RM 4123/Apst 5123 Living in a Consumer Society

SYLLABUS OVERVIEW

Course Designator: RM 4123/Apst 5123
Section Number: 001
Course Number: 33214/32836
Semester and Year: Fall 2012
Class Meeting Days & Time: Tuesday & Thursday 4:30 p.m.-5:45 p.m.
Classroom: McNeal 146
Number of Credits: 3
Final Exam Date & Time: Final Take-Home Exam will be due on Tuesday, Dec. 11.

INSTRUCTOR'S INFORMATION

Instructor: Hye-Young Kim, Ph.D.
Office Location: McNeal 352
E-mail: hykim@umn.edu
Office Phone: 612-624-4904
Office Hours: Thursday 1:30-3:30 p.m., other times by appointment

COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Materialist consumerism has become one of the defining characteristics of American society. Consumption and the purchase of material possessions are central aspects of who we are, who we dream of being, how we interact with each other, and how we affect the larger environment. The purpose of this course is to provide exposure to a number of selected topics surrounding contemporary consumer society. Students will also have the opportunity to extend their thinking regarding consumer issues/problems to socially responsible business practices. A parallel objective interwoven throughout the course is that students will be provided with the chance to participate in a number of professional career activities including literature integration, scholarly dialogue, and presentations.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Required readings will be provided a week prior to topic discussion.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME

Upon completion of this course, students can communicate effectively. Specifically, the objectives of this course are:

- To encourage the development of an integrated, structural perspective on consumer society
• To gain an appreciation for past and present contributions to theories of consumption and consumer behavior
• To hone critical thinking, reasoning, analytical reading, and writing skills
• To practice the analysis and interpretation of scholarly research

RELEASE OF WORK STATEMENT

Students understand that enrollment in this course grants consent for their work to be selected for inclusion in college or departmental publications (online or in print). Your instructor may select to use your work to represent her/his skills as an instructor in a teaching portfolio (online or in print).

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is essential to your success in this course. Extensive absences from class will negatively affect your learning and performance. It is unlikely that any student will successfully complete the course without regular attendance. Although formal attendance is not taken on a daily basis in class, full attendance is expected.

COURSE WEBSITE

The course website will be located on Moodle. The easiest way to log in to the course site is to log into the myU portal (http://myU.umn.edu), and locate the link for RM 4123 or Apst 5123. Through this site, you will be able to access online discussion forums, assignments, your grades, and other useful information. Use your University of Minnesota Internet ID and password to log in. You are responsible for monitoring the course site frequently.

ORIENTATION AND ORGANIZATION

The course has a Split Course format. In other words, the course is a combination of face-to-face instruction with online learning. In a split course, a significant part of the course learning will be online. As a result, the amount of classroom time will be reduced but not eliminated.

This course will employ various teaching strategies (i.e., lecture, videos, discussion, and student presentations). In addition, certain scholarly values will be expected. These include thorough and thoughtful reading of the assigned material, active contribution of ideas and insights, professional respect of others’ contributions, and a striving towards academic rigor in all course related activities.

EXAMS

Students will take two take-home essay exams assessing understanding and application of material in the course. There will be NO early exams. Make-up exams will be given only when notification is provided to me three days in advance with valid justification. A missed exam will result in a Zero (0) for that exam. Nothing can be made up unless arranged with the instructor prior to the exam time.
ASSIGNMENTS

There will be required homework assignments almost every week. Frequent and dependable access to a computer with reliable Internet access is essential for success in this course. All the course assignments must be submitted to the Moodle course site (Electronic submission only; No hard copies will be accepted). Guidelines for assignment submission will be posted on your course site. If you are unclear about the technological requirements, please check out Student Support (http://www.oit.umn.edu/moodle/student-guides/index.htm) where you will find information regarding the use of Moodle.

No late assignments will be accepted. If you do not submit your assignment electronically by the designated deadline, you will receive a Zero (0) for that assignment. Do not wait until the last minute to make an online submission. Any computer-related problems will not be excused.

Unexcused late assignments will not be graded but instead will receive half of the points if quality is acceptable. Makeup assignments will only be arranged under legitimate circumstances and written documentation (e.g., hospital admittance receipt) must be provided.

- **Reading Reflections:** Students will be asked to provide a brief summary of the readings and their reaction. Detailed guidelines will be discussed in class.

- **Online Discussion Forums:** In each online class, you are expected to participate in a discussion forum available on the course site. Participation is required during the scheduled class time (4:30 p.m.-5:45 p.m.). Detailed guidelines will be discussed in class.

- **Presentations:** During the semester, each student will be scheduled to give at least TWO PowerPoint presentations. These presentations will be timed, so please make sure you are prepared. You must turn in a PowerPoint presentation though Electronic Assignment Drop Box before 4:00 p.m. on the day of your presentation. Detailed guidelines will be discussed in class.

WORK LOAD

To achieve an average grade in a regular 15 week undergraduate course, the University recommends spending an average of 3 hours per credit per week on class work. Since this is a 3 credit course, you should plan on allocating approximately 9 hours per week on this course. Three hours of this time will be spent in class, and the remaining 6 hours should be used for reading the assigned material, working on the assignments, and studying for exams.

GRADING

Grades will be based on a combination of reading reflections (10%), active participation in online discussion forms (20%), presentations (10%), midterm (30%) and final (30%) take-home exams (approximate weightings).

*Your grade is based on the following scale:*

94-100% = A
90-93% = A-
87-89% = B+
84-86% = B
80-83% = B-
77-79% = C+
74-76% = C
70-73% = C-
67-69% = D+
60-66% = D
LESS THAN 60% = F

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

1. PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASSROOM

Individual students may be directed to turn off personal electronic devices if the devices are not being used for class purposes. If the student does not comply, the student may be asked to leave the classroom. For more information, please refer to http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/CLASSROOMPED.html

2. USE OF CLASSNOTES AND MATERIALS

Notes taken in a class are intended for students to use to facilitate their learning in a course, and not to provide profit to an individual student, or to be used by students outside of that particular course. For more information, please refer to http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/CLASSNOTESSTUDENTS.html

3. SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY AND STUDENT CODE CONDUCT

Academic misconduct is defined as any act that violates the rights of another student with respect to academic work or involves misrepresentation of a student’s own work. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to: cheating on assignments or exams, checking answers from someone else’s work during an exam, plagiarizing pieces of work, depriving others of necessary coursework, and sabotaging another’s work. Discovery of academic misconduct is grounds for an “F” for the course and may be grounds for expulsion from the University.

All activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment for others may be subject to disciplinary action under the Code. In addition, students responsible for such behavior may be asked to cancel their registration (or may have their registration canceled). For more information, please refer to http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

4. SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

The University is committed to preventing and eliminating sexual harassment of faculty, staff and students
through education and by encouraging all members of the University community to report any concerns or complaints about sexual harassment. For more information, please refer to http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.pdf

5. STATEMENT ON CLIMATE OF INCLUSIVITY:

You are expected to be attentive during class, ask questions if you do not understand something, and to offer your opinion. You are also expected to listen respectfully to other students and to me when speaking. The University of Minnesota is committed to providing a safe climate for all students, faculty, and staff. All persons shall have equal access to its programs and facilities without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism and other forms of bigotry are inappropriate to express in this class. Reports of harassment are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. For more information, please refer to http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/administrative/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf

6. ACADEMIC FREEDOME AND RESPONSIBILITY

Please refer to http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Academic_Freedom.pdf

7. AVAILABILITY OF DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical or systemic), are invited to contact DS to arrange a confidential discussion at 612- 626-1333 (V/TTY) or ds@umn.edu.
- Students registered with DS, who have a letter requesting accommodations, are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester to discuss accommodations outlined in their letter.

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via www.mentalhealth.umn.edu or contact Counseling/Consulting Services at 612-624-3323.

8. ACADEMIC SERVICES

If you would like additional help, please contact one of the offices listed below.
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Week 2: Introduction to Consumer Society: Materialism and Happiness (Part I)

Week 3: Introduction to Consumer Society: Materialism and Happiness (Part II)

Week 4: The Role of Advertising in Enhancing Consumer Society

Week 5: The Persuasion Industry

Week 6: Consumption and the Reproduction of Class Inequality

Week 7: Conspicuous Consumption

Week 8: Mid-Term Take-Home Exam

Week 9: Luxury Consumption

Week 10: Hedonic Consumption (Part I)

Week 11: Hedonic Consumption (Part II)

Week 12: The Dark Side of Consumer Behavior

Week 13: Vulnerable Consumers & Consumer Protectionism

Week 14: Corporate Social Responsibility & Green Marketing

Week 15: Final Take-Home Exam