

## **23E28000 Consumer Culture Syllabus/Schedule (2022 Period 4)**

<b>Instructor's contact information</b>	<b>Course information</b>
Course Instructor – Eric Arnould Email: eric.arnould@aalto.fi Office Location – Ekonominaukio 1, V112 Office Hours - Before or after class or by appointment.	Dates: Term 4: 28.2.2022- 8.4.2022 Monday & Friday at 16.15-18.00 Location: V001, Ekonominaukio 1 Zoom Link: Language of Instruction: English Course Website: MyCourses Course readings: Perusall.com

The course covers key concepts from consumer culture theory. These draw from fields including sociology, social psychology, and cultural anthropology.

- **PREREQUISITES**

- a. Enrollment in master's program

- **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- a. On completion of this course, students will be familiar with the key concepts, theories, and frameworks of consumer culture theory and interpretive consumer research. Students will learn how to apply these concepts, theories, and frameworks in critically examining and analyzing consumers, consumerism, and consumer society.

- **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS**

- a) I expect students to attend all lectures, to engage in group work, to participate actively in class discussions, to read all assigned readings prior to the corresponding class period, to complete all written assignments on time, and to be present for the group presentations.
- b) As I choose to teach only on campus, we will follow the normal procedure of individual study arrangements since teachers cannot collect health information of students:
  - a. If you wish for individual study arrangements, please contact Elli Hämäläinen ([elli.hamalainen@aalto.fi](mailto:elli.hamalainen@aalto.fi)) immediately and provide her with a doctor's statement of the need
  - b. The individual arrangement can be e.g., providing a separate room for the examination, a possibility to complete an individual assignment instead of attending lectures or in some cases completing an alternative course instead of one requiring attendance on campus.

- **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

- a. I will assess student performance according to the following:

- i. Participation (30% Total)
  - 1. In-class discussion (15%): students should come prepared to discuss the assigned readings each class period. Expect to be asked to speak in class.
  - 2. Perusall readings (15%): participation scores for take home readings will be evaluating using Perusal software.
- ii. **Note on Persusall:** Your use of Perusall allows me to see if you are taking advantage of the reading materials.
- iii. **Note on readings:** Read articles for results or findings and discussion. Article sections on theoretical framework and methodology are of less relevance to this course. We want you to focus on the relevance of this research for our research exercise.
- iv. **Note on attendance:** more than 2 absences will result in a grade reduction
- v. Take Home Exam (25%)
  - 1. 25% of the grade will come from a take home, written exam given during the exam week.
- vi. Group Work (45%) (see more details below)
  - 1. 45% of your grade will come from 2 group work deliverables:
    - a. Group Theory Transference Presentation (15%)
    - b. Group Theory Transference Document (30%)
- vii. **Note on attendance:** more than 2 absences will result in a grade reduction

- **COURSE MATERIALS**

- a. Please obtain a copy of the book from Amazon, Perusall.com or equivalent. (The editors do not earn income from this book!)
  - i. 2018, *Consumer Culture Theory*, Eric Arnould and Craig J. Thompson, ed. London and New York: Sage Publications.
- b. Readings are drawn from this text as well as from journal articles. Our aims in choosing readings are two-fold. First, is to provide students with an introduction to the scope and diversity of consumer culture research. Second, is to provide students with intellectual tools that can help them address the research challenge we have set for the term.
- c. PDF files of assigned article readings will be posted to Perusall.com (More on this below under the participation grade component). The textbook readings should be obtained independently and will not be uploaded to Perusall.com.
- d. Moreover, **optional, fun and entertaining CCT resources** have been uploaded to the MyCourses page. This list includes documentaries, podcast, YouTube explainers and more.

- **ETHICAL GUIDELINES**

- a. Aalto University Code of Academic Integrity and handling thereof:  
<https://into.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=3772443>

- **COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READINGS</b>
28 February	1) Instructor Introduction 2) Course introduction, overview, discussion of term assignments and evaluation 3) Consumer Culture Theory Introduction 4) Assign Groups for Group Work – each group will need a presentation slot/paradigm for the research exercise	<b>ALL READINGS CAN BE FOUND ON PERUSAL</b>  <b>Read prior to first class period:</b> Arnould and Thompson, pp. 1-17 Introduction  <b>Recommended:</b> Arnould, E.J., and C.J. Thompson (2005) <i>Consumer Culture Theory: 20 Years of Research, Journal of Consumer Research</i> .
4 March	<b>1) Briefing from World Wildlife Fund on the project</b> 2) Consumer Culture Theory Introduction Cont. 3) Introduction to and discussion of Anti-Utilitarian Theory	<b>Required:</b> 1) Douglass and Isherwood, <i>The World of Goods</i> Chapter 1 2) Sahlin's <i>On the Culture of Material Value and the Cosmography of Riches</i> .  <b>Recommended:</b> 3) Baudrillard's <i>The Ideological Genesis of Needs</i> (Warning: this is probably the most challenging reading in the course. Do your best but don't worry, we will discuss it in class.
7 March	Consumer Identity Projects Textbook	Arnould and Thompson, Chapter 3, pp. 62-84
11 March	Consumer Identity Projects Articles*  <b>1) Each group needs a presentation slot/paradigm for the research exercise</b>	<b>Required:</b>  Jessica Greenebaum (2012) <i>Veganism, Identity and the Quest for Authenticity, Food, Culture &amp; Society</i> , 15(1), 129-144  Louise Randers, Alice Grønhøj, John Thøgersen (2021), <i>Coping with multiple identities related to meat consumption, Psychology &amp; Marketing</i> , 38, 159–182.  <b>Recommended:</b>

		<p>Belk, Russell W. (1988), Possession and the extended self, <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 15 (Sept), 139-168.</p> <p>Buttny, Richard &amp; Kinefuchi, Etsuko (2020), Vegans' problem stories: Negotiating vegan identity in dealing with omnivores. <i>Discourse &amp; Society</i>, 31(November), 565-583.</p> <p>Heisley, Deborah D. &amp; Deborah Cours (2007) Connectedness and Worthiness for the Embedded Self: A Material Culture Perspective, <i>Consumption, Markets and Culture</i>, 10:4, 425-450.</p> <p><b>Additional:</b>  Epp, Amber M. &amp; Velagaleti, Sunaina R (2014), "Outsourcing parenthood? how families manage care assemblages using paid commercial services," <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 41 (December), 911-935.</p> <p>Fournier, Susan (1998), Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research, <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 24 (March), 343-373.</p> <p>Belk, Russell W. (2013), Extended Self in a Digital World, <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 40 (Oct), 477-500</p> <p>Schau, Hope Jensen and Mary C. Gilly (2003), "We Are What We Post? The Presentation of Self in Personal Webspaces," <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 30(4): 385-404.</p>
14 March	Marketplace Cultures Textbook	Arnould and Thompson, pp. 87-106 Chapter 4
18 March	Marketplace Cultures Articles	<b>Required:</b> Chamila Perera, Pat Auger and Jill Klein (2018), Green Consumption Practices Among Young Environmentalists: A Practice Theory Perspective, <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 152(October), 843-864.

		<p>Katherine Casey, Maria Lichrou &amp; Lisa O'Malley (2020), Prefiguring sustainable living: an ecovillage story, <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i>, 36(17-18), 1658-1679</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b>  Anja Dinhopf Ulrike Gretzel, Adrew Whelan (2015), Labeling as a Social Practice in Online Consumption Communities, <i>Psychology and Marketing</i>, 32(3), 240–249.</p> <p>Alex V. Barnard (2016), Making the City “Second Nature” <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 121(January), 1017-1050.</p> <p>Phua, Joe; Jin, S. Venus; Kim, Jihoon (Jay) (2020), The roles of celebrity endorsers' and consumers' vegan identity in marketing communication about veganism, <i>Journal of Marketing Communications</i>, 26(December), 813-835.</p> <p><b>Additional:</b>  Schouten, John W., and James H. McAlexander (1995), "Subcultures of Consumption: An Ethnography of the New Bikers." <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> 22.1: 43-61.</p> <p>Fournier, Susan and Lara Lee (2009), Getting Brand Communities Right, <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 87 (April), 105-111.</p> <p>Cova, B., Pace, S., &amp; Skålén, P. (2015). Marketing with working consumers: The case of a carmaker and its brand community. <i>Organization</i>, 22(5), 682-701.</p> <p>Muniz, Albert M., and Hope Jensen Schau (2005), “Religiosity in the Abandoned Apple Newton Brand Community,” <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 31 (March), 737–47.</p>
21 March	Sociohistoric Patterning of Consumption Textbook	Arnould and Thompson, Chapter 7, pp.153-169 & Chapter 8, pp.180-196

25 March	Sociohistoric Patterning of Consumption Articles	<p><b>Required:</b></p> <p>Wided Batat, Paula C. Peter, Handan Vicdan, Valerie Manna, Ebru Ulusoy, Emre Ulusoy and Soonkwan Hong (2017), Alternative food consumption (AFC): idiocentric and allocentric factors of influence among low socio-economic status (SES) consumers, <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i>, 33(7–8), 580–601.</p> <p>Jeff Kirby (2017), Fleshing Out an Ecological Habitus, <i>Nature and Culture</i>, 12 (Summer), 89-114</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b></p> <p>Rachel A. Vaughn (2017), “Choosing” Wisely: Paralleling Food Sovereignty and Reproductive Justice, <i>Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies</i>, 38(3). 22-46.</p> <p>Yee-Man Lam (2017), A Zen-Flavored Feminist Environmental Selfhood and its Contemporary Implications, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i>, 22(Fall), 99-123.</p> <p><b>Additional:</b></p> <p>Karababa, Eminegül and Guliz Ger, (2011), Early Modern Ottoman Coffeehouse Culture and the Formation of the Consumer Subject, <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 37 (February), 737-760.</p> <p>Üstüner, T., and C. J. Thompson (2015), “Women Skating on the Edge: Marketplace Performances as Ideological Edgework.” <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> 42 (2): 235–265.</p> <p>Cayla, Julien and Giana M. Eckhardt (2008), “Asian Brands and the Shaping of a Transnational Imagined Community,” <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 35 (August), 216-230.</p> <p>Crockett, David (2008), "Marketing Blackness: How Advertisers Use Race to Sell Products," <i>Journal of Consumer Culture</i>, 8(2): 245–268.</p> <p>Wooten, David B (1995), "One-of-a-Kind in a Full House: Some Consequences of Ethnic and Gender</p>
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		Distinctiveness," <i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i> , 4 (3), 205-24
28 March	Mass-mediated marketplace ideologies textbook	Arnould and Thompson, pp.276-317 Chapters 12 & 13
1 April	Mass-mediated marketplace ideologies articles	<p><b>Required:</b> Sarah M. Pike (2001), Radical Animal Rights and Environmental Activism as Rites of Passage, <i>Journal of Ritual Studies</i> 27(1), 3-35</p> <p>Andreas Plank (2020), Free lunch, structural violence, and normalization: A neo-Gramscian analysis of food waste and dumpster diving, <i>Organization</i>, 1–24, DOI: 10.1177/1350508420973348</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> Josée Johnston (2017), Can consumers buy alternative foods at a big box supermarket? <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i>, 33(7–8), 662–671.</p> <p>Johanna F. Gollnhofer (2017), The Legitimation of a Sustainable Practice Through Dialectical Adaptation in the Marketplace, <i>Journal of Public Policy &amp; Marketing</i>, 36 (1) Spring 156–168</p> <p>Rachel L. Austin and Clifton P. Flynn (2015), Traversing the Gap between Religion and Animal Rights: Framing and Networks as a Conceptual Bridge, <i>Journal of Animal Ethics</i>, 5(Fall),144-158</p> <p><b>Additional:</b> Giesler, Markus and Ela Veresiu (2014), Creating the responsible consumer: moralistic governance regimes and consumer subjectivity, <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 41 (Oct), 840-857.</p> <p>Darmody, A. and Zwick, D., 2020. Manipulate to empower: Hyper-relevance and the contradictions of marketing in the age of surveillance capitalism. <i>Big Data &amp; Society</i>, 7(1), p.2053951720904112.</p> <p>Bradshaw, A. and Zwick, D., 2016. The field of business sustainability and the death drive: A</p>

		<p>radical intervention. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>, 136(2), pp.267-279.</p> <p>Gabriel, Yiannis (2015), Identity, choice and consumer freedom – the new opiates? A psychoanalytic interrogation, <i>Marketing Theory</i>, 15(1), 25–30.</p> <p>Humphreys, Ashlee and Craig J. Thompson, (2014), Branding disaster: reestablishing trust through the ideological containment of systemic risk anxieties, <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 41 (December), 877-910.</p> <p>Izberk-Bilgin, Elif (2012), "Infidel Brands: Unveiling Alternative Meanings of Global Brands at the Nexus of Globalization, Consumer Culture, and Islamism," <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 39 (4): 663-87.</p> <p>O'Guinn, Thomas and Russell W. Belk (1989), "Heaven on Earth: Consumption at Heritage Village, USA," <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 15 (3, September), 227-238.</p> <p>Varman, Rohit and Russell W. Belk (2009), Nationalism and ideology in an Anti-Consumption Movement, <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, 36(December), 686–700.</p>
4 April	Theory Transference Group Presentations (X groups will present)	Presence of WWF representatives
8 April	Theory Transference Group Presentations (X groups will present)	Presence of WWF representatives
11 April	<b>NO CLASS</b> – Take home Exam Questions Released	N/A
15 April	<b>NO CLASS</b> – Take home exam due at midnight (23:59)	N/A



## Assignments

### Group Work: Theory Transference Exercise (45%)

Your task is to pick one or more core theoretical constructs of interest from within the paradigm you have chosen and apply them to analyze a contemporary consumption phenomenon. For this exercise, the phenomena I want you to analyze is the World Wildlife Fund Eat4Change initiative. Eat4Change strives to engage citizens, particularly youth, to take an active role in society and change their diets to a more plant-based diet, called the Planetary Diet, for the wellbeing of people and the planet. The project started in May 2020 and continues to April 2024. Changing habits and influencing policies that will reduce industrial livestock production, increase sustainable food production, and shorten agricultural value chains are key goals.

To accomplish this assignment, each member of your group will conduct some short interviews with Finnish millennials about their relationships to the natural world, to WWF, about their dietary choices and their relationship, if any to the Eat4Change initiative. Your group will evaluate and interpret the data in terms of concepts associated with one of the four major paradigms in consumer culture theoretics. Interviewees will sign an ethical review document accepting participation.

For example, if your group chooses the Consumption and Identity paradigm, you may discuss how and/or participation in the Eat4Change initiative, relationship to WWF, or views of nature are driven by concerns to pursue a particular kind of identity in society. If your group chooses the marketplace cultures paradigm, you might talk about how participation in Eat4Change as a marketplace culture (e.g., food-oriented) brand community (member of an environmental organization), or sub-culture of consumption (environmental activist, animal rights activist), motivates views of nature, relationship to WWF, and/or participation in the Eat4Change initiative. For the socio-historic patterning of consumption paradigm, groups could discuss how participation in the Eat4Change initiative relates to socio-historic factors like class, gender, ethnicity, or globalization. Finally, groups adopting the mass mediated marketplace ideology perspective might discuss how, political ideology or other political factors impact views of nature, relationships to WWF and participation in the Eat4Change initiative.

Within each paradigm, there are dozens (if not more) possible ways of explaining engagement with nature WWF, and the specific Eat4Change program, each of which reveals and conceals insights about contemporary consumer culture. I want you to approach this project pragmatically, or, in other words, use theoretical frameworks and concepts as tools which excavate different kinds of insights. In this spirit, we will end the class comparing and contrasting the various insights each theoretical paradigm illuminated when applied to the focal phenomena.

**Important Note on Scope:** The point is to use consumer culture theoretics to understand what drives different consumer behaviors orientations in relation to a sustainability-oriented innovation in consumption practice.

**ASK FOR HELP AS NEEDED!**

### **Deliverables**

- 10 minute PowerPoint presentation (plus additional 5 min for audience questions), slides submitted to MyCourses.
- 2000 word essay concisely detailing your core theoretical construct(s), how it applies to the consumption phenomena of interest, and practical insights you gained from the exercise (for example policy recommendations, managerial recommendations, theoretical contributions to a relevant CCT lit stream, etc).
- Note: because this project is a primary research assignment, you need to justify (briefly) your argument and the value of your theoretical approach. This can be done using primary sources (i.e., the interviews) but illustrative examples found in secondary sources such as news articles, blog posts, or social media are also useful. Justification for your theoretical argument is also provided by the applicability of your practical insights. Similarly, and symmetrically justification for your practical insights is provided by the coherence of your theoretical arguments.

### **Grading Criteria: 40 points total.**

- Knowledge of CCT paradigm and core constructs: 10 points
- Application of CCT paradigm and core constructs to consumption phenomena: 10 points
- Practical or Theoretical Insights from transferability exercises – in other words, answering the ‘so what’ or ‘why does this matter?’ questions: 10 points.
- Presentation and communication style and effectiveness: 10 points

**Due Date of Written Component:** Friday April 15<sup>th</sup> at 23:59 to MyCourses. Only one person per group needs to submit.

**Due Date of Presentations:** Theory transference exercise presentations will be given during the last week of class (final two class periods before the exam week). **Each group should sign up for one of the following presentation slots.** Note: the socio-historic patterning of consumption and mass-mediated marketplace ideologies fall in the later presentation slots because lectures over those materials come later in the course. Presentations should be emailed to [eric.arnould@aalto.fi](mailto:eric.arnould@aalto.fi) before the presentation class period.

### **April 4th Slots**

- 1) Consumer Identity Projects
- 2) Marketplace Cultures
- 3) Consumer Identity Projects

#### 4) Marketplace Cultures

#### **April 8<sup>th</sup> Slots**

- 1) Mass-mediated marketplace ideologies
- 2) The Socio-historic Patterning of Consumption
- 3) Mass-mediated Marketplace Ideologies
- 4) The socio-historic patterning of consumption

#### **Participation (30%)**

- 30% of your grade will come from participation. This is further broken down into 2 categories
  - o **In-class discussion (15%)**
    - Each class you are expected to have done any readings assigned in preparation for class discussions and activities. Monday classes are organized around a lecture from the textbook. Wednesday classes will be organized around in class discussion of assigned article readings. We want you to try to explain and or ask questions about the authors' theoretical approach, empirical results, and the practical implications.
    - It will be particularly useful for students to reflect about the applicability of the authors' findings to their own professional experience, to the WWF project, or to other consumption phenomena with which they are familiar.
    - Each class, the instructor will note students who consistently avoid discussion/participation. You do not necessarily need to contribute a monologue every class period; however, consistent lack of participation will result in a grade reduction.
  - o **Perusall Reading assignments (15%)**
    - 15% of your grade will come from completing readings and online discussion with peers using Perusall software.
    - Due dates for Perusall readings are on Perusall. In general, the articles assigned on Perusall will be due before the Friday class for which they are assigned.
    - Note: textbook readings are required but will not be graded or uploaded to Perusall. The textbook should be obtained independently through Amazon, Perusall or some other source.
    - For each class after the first lecture, ***there will be assigned readings on Perusall.com***. Students are expected to read each article and invited to engage in meaningful discussion with other students prior to class. We

expect you to familiarize yourself with the articles and apply the relevant theories and findings to your group (term project) and individual (exam) assignments. Discussion is the best way to see the pertinence to your group (term project).

- **Please register to the Perusall course site** by a) creating an account on [www.perusall.com](http://www.perusall.com), and b) registering into the course with the code **ARNOULD-GUZQ9** (additional instructions and examples of good comments can be found on the welcome message after signing up for Perusall)
  
- Your Perusall score depends on:
  - Contributing thoughtful questions and comments to the class discussion, spread over the reading and throughout the entire term

Tips:

- Start the reading early
  - Break the reading into chunks (instead of trying to do it all at once)
  - Read all the way to the end of the assigned reading
  - Pose thoughtful questions and comments that elicit responses from classmates
  - Answer questions from others
  - Upvote thoughtful questions and helpful answers
  - You do not need to 'game' Perusall to get a good score. The system is designed to get all students prepared and 100% credit for the reading. Paying attention to Perusall's nudges will improve your grade on assignments.
  - Read articles for results or findings and discussion. Article sections on theoretical framework and methodology are of less relevance to this course. We want you to focus on the relevance of this research for our research exercise
- **KEY NOTE ABOUT PERUSALL** – Both article readings for each Friday deadline are organized under the same reading assignment for each week in Perusall. This means when you finish reading the first article assigned to you and scroll ALL THE WAY to the bottom, there will be a gray arrow to click to move to the next portion (the second reading) of the assignment. If you do not click to move on to the second reading in the assignment, you will not get a very good score.

### **Take Home Exam (25%)**

- 25% of the grade will come from a take home, written exam.
- 1-2 weeks prior to the exam, students will be given a list of 5-10 possible exam questions that focus on the assigned readings to begin preparation. On the date of the exam, the instructor will choose 2 questions and announce them on MyCourses. Students are expected to write roughly 2500 words total (1250 per prompt) and submit their original written work to the Turnitin submission box on the course website by the due date.

- a. **Examination Start Date:** Sunday April 10<sup>th</sup> mid-day (Exact time TBD)
- b. **Examination Due Date:** Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 23:59 (midnight)