Instructor: Dr. Keri Brondo
Office: 304 Manning Hall
Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:00-12:30 or by appointment
Email: kbrondo@memphis.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Anthropological research on consumerism tries to make sense of this core element of globalization by connecting consumption to broader cultural and social contexts, and eliciting the consumer's point of view. Major themes covered in this course include: 1) how consumption is a site for crafting or contesting cultural identities (i.e., consumption as agency and resistance); 2) the contemporary marketing of culture and ethnic “difference,” and the relationship(s) between anthropology and marketing; and 3) consumption and the environment (understanding our ecological footprint). In all modules of the course we will read and discuss works including specific case studies as well as theoretical and methodological approaches for understanding consumption, consumer behavior, and their links to culture.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- It is the student’s responsibility to read and understand the syllabus. Special circumstances may require modifications in the syllabus and in the assignments. If this occurs, advance notice will be given in class and these changes will become part of the syllabus.

- Students are expected to attend class regularly and complete all assignments. Success in this class requires consistent attendance, regular class participation, and keeping up on all reading and work assignments.

- Makeup exams and late assignments will only be permitted for medical reasons, family emergencies or official University business. Written documentation is required.

- Excused absences for religious holidays and other events must be cleared with the instructor in advance.

- Text messaging and the use of personal electronics are extremely distracting and therefore forbidden during class sessions. Laptop use is restricted to note-taking (no internet surfing), and must be approved by the instructor. Cell phones should be silenced.

- Whenever you use another person’s words or ideas you must properly cite them. Word for word copying of another person’s words without proper attribution is known as plagiarism and is a serious form of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Refer to the university’s Regulations, Ordinances and Policies Regarding Academic Honesty and Integrity: http://history.memphis.edu/misconduct_policy.html.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory. The success of this class depends on consistent attendance and active participation.

DISCUSSION: This class is discussion-based. The success of these discussions depends on all of us. Regular attendance and engagement with the class materials is essential.

Seminar participation tips: Be courteous and respectful of one another. Do not laugh at or belittle anyone’s remarks. While you may not agree with them (this is fine), try to build a constructive dialogue around your differing interpretations of a reading. Allow other people to also speak and participate in the class; please do not dominate the discussion. Listen to what is being said rather than who is saying it – responses should not be personalized, and disagreements in opinion are not to be taken personally. Remember that we will be talking about ideas and learning from one another.

FILMS: This class makes extensive use of videos, many of which are not available to students outside of class. Some of the films may be rated “R.” Assignments will be based in part on films seen in class. It is the students’ responsibility to attend class and understand the content of the films. All films listed in the course schedule are tentative; specific titles and viewing dates are subject to change.

READINGS: The syllabus includes a reading schedule. Students must complete all reading prior to coming to class. The two required books will be available at the student bookstore, and all articles and book chapters will be available on eCourseware, as well as on reserve in the Anthropology Department’s main office, Manning 316.

Required Books:


Note: On occasion, undergraduates will be given the opportunity to skim particular assigned readings. Graduate students will read closely and provide content lectures on these readings (9/13, 11/1, and 11/8). All students will be responsible for the content presented.

READING REFLECTION NOTES: To facilitate our discussions, students are required to prepare notes and discussion questions for each class session. The notes should include a summary of the main points from the reading and two questions related to the reading that would help generate class discussion. Strong discussion questions put the weekly readings in conversation with past readings and/or course material. The notes should be about 1-2 pages single-spaced typed pages, and the format is up to you (e.g., paragraph/essay format, outlines (just be sure to cover the material). I will collect them at the end of each class period OR you may submit an electronic copy to ecourseware before class begins. I will not accept late notes; however graduate students may skip one and undergraduate students may skip two of the ten sets of notes over the course of the semester. Skipping notes does not mean you can skip the reading; I will call on you for participation during discussion regardless. The weekly notes will help you prepare for your thematic essay assignments.

THEMATIC ESSAYS: At least one week prior to each due date, a question or series of questions to address in an essay will be posted on ecourseware. Essays should be no more than 5 double spaced pages, and in 12 point font. As with all essays, your response should include a thesis statement and your argument should clearly engage the course materials – films, lectures, and readings (that doesn’t mean you have to agree with the readings, only that you ground your disagreement in the ideas and readings presented in this course). Before turning in your essay, make sure you have edited it for typos and used spell check. Be sure to use proper citations. Late papers will not be accepted. You should turn your essay in to ecourseware by 2:30pm on the date it is due.
JOURNAL: Students must keep an e-journal (on ecourseware) where they reflect on their consumption practices in connection with the weekly readings. There is a required minimum of one entry per week of 2-3 full paragraphs, but no maximum. Feel free to write as much as you desire.

EXTRA CREDIT POP QUIZZES: Periodically, “pop” quizzes will be administered in class for extra credit towards your final course grade. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions and will help you assess your comprehension of core knowledge. You will not be penalized for wrong quiz answers, but correct answers will earn you 1 extra credit point towards your final course grade, per correct response.

GRADUATE STUDENT LECTURES: Graduate students will lead a lecture and class discussion on 3 occasions. On 9/13 graduates will explore the theoretical framework outlined in Bourdieu’s Distinction (undergraduates will only have skimmed the selections, so you will need to do a solid job covering key concepts). On 10/4 graduates will choose a case study in design anthropology that they will present to the class and use as a basis for discussion. Other students will not have read the case study. During the weeks the class reads The Story of Stuff (11/1 and 11/8), grads will cover the critical content of these chapters in formal lectures.

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT: Throughout the course of the semester students will be working toward the production of a research paper on a topic of their choice that relates to consumerism. Students will share the progress of their individual projects during class, and all students in the class will be given responsibility to comment on other students’ work. Project submissions (ecourseware or hard copy) include:

- Brief (one paragraph) statement on research topic
- Statement of Paper Topic, Initial Bibliography, and Research Methods *Note: you must use primary sources (see handout for choosing and research a project topic)
- Draft Paper
- Presentation
- Final Paper (10-15 pages)

GRADING 4220:

- Thematic essays 600 points
- Reading notes 200 points
- Journal 100 points
- Participation 100 points

Total: 1000 points

GRADING 6220:

- Thematic essays 450 points
- Reading notes 150 points
- Journal 30 points
- Participation 100 points
- Research Project 210 points
- Lectures 60 points

Total: 1000 points

Research Project Breakdown:
- Brief (one paragraph) statement on research topic = 0 points; -10 from final grade if not submitted.
- Statement of Paper Topic, Initial Bibliography, & Research Methods = 20 points
- Draft Paper = 50 points
- Presentation = 15 points
- Final Paper = 125
## CLASS SCHEDULE

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| **8/30** | Introduction to class  
FILM: NO IMPACT MAN  
Consumption, Cultural Meaning, Identity Construction, and Class Distinction |
| **9/6** | NO CLASS  - LABOR DAY |
*Graduate Student Lecture Presentations on chapter content*  
*Reading Notes 1 Due* |
FILM: MERCHANTS OF COOL  
*Reading Notes 2 Due*  
*Graduate student research project topic due* |
FILM: BEYOND ETHNOGRAPHY: CORPORATE AND DESIGN ANTHROPOLOGY |
**Reading Notes 3 Due**


**Graduate students:** Choose chapter from Sunderland and Denny (4-10) to present to class and lead group discussion on topics raised through the case study (e.g., methods, ethics, representation).

**Reading Notes 4 Due**

10/8  **FRIDAY**  

*Graduate Student Statement of Paper Topic, Initial Bibliography & Research Methods Due to ecourseware by Midnight*. I will review papers by time of arrival to the ecourseware dropbox. Papers will be returned in that order throughout the following week. All papers will be graded by Sat. 10/16 at 8pm.

**Globalization and Chains of Consumption**


**FILM SHORT: STORY OF STUFF**

**PAPER 1 DUE**

10/18  **NO CLASS – FALL BREAK**


*Graduate Student Lecture Presentations on chapter content*


Fiske, Shirley. *Global Change and Policymaking from Inside the Beltway: Engaging Anthropology*. In Susan Crate and Mark Nuttall’s (eds.) *Anthropology & Climate Change*.

**FILM: TRASHED**

*Reading Notes 5 Due*

11/1  *Leonard, Chapters 4-5 (undergraduates skim)*  

*Graduate Student Lecture Presentations on chapter content*

Fischer, *Introduction-Chapter 1*.

*Reading Notes 6 Due*

11/8  Fischer, *Chapters 2-4*  

**FILM: BLING**

*Reading Notes 7 Due*

11/15  Fischer, *5-conclusion*  

**FILM: THE END OF POVERTY?**

*Reading Notes 8 Due*
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>11/24</td>
<td><strong>PAPER 2 DUE</strong></td>
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<td>*Graduate Student draft project paper due to ecourseware by 3:30pm. *</td>
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<td>I will review papers by time of arrival to the ecourseware dropbox. Papers will be returned in that order throughout the following week. All papers will be graded by Tues. 11/30 at 5pm.</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
<td><strong>Special Topics / Feminist Approaches and Consumerism:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading Notes 10 Due</strong></td>
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<td>12/13</td>
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<td>*Graduate Student Project Presentations</td>
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|        | *Graduate Student Final Papers Due**}