



蘇州大學  
Soochow University

# SOS 212 Consumer Culture, Identity and Lifestyle

Summer 2024

**Course Credits:** 4

**Contact Hours:** 56 hours

**Instructor:** TBA

**Email:**TBA

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

SOS 212 is an interdisciplinary course that examines the intricate relationship between consumerism, media, and contemporary lifestyles. Drawing upon concepts from cultural studies, media studies, sociology, and psychology, this course delves into the ways in which consumer culture shapes and is shaped by media representations, social practices, and individual identities. Through critical analysis of advertising, branding, popular media, and consumer behavior, students will explore the complexities of contemporary consumer society and its impact on individual and collective identities.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

1. Understand key theories and concepts related to consumption, consumer culture, commodification, and the construction of social and cultural identity.
2. Critically analyze the role of consumer culture in shaping contemporary lifestyles.
3. Evaluate the influence of media representations on consumer behavior and identity formation.
4. Demonstrate effective communication skills in discussing and presenting research findings on consumer culture topics.
5. Apply interdisciplinary perspectives to analyze the intersections of consumer culture with issues of gender, race, class, and globalization.

## **PREREQUISITES**

None.



## GRADING

Grades will be determined by accumulating points, with 100 points being the maximum, as follows:

ITEM	POINTS
Participation	10 Points
2 Quizzes	10 Points
2 Research Papers	20 Points
Final Presentation	10 Points
Midterm	20 Points
Final Exam	20 Points
Total	100 Points

Late submissions will be graded at the end of the course. Grades will be assigned according to the following rule:

$$A \geq 90 > B \geq 80 > C \geq 70 > D \geq 60 > F.$$

We reserve the right to make adjustments to the overall grading policy.

## COURSE MATERIALS

### **Required Texts:**

*Consumer Culture*, Celia Lury, Second Edition, Routledge, 2011.

*My Life with Things: The Consumer Diaries*, Elizabeth Chin, Duke University Press, 2016.

### **Recommended (Optional) Texts or Other Materials:**

Additional reading texts and materials will be posted on the 1st class.

## COURSE TOPICS

MODULE	TASKS
Module 1	<b>Topics:</b> Topic 1: Making Sense of Consumption Topic 2: Making Sense of the Commodity Topic 3: Thinking About Things



	<p>Topic 4: Making Sense of the Commodity</p> <p>Topic 5:</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b></p> <p>Quiz 1</p>
Module 2	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <p>Topic 6: Conspicuous Consumption</p> <p>Topic 7: Spaces of Consumption: From Department Stores to Big Box Store</p> <p>Topic 8: Spaces of Consumption: Food Culture, Craft Culture, and Post-industrial Consumption</p> <p>Topic 9: Making Sense of the Brand</p> <p>Topic 10: Taste and Lifestyle</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b></p> <p>Research Paper 1</p>
Module 3	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <p>Topic 11: Speed and Fast Fashion</p> <p>Topic 12: Lifecycle of the Commodity</p> <p>Topic 13: Data Collection and Consumer Tracking</p> <p>Topic 14: Consuming the Nation</p> <p>Topic 15: Identity as Consumption: Consuming Gender</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b></p> <p>Midterm</p>
Module 4	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <p>Topic 16: Consuming Race/Ethnicity</p> <p>Topic 17: Consuming Identity Through Social Media: Instagram and Haul Videos</p> <p>Topic 18: Media Consumption: Systems of Distribution and Delivery</p> <p>Topic 19: Consumption TV: Shoppers and Hoarders</p> <p>Topic 20: Toward a Consumption Ethics</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b></p> <p>Quiz 2</p> <p>Research Paper 2</p>
Module 5	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <p>Topic 21: Environmental Impacts</p> <p>Topic 22: Opting Out: Rejecting Consumption</p> <p>Topic 23: DIY Cultures</p> <p>Topic 24: Commodity Activism</p> <p>Topic 25: Consuming the University</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b></p> <p>Final Presentation</p> <p>Final Exam</p>



## **ATTENDANCE**

1) Class attendance is required. Missing classes without permission will lead to decrease in overall grade.

Missing less than two classes: no penalty.

Missing more than two classes: 7% will be taken off from the overall grade.

If the instructor reports a student's frequent missing of class to the Soochow University Academic Administration Office, the student might get a written warning and might be prohibited from attending final exam.

2) Participants in this course are expected to arrive in class promptly and adequately prepared. The primary objective of this course is to critically engage with the readings and the subject matter. Therefore, course participants are expected to have completed the reading prior to class and prepare thoughtful reflections/commentaries to share with fellow colleagues.

## **LEARNING REQUIREMENTS**

- 1) Late assignments are not acceptable and are subjected to grade deductions.
- 2) Assignments submitted in the wrong format will be counted as not submitted.
- 3) Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.
- 4) Make-up for midterm and final exams only with valid excuses, as defined by the University.
- 5) In order to earn a Certificate of Completion, participants must thoughtfully complete all assignments by stated deadlines and earn an average quiz score of 50% or greater.

## **TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

The use of electronic devices in class is distracting, both for the user and for the rest of the class. Only non-programmable calculators can be used in the tests and exam. Any attempts to use cell phones and other electronic communication devices will be seemed as cheating. Laptops are discouraged, unless you use them for activities DIRECTLY related to the course (eg., note taking, reading course documents).



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## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

Soochow University highly values the academic integrity and aims to promote the academic fairness, honesty and responsibility. Any academic dishonesty behaviors and any attempts to cheats and plagiarism will be reported to the university administration office. A written warning and the relevant penalties will be imposed. The record might be shown on the official university transcript.

## **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION**

Soochow University is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at Soochow University. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome.

Note:

Please contact the University Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material.