

#ShopApocalypse: Consumer Culture's Past and the Future of the Planet
History 1710/ Sociology 1714
On-Line Class

Office Hours

Robin Fleming

Email: robin.fleming@bc.edu

Office Hours: via Zoom, Wednesday 12:00–1:30 and by appointment

Juliet Schor

Email: juliet.schor@bc.edu

Office hours: via Zoom, Monday 1–2:30 pm and by appointment

Lab Leader: Jessica Worl

Email: worl@bc.edu

Office hours: via Zoom, Tuesday and Thursday 2:00–4:00, and by appointment

Lectures: MWF 9:00 am Eastern Standard Time, via Zoom

Reflection Sessions: Th 6 pm Eastern Standard Time, via Zoom

Lab Sessions: Information provided in a separate email by Professor Worl

Weekly Schedule of Lectures & Readings

Week 9: Transition to on-line

M 3/16 no class

W 3/18 no class

F 3/20 Alternative Food

[NB: the theme for the following three weeks is “Consumption and Social Inequalities: Fashion, Accumulation and the Buying Impulse”]

Week 10: Fashion's Past

M 3/23 Fashion's Past

W 3/25 Fashion's Past and Fashion's Present

F 3/27 Status Dynamics in the Contemporary Fashion System

Readings

- Ronald Bailey, “The Other Side of Slavery: Black Labor, Cotton, and Textile Industrialization in Great Britain and the United States,” *Agricultural History*, 68 (1994), 35–50.
- Prasannan Parthasarathi and Giorgio Riello, “From India to the World: Cotton and Fashionability,” in Frank Trentman, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption* (Oxford, 2012), 1–28.
- Denis Diderot, “Regrets for My Old Dressing Gown,” <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/diderot/1769/regrets.htm>
- Beverly Lemire, “The Theft of Clothes and Popular Consumerism in Early Modern England,” *Journal of Social History*, 24:2 (1990), 255-276.
- Susan Strasser, *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash* (New York, 1999), 38–67.

Week 11: Class, Gender, Race, and Upscaling (March 30)

M 3/30	Clothes and Resistance
W 4/1	Upscaling and the American Wedding
F 4/3	Fashion in the Global Economy

Readings

- Erica Rappaport, “A Husband and His Wife’s Dresses: Consumer Credit and the Debtor Family in England, 1864–1914,” in Victoria de Grazia, *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley, 1996), 163–87.
- Stuart Cosgrove, “The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare,” reprinted in Jennifer Scanlon, *Gender and Consumer Culture Reader* (New York, 2000), 342-354.
- Cele C. Otnes and Elizabeth H. Pleck, “Romance, Magic, Memory, and Perfection,” in idem, *Cinderella Dreams: The Allure of the Lavish Wedding* (Berkeley, 2003), 25–54.
- Elizabeth L. Cline, *Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion* (London, 2012), ch. 4.
- Tuba Üstüner and Douglas B. Holt, 2007, “Dominated Consumer Acculturation: The Social Construction of Poor Migrant Women’s Consumer Identity Projects in a Turkish Squatter,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34:1 (2007), 41-51.

Week 12: Slow Fashion, Eco-Fashion, Thrift Store Purchasing

(no reflection session Thursday, March 9 (Holy Thursday))

M 4/6	Ecological Impacts of Apparel
W 4/8	Alternative Apparel Practices
F 4/10	No class (Good Friday)

Readings

- Morgan McFall-Johnsen, “The Fashion Industry Emits More Carbon than International Flights and Maritime Shipping Combined. Here are the Biggest Ways it Impacts the Planet,” *Business Insider*

US (21 October, 2019): <https://www.businessinsider.my/fast-fashion-environmental-impact-pollution-emissions-waste-water-2019-10-2/>.

- Sandra LaVille, “The Story of a £4 Boohoo Dress: Cheap Clothes at a High Cost,” *The Guardian* (22 June 2019): https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/jun/22/cost-cheap-fast-fashion-workers-planet?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other.
- Jessica Bain, “Darn Right I’m a Feminist.... Sew What? The Politics of Contemporary Home Dressmaking: Sewing, Slow Fashion and Feminism,” 2015 *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 54 (2016), 57–66.
- Shelly Steward, “What Does that Shirt Mean to You?: Thrift Store Consumption as Cultural Capital,” *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 0:0 (2017), 1–21.
- DIY reading: find 3 new apparel practices online

Week 13: Global Supply Change and System Crisis: Problems and Solutions

M 4/13 No class (*Easter Monday*)
W 4/15 Pandemic
F 4/17 Global Supply Chains

Readings

- nine minute NPR interview with historian Frank Snowden on the history of pandemics: <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/03/09/pandemics-coronavirus-aids-flu>
- Ann Herring, “Viral Panic, Vulnerability, and the Next Pandemic,” in Catherine Panter-Brick and Agustín Fuentes, eds., *Health, Risk, and Adversity* (London, 2009), **read only pp. 78–88**.
- Michael T. Osterholm, “Unprepared for a Pandemic,” *Foreign Affairs*, 86:2 (2007), 47–57.
- Jedediah Britton-Purdy, “The Only Treatment for Coronavirus Is Solidarity,” *Jacobin*.
- Marc Levinson, “Just in Time,” in idem, *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger*, 2nd edn (Princeton, 2016), 357–74.
- Coronavirus and Climate Change: A Tale of Two Crises (DW.com): <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-climate-change-pollution-environment-china-covid19-crisis/a-52647140>

Week 14 Ecological Issues, Consumption and Environment

M 4/20 No class (*Patriot’s Day*)
W 4/22 Recycling’s Past and Present
F 4/24 Climate Change and Consumption

Readings

- Susan Strasser, “Good Riddance,” in *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash* (New York, 2000), 265–93.
- Michael Hardy, “The Hellish E-Waste Graveyards where Computers are Mined for Metal,” *Wired* (January 8, 2018):

<https://www.wired.com/story/international-electronic-waste-photographs/>

• Brian Resnick, “How Much Plastic is your Washing Machine Sending Out to Sea?,” *Vox* (January 11, 2019):

<https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2018/9/19/17800654/clothes-plastic-pollution-polyester-washing-machine>

• Adrua Vasil, “It’s Pretty Staggering: Returned Online Purchases Often Sent to Landfill, Journalist’s Research Reveals,” CBC Radio (12 December 2019):

[https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/it-s-pretty-staggering-returned-online-purchases-often-sent-to-landfill-environmental-journalist-says-](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/it-s-pretty-staggering-returned-online-purchases-often-sent-to-landfill-environmental-journalist-says-1.5393806?fbclid=IwAR3qoEeckAxtlhUMRkFRJVMhNEZCp3ByXbxNMV9DkCBAEy62cIkOAvS9aGU)

[1.5393806?fbclid=IwAR3qoEeckAxtlhUMRkFRJVMhNEZCp3ByXbxNMV9DkCBAEy62cIkOAvS9aGU](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/it-s-pretty-staggering-returned-online-purchases-often-sent-to-landfill-environmental-journalist-says-1.5393806?fbclid=IwAR3qoEeckAxtlhUMRkFRJVMhNEZCp3ByXbxNMV9DkCBAEy62cIkOAvS9aGU)

• “Green New Deal Resolution:” <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text>

• Daniel Aldana Cohen, “A Green New Deal for Housing,” *Jacobin*

<https://jacobinmag.com/2019/02/green-new-deal-housing-ocasio-cortez-climate>

• Mike Berners-Lee, “1 Million Tons and Beyond,” in idem, *How Bad Are Bananas?*

Week 15: Concluding Conversation

M 4/27 Confronting #ShopApocalypse

W 4/29 Envisioning a New Consumer Culture

Readings

• Luis E. Alonso et al., “From Consumerism to Guilt: Economic Crisis and Discourses about Consumption in Spain,” *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 15:1 (2015), 66-85.

• Allison Page, “‘How Many Slaves Work for You?’ Race, New Media, and Neoliberal Consumer Activism,” *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 17:1 (2017), 46-61.

• Kate Aronoff, “Could a Green New Deal Make Us Happier People?,” *The Intercept* (April 7, 2019): <https://theintercept.com/2019/04/07/green-new-deal-happiness/>

Reflection Sessions

Thursday, March 19: The Coronavirus Crisis and Consumption

Thursday, March 26: People Like Us: Social Class in America

Thursday, April 2: Apparel and Social Class

Thursday, April 9: Holy Thursday. No reflection session

Thursday, April 16: Discussion with filmmaker of *Water is Life*

Thursday, April 23: Personal Consumption Meets the Climate Crisis

Thursday, April 30: Project Presentations

Midterm and Final Exam Information Sheet

In light of the shift to an online course we are changing the format of the midterm and the final. They will both be open book, open note take home examinations. That means you can consult readings, lecture notes, and PPT's while you write your exam. As with the in-class essay, you will be asked to sign an honor pledge that you followed the rules for the exam as we set them out.

Midterm

On Friday March 20 you will receive the question from us via email and it will be posted on the GoogleDrive. There will be 2 Identification questions (you define a concept very briefly). These are worth 5 points each. There will be a 500-word essay, worth 90 points. The essay will be like the first in-class essay that you already took. We will ask you to use at least three class readings. You can also draw on other class readings and lectures. The purpose is to get you to synthesize what you are learning. You can talk about the question with others in the class but you cannot use their outlines or pre-written answers. You should not go to the internet for help! This often results in incorrect claims and understandings. Because you have a week does not mean this should take a week. Please treat it like the essay you wrote in class. Choose your authors early. Focus on them, write an outline, and then when you are ready, sit down and write the answer in an hour or two. Please do not go over the word limit.

Final Exam

On Friday May 1 you will receive the exam from us via email and it will be posted on the GoogleDrive. There will be 4 ID questions (worth 5 points each), two 500-word essays, worth 40 points each. The questions will be relevant to material from the full semester. As with the earlier essays, you will be asked to include discussion of multiple class readings. Rules and advice for the earlier essays also pertain.