The material on the website is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in SOCY306. The material on this website may be downloaded for a registered student’s personal use, but shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in SOCY306. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate’s Academic Integrity Policy Statement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th Sept</td>
<td>Welcome to Sociology of Consumer Culture 2020!</td>
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<tr>
<td>14th Sept</td>
<td>Capitalism, Consumerism, and Consumers</td>
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<td>17th Sept</td>
<td>How and why did consumer culture develop?</td>
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<td>21st Sept</td>
<td>Manipulation, Advertising, and Marketing</td>
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<td>24th Sept</td>
<td>What is branding and (how) does it work?</td>
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<td>28th Sept</td>
<td>Consumption, Status, and Class</td>
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<td>1st Oct</td>
<td>What shapes consumption preferences?</td>
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<td>5th Oct</td>
<td>Consuming Place</td>
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<td>8th Oct</td>
<td>What do images consume?</td>
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<td>12th Oct</td>
<td>No class: Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>15th Oct</td>
<td>Consuming Social Media: looking for likes?</td>
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<td>19th Oct</td>
<td>Consuming Energy, Organizing Normality</td>
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<td>22nd Oct</td>
<td>Workshop: how to succeed in your next assignment</td>
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<td>26th Oct</td>
<td>Fall Term Break</td>
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<td>29th Oct</td>
<td>Fall Term Break</td>
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<td>2th Nov</td>
<td>Food, Diet, and the Body</td>
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<td>5th Nov</td>
<td>What shapes practices of eating?</td>
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<td>9th Nov</td>
<td>Consumption &amp; the Life Course</td>
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<td>12th Nov</td>
<td>Are children consumers?</td>
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<td>16th Nov</td>
<td>Consuming Race</td>
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<td>Can consumption ever be ‘authentic’?</td>
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<td>18th Nov</td>
<td>Consuming Celebrity</td>
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<td>20th Nov</td>
<td>Do celebrities influence consumption patterns?</td>
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<td>25th Nov</td>
<td>Consumer Citizenship, Ethics, and Social Change</td>
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<td>27th Nov</td>
<td>How to write a take-home exam for this class</td>
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## Course Structure Detail

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-minute Intro</td>
<td>Welcome!</td>
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<td>Micro Lecture 1:</td>
<td>What is this course about and how will it work?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weekly Q &amp; A:</td>
<td>Student questions about the course</td>
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### 14th September: Capitalism, Consumerism, and Consumers

- **2-minute Intro:** What are we doing this week?
- **Micro Lecture 1:** The production of consumption perspective
- **Micro Lecture 2:** Socioeconomic contexts of consumerism
- **Micro Lecture 3:** The ideology of consumerism

**Activity 1:** Read Dunn (20028) Identifying Consumption. Chapter 1.
**Activity 2:** Watch ‘History of Ideas: Consumerism’ video

### 17th September: How and why did consumer culture develop?

- **Micro Lecture 1:** Five cultural explanations
- **Weekly Q & A:** What do you consume most?

**Activity 2:** Post to group discussion forum

### 21st September: Manipulation, Advertising, and Marketing

- **2-minute Intro:** What are we doing this week?
- **Micro Lecture 1:** Critical theory of consumer culture
- **Micro Lecture 2:** Commodity aesthetics
- **Micro Lecture 3:** Symbolic differentiation of goods

**Activity 1:** Read Smart (2011) Consumer Society. Chapter 3.
**Activity 2:** Watch ‘The Century of the Self’ BBC excerpt

### 24th September: What is branding and (how) does it work?

- **Micro Lecture 1:** Branding spaces, bodies, yourselves
- **Weekly Q & A:** Can we ‘see through’ marketing and branding?

**Activity 2:** Post to group discussion forum
28th September  Consumption, Status, and Class

2-minute Intro:  What are we doing this week?
Micro Lecture 1:  Bourdieu and consumption theory
Micro Lecture 2:  What is habitus?
Micro Lecture 3:  Taste and cultural capital

Activity 2:  Watch 7up video excerpt

1st October  What shapes consumption preferences?

Micro Lecture 1:  Consumption and identity
Weekly Q &A:  How much choice do you have over consumption?

Activity 1:  Read Bookman (2013) Coffee brands, class, and culture in a Canadian city’.
Activity 2:  Post to group discussion forum

5th October  Consuming Place

2-minute Intro:  What are we doing this week?
Micro Lecture 1:  Mobility and consumption
Micro Lecture 2:  The significance of travel and tourism
Micro Lecture 3:  The tourist gaze

Activity 2:  Listen to podcast

8th October  What do images consume?

Micro Lecture 1:  Photography and performances of travel and tourism
Weekly Q &A:  Is this the end of tourism?

Activity 1:  Read Stoldt et. al. (2019) ‘Professionalizing and Profiting: the rise of intermediaries in the social media industry’.
Activity 2:  Post to group discussion forum
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[6] 12th October</td>
<td><strong>No class: Thanksgiving</strong></td>
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</table>
| 15th October | **Consuming Social Media: looking for likes?** | 2-minute Intro: What are we doing this week?  
Micro Lecture 1: Social media demographics  
Micro Lecture 2: The attention economy and influencer marketing  
Weekly Q & A: Are you commodifying your 'self'?  
Activity 2: Post to group discussion forum |
| 19th October | **Consuming Energy, Organizing Normality** | 2-minute Intro: What are we doing this week?  
Micro Lecture 1: Escalating consumption: comfort  
Micro Lecture 2: Escalating consumption: cleanliness  
Micro Lecture 3: Escalating consumption: convenience  
Activity 2: Post to group discussion forum |
| 22nd October | **Workshop**                              | Activity 1: How to succeed in your next assignment!                                                                                   |
| [8] 26th October | **Fall Term Break**                       |                                                                                                                                         |
| 29th October | **Fall Term Break**                       |                                                                                                                                         |
### 2\textsuperscript{nd} November  
**Food, Diet, and the Body**

- **2-minute Intro:** What are we doing this week?
- **Micro Lecture 1:** Food, consumption & society
- **Micro Lecture 2:** Sociological approaches to food consumption
- **Micro Lecture 3:** Changing dimensions of food production and consumption

**Activity 1:** Read MacGregor et. al. (2018) ‘Promoting a healthier, younger you: the media marketing of anti-ageing superfoods’.

**Activity 2:** Watch Video

### 5\textsuperscript{th} November  
**What shapes practices of eating?**

- **Micro Lecture 1:** Cultural repertoires and symbolic boundaries
- **Weekly Q & A:** What counts as ‘ethical eating’?

**Activity 1:** Read Johnston et. al. (2011) ‘Good food, good people: understanding the repertoire of ethical eating’

**Activity 2:** Post to group discussion forum

### 9\textsuperscript{th} November  
**Consumption & the Life Course**

- **2-minute Intro:** What are we doing this week?
- **Micro Lecture 1:** What is the life-course?
- **Micro Lecture 2:** Commodification of childhood
- **Micro Lecture 3:** Adolescent, adult, and older-age consumption

**Activity 1:** Read Cook & Kaiser (2004) ‘Betwixt and Between’.

**Activity 2:** Watch Consuming Kids Excerpt

### 12\textsuperscript{th} November  
**Are children consumers?**

- **Micro Lecture 1:** Children’s consumption practices
- **Weekly Q & A:** Why is children’s consumption a public concern?


**Activity 2:** Post to group discussion forum
### 16th November  
**Consuming Race**

**2-minute Intro:** What are we doing this week?

**Micro Lecture 1:** Social construction of race, ethnicity, and nationality

**Micro Lecture 2:** Theorizing racial consumption

**Micro Lecture 3:** Whiteness and consumption

**Activity 1:** Read Crockett (2008) ‘Marketing Blackness: how advertisers use race to sell products’.

**Activity 2:** Watch Video

### 19th November  
**Can consumption ever be ‘authentic’?**

**Micro Lecture 1:** Racial discrimination in retail and marketing

**Weekly Q & A**  
What is ‘authenticity’ in consumption?

**Activity 1:** Read Pittman (2017) ‘Shopping while Black: black consumers’ management of racial stigma and racial profiling in retail settings’.

**Activity 2:** Post to group discussion forum

### 18th November  
**Consuming Celebrity**

**Micro Lecture 1:** What is a celebrity?

**Micro Lecture 2:** The spread of celebrity culture

**Micro Lecture 3:** Celebrity and consumer culture


**Activity 2:** Watch Video

### 20th November  
**Do celebrities influence consumption patterns?**

**Micro Lecture 1:** Micro-celebrities and nano-influencers

**Weekly Q & A:** Has COVID killed the celebrity?

**Activity 1:** Read Fresco (2017) ‘In LeBron James’ promotional skin: self-branded athletes and fans’ immaterial labour’.

**Activity 2:** Post to group discussion forum
<table>
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<tr>
<td>25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November</td>
<td>Consumer Citizenship, Ethics, and Social Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micro Lecture 1:</td>
<td>The consequences of contemporary consumerism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro Lecture 2:</td>
<td>Is consumption an ethical or moral issue?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 2:</td>
<td>Post to group discussion forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November</td>
<td>How to write a take-home exam for this class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro Lecture 1:</td>
<td>Best practices and good habits for take-home success!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Q &amp; A:</td>
<td>How can I do well in this final assignment?</td>
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