History 88
The Social History of Consumption
Spring 2003
Professor Burke

Office: Trotter 206
Office hours: Monday 10-12, 2-4; Wednesday 3-5; Friday 2-4 or by
appointment.
Office phone: 328-8115
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Books for purchase:


Richard Klein, Cigarettes Are Sublime

Juliet Schor, The Overspent American.

James Twitchell, Lead Us Into Temptation.

Susan Strasser, ed, Getting and Spending: American and European
Consumer Society in the Twentieth Century.

Gary Cross, An All-Consuming Century.

Carolyn Wyman, Spam: A Biography.


John Freyer, All My Life For Sale

Note: Allen, The Devil's Cup and Freyer, All My Life For Sale, will not be
available at the start of the semester. I will tell you when they come into
the bookstore.
There will be four assignments due during the semester, with the final paper being the most important:

2 2-3 page discussion papers
A consumption diary and commentary on diaries, 2-3 pp.
Biography of a commodity, 12-15 pp

Though this is a large class, I still expect everyone to engage in regular discussion. Attendance and participation are a vitally important part of your final grade. You cannot do well in this course if you miss class repeatedly.

Readings marked with an asterix will either be distributed in class or available on Blackboard’s e-reserves. (I’ll let you know which is the case for each reading.)

Thursday January 23

Introduction

CONSUMPTION AND SOCIETY: THREE HISTORICAL SNAPSHOTs

II. Early Modern Europe: Transitions Reconsidered

Tues. January 28
Lisa Jardine, Worldly Goods, Chapters One and Two

Thursday January 30
Lisa Jardine, Worldly Goods, Chapter Six and Eight

Tuesday February 4
*Jan de Vries, "Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods"
*Joyce Appleby, "Consumption in Early Modern Social Thought"
*Lorna Weatherill, "The Meaning of Consumer Behavior"
*TH Breen, "The Meaning of Things: Interpreting the Consumer Economy of the Eighteenth Century"
You will be assigned ONE of these four essays to read. You will be responsible for explaining its basic argument and methodology to other students in small groups.

III. Consumption and the Making of Modern American and European Society

Thursday February 6
Stephen Nissenbaum, The Battle For Christmas, Chapter One and Two

Tuesday February 11
Stephen Nissenbaum, The Battle for Christmas, Chapter Four, Five and Epilogue

Thursday February 13
Charles McGovern, "Consumption and Citizenship in the United States", in Strasser, ed., Getting and Spending
Lizabeth Cohen, "The New Deal State and the Making of Citizen Consumers", in Strasser, ed., Getting and Spending
FIRST PAPER DUE

Tuesday February 18
Daniel Horowitz, "The Émigré as Celebrant of American Consumer Culture", in Strasser, ed., Getting and Spending
TOPICS FOR FINAL PAPER DUE

Thursday February 20
Kurt Moser, "World War I and the Creation of Desire for Automobiles in Germany", in Strasser, ed., Getting and Spending
Susan Strasser, "The Convenience Is Out of this World", in Strasser, ed., Getting and Spending

Tuesday February 25
Stephen Kline, "Toys, Socialization and the Commodification of Play", in Strasser, ed., Getting and Spending
Fath Davis Ruffins, "Reflecting on Ethnic Imagery", in Strasser, ed., Getting and Spending
DEMONSTRATION OF RESEARCH STRATEGIES FOR FINAL PAPER
Thursday February 27
*Elaine Abelson, When Ladies Go A-Thieving
*James Leach, Landscape of Desire

Globalization and the developing world

Tuesday March 4
*Timothy Burke, Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women, Chapter Six

Thursday March 6
*Richard Wilk, "Learning to Be Local in Belize"
*Benjamin Barber, Jihad vs. McWorld
*Thomas Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree

SPRING BREAK

COMMODITIES

I. Spam

Tuesday March 18
Spam: A Biography, all
Librarian visit: discussion of final paper and research strategies.

II. Textiles

Thursday March 20
*Jane Schneider, "Rumpelstiltskin's Bargain", in Jane Schneider, ed., Cloth and Human Experience
Consumption diaries due.

Tuesday March 25
*Misty Bastian, "Female Alhajis and Entrepreneurial Fashions", in Hendrickson, ed., Clothing and Difference
Distribution of consumption diaries.

Thursday March 27
Consumption diaries: discussion and review.
III. Cigarettes

Tuesday April 1
Richard Klein, Cigarettes Are Sublime, Introduction, Chapters One through Three and Chapter Six

IV. Barbie

Thursday April 3
*MG Lord, Forever Barbie, selection
*Erica Rand, Barbie's Queer Accessories, Chapter Three
Barbie Liberation Organization video (in class)
DIARIES PAPER DUE

V. Sugar and Coffee

Tuesday April 8
*Sidney Mintz, Sweetness and Power

Thursday April 10
NO CLASS (Work on reading The Devil's Cup and All-Consuming Century)

Tuesday April 15
Stewart Lee Allen, The Devil's Cup

ASSESSING CONSUMPTION

Thursday April 17
Gary Cross, All-Consuming Century, Chapter 4-7

Tuesday April 22
Juliet Schor, The Overspent American, Chapter 2-3

Thursday April 24
Juliet Schor, The Overspent American, Chapter 4-6

Tuesday April 28
James Twitchell, Lead Us Into Temptation, Chapter 1, 3, 6-8
Thursday May 1
John Freyer, All My Life For Sale
SECOND DISCUSSION PAPER DUE

FINAL PAPER DUE by 4 pm on May 12.