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## TOPIC IN MARKETING CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY

Period: a.y. 2021/22 – II sem.

Class times: Room TBD.

Instructor:

Prof. Stefania Borghini  
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### Course description

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) is an interdisciplinary field that comprises macro, interpretive, and critical approaches to and perspectives of consumer behavior. Its approach refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationship between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings. CCT research is having a growing impact in top publication venues including the *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, *the Journal of Marketing Research*, *the Journal of Retailing*, and the *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*. The number of social scientists outside of consumer research/marketing domain who conduct CCT research is also large and growing. These researchers publish books in their home disciplines and are starting to find room also in publications of cognate disciplines such the *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *Consumption*, *Markets and Culture*, and the *Journal of Material Culture*.

In this course students will familiarize with the most important topics within the field of CCT and will build a knowledge base of discursive streams of academic theories about consumers and consuming.

They will learn about the historical evolution of the field, the different theoretical terrains and roots, the disciplines that have contributed to its creation (anthropology, sociology, semiotics, cultural and media studies, etc.).

Students will be exposed in a critical way to different theories and methods in order to stimulate the development of skills and intellectual of capabilities necessary to pose proper research questions, and challenge existing theories. Moreover they will be asked to use CCT theoretics in order to generate insights for their own current and future research projects.

## Course Material

This is a **list of readings that are mandatory** in order to approach the course and understand the origin of the field. These materials will not be discussed during the sessions but they are really useful as they provide a great review and a point of departure.

Arnould, Eric J. and Craig J Thompson (2005), "Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (March), 868-882.

Arnould, Eric J. and Craig J Thompson (2007), "*Consumer Culture Theoretics*," Sherry and Belk, Ed. CCT Proceedings.

MacInnis, Deborah J. and Valerie S. Folkes (2010), "The Disciplinary Status of Consumer Behavior: A Sociology of Science Perspective on Key Controversies", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (April), 899-914.

## Preparation and in-class participation

The classes will be structured on discussing the assigned readings. Students must complete all of the assignments (required readings and articles to be presented) before class. There is a lot to read, so I suggest them get a head start by reading at least some of the articles in advance.

Each week, each student will lead the discussion for one of the articles labeled "articles to be presented." Before class, discussion leaders should prepare a document summarizing the article and send this summary to the instructor. At a minimum, the summary should include the following:

- key research questions addressed in the paper
- theoretical positioning
- primary theoretical concepts or frameworks being employed
- methodology
- main findings
- comments on alternative interpretations of the results
- possible extensions and strategies of enrichments of the research
- a potential connection with CB research
- potential links with current research projects (when possible)

In class, the discussion leaders should prepare questions, key ideas, and implications of the paper to discuss with the class. I encourage discussion leaders to create slides to help supplement the discussion, which should last 20 to 30 minutes.

I will assign the papers to be presented to the students before class begins. If there are any papers that you would like to present, send me your requests via email before each class; however, you will likely be the discussion leader for at least one or two papers that you did not request.

For each session I usually identify different kinds of materials:

- *required readings*: all students need to read them in order to approach the general topic of the session, its roots and main questions
- *articles to presented*: each student will have to present one of these articles
- *related articles*: this is a list of additional references on the same topic that students may find useful to to deepen their knowledge.

#### Note

The ways readings are organized in some cases is purely didactic. As students will understand during the course, several articles cover different topics and theoretical lens and they could be used in multiple sessions.

#### **Assessment Methods**

Effective class participation includes attendance to the sessions and making an active and constructive contribution to the discussion, asking questions, making constructive comments, and having a positive attitude toward learning. Students will be evaluated as follows:

Class participation:	15%
Assignments (paper presentation and notes):	35%
Final research paper:	50%

Each student must write an individual research proposal formatted using the style guidelines from the *Journal of Consumer Research* (<http://ejcr.org/newstylesheet.pdf>). The paper should identify a research question within the broad domain of the CCT perspective. The research proposal should be structured like a typical academic article, including an introduction/positioning, literature review, and methodology. The paper will not require an empirical research, but will require a detailed research design. Additional information about the requirements will be provided at the beginning of the course. I will also give a list of exemplary articles that can inspire students on how to frame and structure CCT papers.

#### **Faculty Bio**

Stefania received her Ph.D. from Bocconi University in 2001 and joined its faculty as a tenured Researcher in 2003. Since 2011 she is Associate Professor of Marketing. Her research interests are related to consumers' behavior in the marketplace and their connections with brands and retail spaces in particular. Her current projects are focusing in particular on children's and women's behavior. In her studies she adopts a consumer culture perspective and privileges ethnographic methods.

## Tentative schedule

### ***Session 1: Consumption, meanings and consumer identity*** **Thursday 03/31/2022 3pm-4.30pm**

#### Required readings

Belk, Russell W. (1988), "Possessions and the Extended Self," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(September), 139-168.

#### Articles to be presented

Schau, Hope Jensen, Mary C. Gilly and Mary Wolfinbarger (2009), "Consumer Identity Renaissance: The Resurgence of Identity Inspired Consumption in Retirement," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (August), 255-276.

Arsel, Zeynep Craig J. Thompson (2011), "Demythologizing Consumption Practices: How Consumers Protect Their Field-Dependent Identity Investments from Devaluing Marketplace Myths", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 37, 5 (February), 791-806.

Price, Linda L., Robin A Coulter, Yuliya Strizhakova, Ainslie E Schultz, (2018), "The Fresh Start Mindset: Transforming Consumers' Lives", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45, (June) 21-48.

#### Related readings

Cohen, Joel (1989), "An Overextended Self?," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (June), 125- 128

Ahuvia, Aaron (2005), "Beyond the Extended Self: Loved Objects and Consumers' Identity Narratives," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (June), 171-184.

Barnhart, Michelle Lisa Peñaloza, (2013), "Who Are You Calling Old? Negotiating Old Age Identity in the Elderly Consumption Ensemble", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39, (April) 1133-1153.

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### ***Session 2: Consumer practices and experiences*** **Friday 04/01/2022 4.50pm-6.20pm**

#### Required readings

Holbrook, Morris B. Elizabeth C. Hirschman, (1982), "The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9, (September), 132-140.

#### Articles to be presented

Arsel, Zeynep, Jonathan Bean, (2013), "Taste Regimes and Market-Mediated Practice", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39, (February), 899-917.

Phipps, Marcus, Julie L Ozanne, (2017), "Routines Disrupted: Reestablishing Security through Practice Alignment", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44, (August), 361-380.

Seregina, Anastasia , Henri A Weijo, (2017), "Play at Any Cost: How Cosplayers Produce and Sustain Their Ludic Communal Consumption Experiences", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44, (June), 139-159.

### Related readings

Weinberger, Michelle F Jane R Zavisca, Jennifer M Silva, (2017), "Consuming for an Imagined Future: Middle-Class Consumer Lifestyle and Exploratory Experiences in the Transition to Adulthood", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44, (August), 332-360.

Chalmers Thomas Tandy, Amber M Epp, (2019), "The Best Laid Plans: Why New Parents Fail to Habituate Practices", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 46, (October), 564-589.

Gollnhofer, Johanna F, Henri A Weijo, John W Schouten (2019), "Consumer Movements and Value Regimes: Fighting Food Waste in Germany by Building Alternative Object Pathways", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 46, (October), 460-482.

Weijo, Henri A , Diane M Martin, Eric J Arnould, (2018), "Consumer Movements and Collective Creativity: The Case of Restaurant Day", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45, (August), 251-274.

Bardhi, Fleura , Giana M Eckhardt, (2017), "Liquid Consumption", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44, (October), 582-597.

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### ***Session 3: Consumers ideologies and negotiation of power relations*** **Tuesday 04/26/2022 10.20am-11.50am**

#### Required readings

Thompson, Craig J. (2004), "Marketplace Mythology and Discourses of Power," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (June), 162-180.

#### Articles to be presented

Luedicke, Marius, Craig Thompson, and Markus Giesler (2010), "Consumer Identity Work as Moral Protagonism: How Myth and Ideology Animate a Brand-Mediated Moral Conflict," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (April), 1016-1032.

Scaraboto, Daiane, Eileen Fischer, (2013), "Frustrated Fatshionistas: An Institutional Theory Perspective on Consumer Quests for Greater Choice in Mainstream Markets", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39, (April), 1234-1257.

Dolbec, Pierre-Yann, Eileen Fischer, (2015), "Refashioning a Field? Connected Consumers and Institutional Dynamics in Markets", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41, (April), 1447-1468.

#### Related readings

Kozinets, Robert V., John F. Sherry, Jr., Diana Storm, Adam Duhachek, Krittinee Nuttavuthisit and Benét DeBerry-Spence (2004), "Ludic Agency and Retail Spectacle," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (December), 658-672.

Thompson, Craig J. and Kelly Tian (2008), "Reconstructing the South: How Commercial Myths Compete for Identity Value through the Ideological Shaping of Popular Memories and Countermemories," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (February), 595-613.

Martin, Diane M., John W. Schouten, (2014), "Consumption-Driven Market Emergence", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40, (February), 855-870.

Humphreys, Ashlee, Kathryn A. Latour, (2013), "Framing the Game: Assessing

the Impact of Cultural Representations on Consumer Perceptions of Legitimacy”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40, (December), 773-795.

Karababa, Eminegül Güliz Ger Early, (2011), “Modern Ottoman Coffeehouse Culture and the Formation of the Consumer Subject”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37, (February), 737-760.

Humphreys, Ashlee, (2010), “Semiotic Structure and the Legitimation of Consumption Practices: The Case of Casino Gambling”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37, (October), 490-510.

Giesler, Markus (2008), “Conflict and Compromise: Drama in Marketplace Evolution”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34, (April), 739-753.

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***Session 4: Subcultures and communities of consumption***  
**Monday 05/02/2022 10.20am-11.50am**

Required readings

Muniz, Albert M. and Thomas C. O'Guinn (2001), "Brand Community," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27 (March), 412-32.

Articles to be presented

Muniz, Albert and Hope Schau (2005), “Religiosity in the Abandoned Apple Newton Brand Community,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (March).

Craig J. Thompson, Gokcen Coskuner-Balli, (2007), “Countervailing Market Responses to Corporate Co-optation and the Ideological Recruitment of Consumption Communities, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34, (August), 135-152.

Chalmers Thomas Tandy, Linda L. Price, Hope Jensen Schau, (2013), “When Differences Unite: Resource Dependence in Heterogeneous Consumption Communities”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39, (February), 1010-1033.

Related readings

Kozinets, Robert V. (2001), “Utopian Enterprise: Articulating the Meanings of Star Trek's Culture of Consumption,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28 (June), pp. 67-88.

Giesler, Markus (2006), "Consumer Gift System: Netnographic Insights from Napster," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 33 (September), 283-290.

Schau, Hope Jensen, Albert M. Muñoz, Jr., and Eric Arnould (2009), “How Brand Community Practices Create Value,” *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (September), 30-51.

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***Session 5: Discourses on gender, class and lifestyle***  
**Monday 05/09/2022 10.20am-11.50am**

Required readings

Bristor, Julia M. Eileen Fischer (1993), “Feminist Thought: Implications for Consumer Research”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19, (March), 518-536.

Articles to be presented

Thompson, Craig J, Paul C Henry, Fleura Bardhi, (2018), "Theorizing Reactive Reflexivity: Lifestyle Displacement and Discordant Performances of Taste", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45, (October), 571-594.

Saatcioglu, Bige, Julie L. Ozanne, (2013), "Moral Habitus and Status Negotiation in a Marginalized Working-Class Neighborhood", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40, (December), 692-710.

Coskuner-Balli, Gokcen Craig J. Thompson, (2013), "The Status Costs of Subordinate Cultural Capital: At-Home Fathers' Collective Pursuit of Cultural Legitimacy through Capitalizing Consumption Practices", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40, (June), 19-41.

#### Related readings

Maciel, Andre F, Melanie Wallendorf, (2017), "Taste Engineering: An Extended Consumer Model of Cultural Competence Constitution", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43, (February), 726-746.

Thompson, Craig J., Tuba Üstüner, (2015), "Women Skating on the Edge: Marketplace Performances as Ideological Edgework", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42, (August), 235-265.

Üstüner, Tuba, Craig J. Thompson, (2012), "How Marketplace Performances Produce Interdependent Status Games and Contested Forms of Symbolic Capital" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38, (February), 796-814.

Üstüner, Tuba, Douglas B. Holt, (2010), "Toward a Theory of Status Consumption in Less Industrialized Countries", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37, (June), 37-56.

Henry, Paul C., (2005), "Social Class, Market Situation, and Consumers' Metaphors of (Dis)Empowerment", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31, (March) 2005, 766-778.

Crockett, David, Melanie Wallendorf, (2004), "The Role of Normative Political Ideology in Consumer Behavior", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31, (December), 511-528.

Thompson, Craig J., (1996), "Caring Consumers: Gendered Consumption Meanings and the Juggling Lifestyle", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22, (March), 388-407.

Thompson, Craig J. and Elizabeth C. Hirschman (1995), "Understanding the Socialized Body: A Poststructuralist Analysis of Consumers' Self-Conceptions, Body Images, and Self-Care Practices," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22 (2), 139-152.

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#### **Session 6: Emotions, embodied experiences** **Monday 05/16/2022 10.20am-11.50am**

#### Required readings

Joy, Annamma, Sherry Jr., (2003), "Speaking of Art as Embodied Imagination: A Multisensory Approach to Understanding Aesthetic Experience", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30, September, 259-282.

#### Articles to be presented

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

30, (December), 326–351.

Scott, Rebecca, Julien Cayla, and Bernard Cova, (2017), “Selling pain to the saturated self”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44, (June), 22-43.

Borghini, Stefania, John F Sherry, Annamma Joy, (forthcoming 2021), “Attachment to and Detachment from Favorite Stores: An Affordance Theory Perspective”, *Journal of Consumer Research*

#### Related readings

Debenedetti, Alain, Harmen Oppewal, Zeynep Arsel, (2014), “Place Attachment in Commercial Settings: A Gift Economy Perspective”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40, (February), 904–923

Ahir Gopaldas, (2014), “Marketplace Sentiments”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41, (December), 995–1014

### **Suggested complementary readings**

#### Related readings (for the ones who want to know more)

Levy, Sidney J. (1959), “Symbols for Sale,” *Harvard Business Review*, 37 (July-August), 117-124.

Levy, Sidney J. (1981), “Interpreting Consumer Mythology: A Structural Approach to Consumer Behavior,” *Journal of Marketing*, 5 (3), 49–61.

Calder, Bobby J. and Alice M. Tybout (1987), “What Consumer Research Is...” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14 (1), 136-140.

Anderson, Paul F. (1986), "On Method in Consumer Research: A Critical Relativist Perspective," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13 (September), 155-173.

Hunt, Shelby (1991), “Positivism and Paradigm Dominance in Consumer Research: Towards Critical Pluralism and Rapprochement,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8 (June), 32-44.

Sherry, John F. (1991) “Postmodern Alternatives: The Interpretive Turn in Consumer Research,” in *Handbook of Consumer Behavior*, eds. Thomas Robertson and Harold Kassarian, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 548-591.

Bristor, Julia M. and Eileen Fischer (1993), “Feminist Thought: Implications for Consumer Research,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19 (Mar), 518-526.

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

Murray, Jeff B. and Julie L. Ozanne (1991), "The Critical Imagination: Emancipatory Interests in Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18 (September), 129-144.

