

IP205-30 Consuming Cultures

26/27

Department

Liberal Arts

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Kim Lockwood Clough

Credit value

30

Module duration

22 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This is the core module in the second year of the the BA in Liberal Arts degree. Centred on interdisciplinary examinations of consumer capitalism, this module explores what it means to consume, what it means to be a consumer, and how practices of consumption are represented within, and actively create, contemporary cultures.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module critically examines the role that consumption plays in contemporary society, analysing different theorisations of processes of consumption and cultural works which engage with issues of consumption. Using an interdisciplinary Problem-Based learning approach, this module will encourage students to interrogate problems at the intersection of the arts, humanities and social sciences.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Theme 1: Creating Consumers

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Making the Masses: Cultures of Refinement
- 1.3 For the Masses: Production and Design
- 1.4 "Free" Time: Commodification and Leisure
- 1.5 Selling the Dream: Advertising
- 1.6 Reading Week
- 1.7 Eating the Other: Imperialism and Appropriation
- 1.8 Culture Industry: Give the People What They Want
- 1.9 Fitter, Happier, More Productive: Marketing Ourselves
- 1.10 Waste Not, Want Not: Luxury and Excess

Theme 2: The World Consumption Built

- 2.1 Spaces of Consumption
- 2.2 Ordinary Escapism: Supermarkets, Shops, and Malls
- 2.3 Extraordinary Escapism: Theme Parks and Festivals
- 2.4 Culture and Capital: Museums
- 2.5 Consuming the Past: Heritage
- 2.6 Reading Week
- 2.7 Social Structures: Making Human Capital
- 2.8 Political Consumption: Neoliberalism
- 2.9 Around the World: Globalisation
- 2.10 Assessment Support

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- demonstrate an in-depth understanding of how consumerism shapes people, cultures, and societies
- apply their understanding of consumer cultures to analyse a variety of 'texts', such as objects, spaces, systems, practices, and experiences
- mobilise a range of critical and theoretical perspectives to support and develop interpretations of consumer culture
- reflect on and evaluate interdisciplinary perspectives on consumer culture
- devise and produce their own independent research project on consumer cultures
- persuasively communicate ideas about, and understandings of, consumer cultures to different audiences

Indicative reading list

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

Research element

- seminar preparation includes guided independent research
- all assessments involve research

- final assessment asks students to think holistically about the research process and make decisions about content, methodology and output; this acts as "light-touch" preparation for the final-year Liberal Arts dissertation

Interdisciplinary

This is a core module on the BA in Liberal Arts degree programme, which centres on interdisciplinary learning.

This module is not subject-specific. Instead, it is issue-focused and draws from a range of disciplinary perspectives, including (but not limited to): cultural studies, sociology, history, geography, economics, marketing, philosophy, media studies, visual studies, and literary studies.

International

Theme 1: Creating Consumers is designed to position contemporary consumer culture in a broader cultural, historical, and geographic context, looking at patterns and systems of trade and cultural exchange across the globe from past to present.

Theme 2: The World Consumption Built looks at how practices of consumption homogenise local spaces into global (non)spaces, as well as how different global cultures are consumed through museums and tourism.

In addition to these specific points of focus and theorisation of internationalised consumer cultures, examples / case studies from a range of locations / cultures will be explored throughout the module.

Subject specific skills

As this is an interdisciplinary module, all skills are inherently transferable across academic and professional contexts, as detailed below.

Transferable skills

- independent research
- communication of knowledge and ideas
- constructing and supporting arguments
- critical and creative thinking
- collaborative working
- problem solving
- time management and organisation

Study

Study time

Type	Required	Optional
Seminars	20 sessions of 2 hours (13%)	
Tutorials	(0%)	
Project supervision	(0%)	2 sessions of 30 minutes
Practical classes	(0%)	
Private study	125 hours (42%)	
Assessment	135 hours (45%)	
Total	300 hours	

Private study description

Reading, research, preparation for seminars

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A5

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
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Assessment component

Group Media Production	30%	40 hours	No
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30 minute group media production exploring an aspect of consumer culture.

Individual assessment equivalent is possible upon request and discussion with the instructor.

Reassessment component

Media Production	Yes (extension)
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7 minute individual media production exploring an aspect of consumer culture.

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Site Analysis	20%	25 hours	Yes (extension)
Analysis of site of consumption, in the form of an academic essay, site design + commentary, or other agreed format.			

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component			
Research Project	50%	70 hours	Yes (extension)
Independent research project exploring an aspect of consumption, which can take critical or more creative approaches, as agreed with module convenor.			

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Feedback for all components will be provided in writing through Tabula. Students will be encouraged to make use of advice and feedback hours to discuss and reflect on feedback received.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
 - Year 2 of LA99 Liberal Arts
 - Year 2 of LA92 Liberal Arts with Classics
 - Year 2 of LA73 Liberal Arts with Design Studies
 - Year 2 of LA83 Liberal Arts with Economics
 - Year 2 of LA82 Liberal Arts with Education
 - Year 2 of LA95 Liberal Arts with English
 - Year 2 of LA81 Liberal Arts with Film and Television Studies
 - Year 2 of LA93 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
 - Year 2 of LA97 Liberal Arts with History

- Year 2 of LA71 Liberal Arts with Law
- Year 2 of LA91 Liberal Arts with Life Sciences
- Year 2 of LA75 Liberal Arts with Modern Languages and Cultures
- Year 2 of LA96 Liberal Arts with Philosophy
- Year 2 of LA94 Liberal Arts with Theatre and Performance Studies