



**Stockholms
universitet**

Master Program in Fashion Studies, 2nd year
UNIT 1, Consumer Culture Theory & Fashion, 7,5 ECTS
Autumn semester 2015

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Course leader: Dr Andrea Kollnitz

Course Guidelines

The course introduces you to consumer culture theory and uses this theoretical backdrop to a discussion about fashion related issues. In the global marketplace, companies and consumers are constantly negotiating over meanings. You are therefore introduced to the dialectical processes between firms and consumers in which the meanings of the market are created. Having completed the course you should be able to explain the role consumption, brands and advertising play in shaping views of fashion in contemporary consumer cultures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the course is on the one hand to advance your understanding of fundamental models and theories within the field of Consumer Culture Theory and how these apply to the field of fashion. On the other hand the aim is to introduce and critically reflect on some of the most typical and central empirical phenomena in the consumer cultures of today.

More specifically, having completed the course you should be able to:

- describe and critically evaluate theories about consumer culture and their relation to fashion;
- analyze how companies and consumers in the global marketplace are constantly negotiating over meanings of consumption;
- explain the role consumption, brands and advertising play in shaping local consumer culture and fashion phenomena.

COURSE CONTENT

The course will cover the following subjects:

- Theoretical approaches to consumer culture;
- Critical approaches to consumption;
- Consumption and identity;
- Fashion, subcultures, and style;
- Brands and consumption;

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TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The course consists of a combination of lectures, group seminars and compulsory assignments. The lectures provide an overview of the different topics and issues in consumer culture theory and their relationship to fashion. The group seminars and the assignments provide an opportunity to discuss and apply the theoretical material.

Lectures, group seminars and the seminars are fully integrated. Students are expected to attend at least 80% of the total number of lectures. Attendance at seminars and submission of papers to the seminars is mandatory.

All coursework will be conducted in English.

ASSESSMENT

The course is assessed through active participation in seminars, completion of written assignments and a written take-home exam.

100% of the overall grade is based on the final exam.

Final Exam

The final exam, which is an *individual* take-home exam, will be distributed to you during week 43 (between October 19 - October 25). The deadline for handing it in is during week 44 (Between October 26 - November 1). Dates are to be decided.

Seminars

During the seminars you will have to be prepared to present and discuss a group project. Before the first seminar you are to hand in a short description of your proposed group project, according to the instructions given at the last pages of these course guidelines. Before the second seminar you are to hand in your completed group project. If you do not hand in these assignments prior to the seminars you are not allowed to participate. If you fail to participate in one seminar you will have to write a short essay to compensate. Details about these make-up assignments will be distributed after the seminars. If you fail to participate in both seminars you will not be able to complete the course.

The group assignment will be graded on a pass/fail basis. In order to pass the course you will need to have received a passing grade on the group project.

Grading

Assessment is based on a criterion-referenced scale. A, B, C, D and E are approved grades. Fx

and F are failed grades. In order to obtain final approval the course requires a minimum grade of E for the written exam and that all course requirements are met. If you have received a passing grade (A-E) you are not allowed to resit the examination in order to receive a higher grade.

If you do not meet the deadline for the final exam you are allowed to hand it in at a later point in time. Note, however, that the highest possible grade to obtain for those handing in late is a **D**.

PLAGIARISM

As a student you will be writing and handing different types of written tasks. It is therefore fundamental that you know that all kind of plagiarism are strictly forbidden! Plagiarism consists of:

- Students copying from each other;
- Students copying from internet, books, articles or other sources without a clear reference;
- Students passing a work or a citation as your own when it is not;
- All kind of cut-and-paste writing strategies.

Any incident of this kind will be reported to the Disciplinary committee of Stockholm University. In case you are found guilty you might be suspended from the University for a period of time.

In order to avoid plagiarism you need to:

- Precise your sources by referring to the author, the book and the page in question;
- Mark that you are using someone else's words by marking it with a quotation mark;
- Precise whose thoughts you are presenting if they are not your own;
- Not pass your work to others.

GRADING CRITERIA

The following summary presents the criteria that apply to different grades. The grading criteria is designed so that requirements included to achieve the lowest approved grade, the grade of E, also applies to higher grades (D-A).

E → Knowledge of concepts, models and theories in consumer culture theory. Rudimentary ability to use these concepts, models and theories to *describe* consumer culture and its relation to fashion.

D → Good knowledge of concepts, models and theories in consumer culture theory.

Rudimentary ability to use these concepts, models and theories to *describe and analyze* consumer culture and its relation to fashion.

C → Good knowledge of concepts, models and theories in consumer culture theory. Ability to use these concepts, models and theories to *describe, analyze, and explain* consumer culture and its relation to fashion.

B → Good ability to draw conclusions showing understanding of how different theoretical approaches are related to each other, and how these affect the outcome of the analyses. Ability to critically reflect on how the choices of theoretical and practical standpoints affect the outcome of the analysis.

A → An excellent ability to synthesize conclusions that show understanding of how different theoretical approaches are related to each other, and how these affect the outcome of the analysis. Very good ability to independently and holistically problematize conceptual and practical aspects in the field of study.

The following applies to fail grades:

Fx → Insufficient: Mandatory course requirements are not met. Supplementary course work must be finished within one week after the result of the final exam has been reported.

F → Fail: No relevant knowledge. Handed in a defective examination or one that can not be assessed. Supplementary work is not accepted.



COURSE LITERATURE¹

PRINTED LITERATURE

Lury, Celia, *Consumer Culture*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2011

ELECTRONICAL SOURCES

Ahuvia, Aaron C. (2005), "Beyond the Extended Self: Loved Objects and Consumers' Identity Narratives," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (1), 171-84.

Arnould, Eric J. and Craig J. Thompson (2005), "Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (March), 868-82.

Bauman, Zygmunt (2001), "Consuming life," *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 1 (1), 9-29.

Belk, Russell W. (1988), "Possessions and the Extended Self," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (September), 139-68.

Belk, Russell W., Güliz Ger, and Søren Askegaard (2003), "The Fire of Desire: A Multisited Inquiry into Consumer Passion," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30 (December), 326-51.

Campbell, Colin (1995), "The Sociology of Consumption," in *Acknowledging Consumption*, ed. Daniel Miller, Florence, KY, USA: Routledge, 95-124.

Elliott, Richar & Davies, Andrea (2006) 'Symbolic Brands and Authenticity of Identity Performance', in Jonathan E. Shroeder and Miriam Salzer-Mörling (eds.) *Brand Culture*. London: Routledge.

Firat, A. Fuat and Alladi Venkatesh (1995), "Liberatory Postmodernism and the Reenchantment of Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22 (December), 239-67.

Galbraith, John K. (2000), "The dependency effect," in *The consumer society reader*, Edited by J. B. Schor, and D. B. Holt. New York, NY: The New Press, 20-5.

le Grand, Elias (2012) "Tainted Markers of Taste: Class, Identity and the Discourse on

¹ Additional readings might be assigned throughout the course.

‘Chavs’”, unpublished manuscript

Hamilton, Kathy (2012) “Low –Income Families and Coping through Brands: Inclusion or Stigma?”, *Sociology* 46(1): 74-90.

Harold, Christine (2004), "Pranking Rhetoric: "Culture Jamming" As Media Activism," *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21 (3), 189-211.

Hayward, Keith & Yar, Majid (2006) “The ‘Chav’ Phenomenon: Consumption, Media and the Construction of a New Underclass.” *Crime, Media, Culture* 2(1): 9-28.

Hebdige, Dick. 'Style', in Malcolm Barnard (ed) *Fashion Theory: A Reader*. Routledge, 2007. Pp. 256-266.

Kjeldgaard, Dannie (2009), ‘The Meaning of Style? Style Reflexivity among Danish High School Youths.’ *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 8(2–3): 71–83.

Marion, Gilles and Agnes Nairn (2011), ”‘We make the shoes, you make the story’ Teenage girls’ experiences of fashion: Bricolage, tactics and narrative identity,” *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 14 (1), 29-56.

Ostberg, Jacob (2011), “Style”, in *The Encyclopedia for Consumer Culture*, Dale Southerton (ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rief, Silvia (2008), "Outlines of a Critical Sociology of Consumption: Beyond Moralism and Celebration," *Sociology Compass*, 2 (2), 560-76.

Segre Reinach, Simona, “National Identities and International Recognition”, *Fashion Theory*, vol.15, issue 2, pp. 267-272, 2011.

Shankar, Avi, Julie Whittaker, and James A. Fitchett (2006), "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now," *Marketing Theory*, 6 (4), 485-505.

SEMINAR INSTRUCTIONS

For the two seminars and the related group work, you are to work in groups of two or three students. Chose an empirical phenomenon related to fashion and make an analysis of this phenomenon from a consumer culture theory vantage point. Use the theoretical material in order to analyze, discuss, and perhaps explain, the evolution of the fashion phenomenon under study.

First seminar:

Prepare a one-page outline of your proposed group project and be prepared to present it to the class. Focus on describing the phenomenon, explaining why it is interesting to study, and suggesting how a consumer culture theory perspective might enlighten us about this particular phenomenon.

The one-page outline should be brought to class and handed to the responsible teacher.

Second seminar:

Prepare a written report of four to five pages where you conduct your CCT-analysis of the fashion phenomenon under study. Also prepare a five- to ten-minute oral presentation of your project and be prepared to present it to the rest of the class.

The written report should be handed in to the responsible lecturer at the seminar *and* sent by e-mail.