

SOCIOLOGY SII198
Consumer Society
Fall 2021

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Lorne Tepperman
(lorne.tepperman@utoronto.ca)

PROFESSOR'S OFFICE HOURS Thursdays 12 noon – 1 pm
Room 143, University College

CLASS HOURS AND LOCATION: **Thursdays 10-12**

SCOPE AND AIMS

What makes people buy things? And what are the social effects of their buying? Sociologists have been studying consumer behaviour for over a century, as social critics and as applied (marketing) researchers. In this course, we will examine both bodies of social research, pure and applied. We will consider what sociologists have found out about consumer behaviour –especially, the demographics and social psychology of buying behaviour. We will also review what sociologists have written about consumerism as a way of life: a tradition of writing that goes back to Karl Marx and Thorstein Veblen.

PREREQUISITE

None

In the first two weeks of classes, in response to a request by the Dean, students who are unable to attend the class meetings in person will meet the Professor for a two-hour Zoom discussion. After that, students will be expected to attend all classes in person.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor Lorne Tepperman teaches this course. Office hours are after class or by appointment. Feel free to contact the instructor at lorne.tepperman@utoronto.ca. If you have questions or comments, you will receive a quick response. The instructor welcomes email. However, all communications and behaviour must conform to the University of Toronto Code of Ethics.

TEACHING ASSISTANT CONTACT

For questions about the course readings or reflection papers, please contact TA Alexa Carson at alexa.carson@mail.utoronto.ca.

READINGS

The assigned reading – **CONSUMER SOCIETY*** -- is available from the U of T Bookstore, Amazon, Rock's Mills Press, or the U of T Robarts Library (short term loan).

*Tepperman, Lorne and Nicole Meredith **Consumer Society**, Toronto: Rocks Mills Press, 2020

Class Attendance

The responsibility for being aware of what is said in classes (including administrative announcements) rests with students. As a precaution, in case they miss a class, students should have a “buddy” who is willing to share their notes.

Assignments and Grading

The grading plan is as follows:

- Class participation..... 30%
- 500-1000-word reflection paper..... 5% (due Sept 16)
- 500-1000-word reflection paper..... 5% (due Sept 30)
- 500-1000-word reflection paper..... 5% (due Oct 14)
- 500-1000-word reflection paper..... 5% (due Oct 28)
- one 12-minute presentation 25% (due before Dec 1)
- one 2500-3000-word term paper* 25% (due Dec 2)

OUTLINE OF TOPICS DISCUSSED*

Sep 9	Introduction to consumer society	CS 1 + Orwell***
16**	The culture of consumption	CS 2, 3
23	The socialization of consumers	CS 4,5
30**	Advertising and branding	CS 6,7
Oct 7	Rich and poor consumers	CS 8,9
14**	Female and male consumers	CS 10, 11
21	Immigrants and Foreign buyers	CS 12,13
28**	Young and old consumers	CS 14,15
Nov 4	Bending and breaking the rules	CS 16, 17
11	No class – reading week	
18	Student presentations (max 8)	
25	Student presentations (max 8)	
Dec 2	Student presentations (max 8) --- final paper is due	

* All readings are chapters in Tepperman, Lorne and Nicole Meredith, **Consumer Society**, 2020. The book is available at the U of T Bookstore, on-line from Amazon or Rocks Mills Press, or in the U of T Library System. It is available in both print and e-book version.

** Reflection papers are due **before class** for each week you are submitting. Late submissions will not be accepted, but you can make up missed reflections in one of the three optional weeks. If you wish to submit optional reflection papers to potentially boost your grade or as a make-up submission, please do so for the Oct. 7, Oct. 21 or Nov. 4 readings (due before class at 10am).

*** George Orwell, “Politics and the English language,” on website

COURSE ACTIVITIES

Students will be expected to participate in weekly group discussions, submit 500-1000-word reflection papers on four or more readings, write a 2500–3000-word research paper on a topic they have chosen, and give a 12-minute classroom PowerPoint presentation on their term paper research. Students will receive --- percent of their course grade before the drop date of -----.

Participation. Your participation grade is worth 30% of the course grade. The instructor will judge you in each class for your contribution to the classroom discussion and evidence you have understood the assigned readings.

Reflection papers. Your reflection papers will be worth 5% each, for 20% of your final grade. This grade will be based on the best four reflection papers you submit. You can submit a maximum of six reflection papers. Each 500-1000-word reflection paper should be submitted in Quercus under Assignments. Your paper should build on a clear understanding of the reading and earlier class discussion. All papers should be neatly typed and proof-read for errors. Review the supplementary material and reflection paper rubric on Quercus for more assignment details.

PowerPoint presentation. Your presentation is worth 25% of your course grade. Based on research for your term paper, you will present your argument and findings to the class for 10-12 minutes at a pre-arranged class time. You will be judged on the clarity of your argument, quality of visual display, and smoothness of delivery.

Term paper. Your paper is worth 25% of your course grade. The neatly typed (and proof-read) ten-page term paper will normally be submitted through Turnitin, unless an alternative method is chosen.

About Your Term Paper

Normally, students will submit their term papers online, to Turnitin.com, for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their papers to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. (The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.) Students may opt out of submitting their work through Turnitin if they supply all their working notes and early drafts with the finished paper and submit to a brief, private discussion of their work.

Term papers will be penalized 5% for each day they arrive **after noon** on December 2. The instructor reserves the right to refuse any work that arrives after December 6. The instructor will provide a grade and comments within a week after receiving any piece of written work. These comments will be provided to the student by e-mail or during class time.

Instructions for Preparing the Term Paper

1. Select one consumer good or service, and then discuss who buys it and why.

2. Students are free to submit a **Project Proposal** no later than October 21. In this proposal, students can list 10-15 potential resources and write 1-2 paragraphs describing their project idea. This proposal will give students an opportunity to get feedback on their ideas before submitting the term paper. This Project Proposal is optional and will not be graded.
3. The total length of your final paper is to be 2500-3000 typed words, plus references. Please correct any errors in spelling and grammar before submitting the paper.
4. Use and cite a minimum of 15 **peer-reviewed** journal articles in preparing your paper. Additional sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, online websites) may also be used and referenced, but may not substitute for peer-reviewed articles. Do NOT reference your textbook.
5. Your paper should use in-text referencing, as used in the book CONSUMER SOCIETY. So, in your essay, cite an article as (Jones, 2016: 143), meaning the quote is from page 143 of an article by Jones. Give the full reference in your end-of-essay bibliography, as follows: Jones, Sally (2016), "The reason people buy candy," Canadian Journal of Sociology, volume 23, May, pages 135-150
6. All references should be from the year 2011 or later. You should justify the inclusion of references with an earlier date.
7. Direct quotations must be enclosed in quotation marks and a specific reference cited. Paraphrases of published material do not require quotation marks but must indicate a reference source.
8. Assignments submitted through Quercus will be scanned by Turnitin. Assignments flagged for plagiarism through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0%) **unless a student instead provides, along with their paper,** sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submitted is truly their own.

Go to **<http://www.turnitin.com>** to submit your paper online. For access, enter the **class ID** and **enrolment password** (you will receive these before your paper is due). Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Your term paper will be judged for the following qualities:

- originality of argument
- adequacy of evidence used to support argument
- appropriate use of primary and secondary sources
- coherence of ideas (concise expression, smooth transitions, logical

- organization)
- engaging style (tone, stance toward audience, level of formality)
- correct grammar, punctuation, and citation form

This assignment is due at the beginning of our last scheduled class. There will be no extensions except for documented medical reasons. Penalties of **10% per day of lateness** will be applied for papers handed in after the deadline without a medical note.

PLAGIARISM

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters” in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact the professor.

If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from other available campus resources like the [U of T Writing Website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please seek the advice of your college registrar.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION

If you have accessibility concerns, please visit

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/Links> to an external site, as soon as possible. If you require accommodation for writing quizzes, the midterm test or the final examination you **MUST** register with Accommodated Testing Services as soon as possible at <https://www.ace.utoronto.ca/ats/Links>. Make sure to submit the required paperwork to Professor Tepperman **BEFORE** assignment due dates and test dates.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

Please contact the instructor if you have questions about your grade or any other aspect of the course. Expect a reply within 48 hours. Various documents will be available on the course's Quercus website in .pdf format.

Need Help with Your Writing?

Students can find information about college writing centres at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>. The teaching approach of the college writing centres is described at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/learning>.

The home page for the website "Writing at the University of Toronto" is www.writing.utoronto.ca. More than 60 Advice files on all aspects of academic writing are available at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice. A complete list of printable PDF versions are listed at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/about-this-site/pdf-links-for-students>.

Check out "How Not to Plagiarize" and other advice on documentation format and methods of integrating sources; these are listed in the section at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources. Also, check out the Writing Plus workshop series, described at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus>.

Information about the English Language Learning program (ELL) is available at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>. You might particularly want to look into:

- the Communication Cafe, which meets weekly at four different times and locations for the first five weeks of each term for practice with oral skills like class discussion and presentations
- Reading e-Writing, an online program that helps students engage course readings more effectively. You can also find further instructional advice files for students and for classroom instruction on this site. For more information, please contact the ELL Coordinator Leora Freedman at leora.freedman@utoronto.ca