



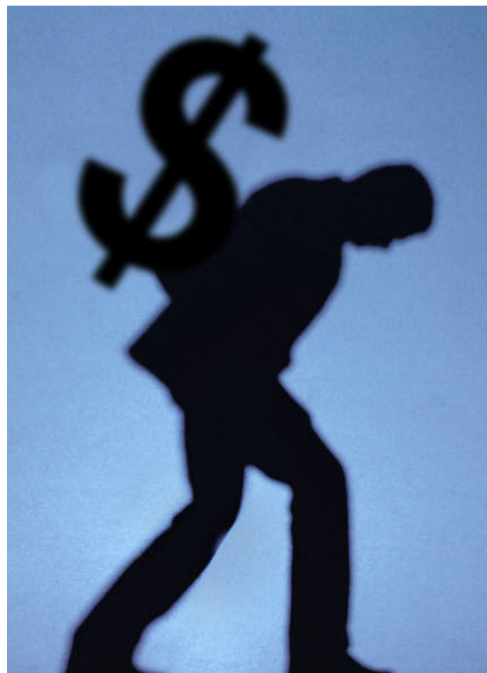
UNSW
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

**Arts and
Social Sciences**

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & LANGUAGES

ARTS3302

A History of Technology, Consumption & Comfort



SEMESTER 2, 2013

Coordinator: Stephen Healy

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COURSE STAFF

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COURSE DETAILS

Consumption is a fundamental feature of contemporary life. Yet many taken-for-granted assumptions regarding consumption, such as the universality of notions such as those of comfort and convenience, turn out to be inventions of recent provenance. This course interrogates the complex nexus of influences encompassing not only technology but also political economy, philosophy, literature, and popular culture that combine to make mass consumption what it is today, with the emergence of domestic comfort a particular focus for examining this nexus of disparate influences. The course cumulates with an analysis of broader patterns of contemporary consumption with an emphasis on how technologies and infrastructures facilitate these patterns. This provides an entry point for an exploration of the problems consumption currently presents the facilitation of sustainability, most notably to the less material intensive forms of life proposed by those propounding a requirement for a 'steady state economy'. The course presents opportunities to learn and apply concepts of intellectual history, social theory and newer areas such as consumption studies in addition to being particularly pertinent to studies in the History and Philosophy of Science (HPS) and Environmental Humanities. It delivers on a long noted requirement for courses better integrating humanities based, and strongly theoretically grounded material, with more empirical, policy focused studies.

COURSE AIMS

This course aims to familiarise advanced undergraduate students with the emergence of key structural determinants of contemporary consumption and the problems these present for industrial civilisation. It builds, most notably, upon earlier HPS and Environmental Humanities courses including ARTS2306: Technology Civilization Culture and ARTS2243: Waste and Society but is pertinent to students in both these and cognate disciplines more generally.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of this course students will have:

1. Knowledge of the emergence of key structural foundations to contemporary consumption with an emphasis on technology and the emergence of domestic comfort.
2. An understanding of the emergence of technologies central to contemporary consumption.
3. An understanding of the emergence of the self-interested autonomous individual of economic theory.
4. An ability to frame and evaluate the relationship of technical, political, intellectual and cultural change and gauge their broader societal import.
5. Refined critical research skills developed through completion of a research essay.
6. Developed skills in oral communication and written argument.

Graduate Attributes Developed	Activities and Assessment Tasks (see page 9)	Associated Learning Outcomes
1. Display in-depth knowledge of and insight into major approaches, methodologies, issues and means of explanation in HPS, and into their development.	Research essay; tutorial presentation; class discussion	1, 2, 3, 4
2. Understand the way these relate to and derive from other disciplines and fields in the Social Sciences and Humanities.	Research essay; tutorial presentation; class discussion	1, 2, 3, 4
3. Demonstrate understanding of significant episodes in the history of science and technology including their social and economic setting and their ideological and cultural dimensions.	Research essay; tutorial presentation; class discussion	1, 2, 3, 4
4. Display insight regarding the significance of contemporary science and technology, the challenges they present, and be capable of formulating and articulating constructive responses to these challenges.	Research essay; tutorial presentation; class discussion	1, 2, 3, 4
5. Be able to engage in reasoned discussion of often charged and controversial topics with people of differing views, regardless of social, cultural and/or individual differences.	Tutorial presentation; class discussion	6
6. Be able to read and analyse complex texts, and be sensitive to issues of interpretation.	Research essay; tutorial presentation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7. Be confident and effective working as a member of a group focused by a common purpose.	Tutorial presentation; class discussion	6
8. Be able to identify the underlying dimensions to a debate or controversy and effectively analyse complex problems.	Research essay; tutorial presentation; class discussion	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
9. Be able to construct a substantive reasoned basis for a point of view, and communicate it in a cogent and effective manner, both verbally and in writing.	Research essay; tutorial presentation; class discussion	4, 5, 6
10. Display openness and independence of mind: be receptive to new ideas and approaches, and be able to subject them to critical scrutiny.	Research essay; tutorial presentation; class discussion	5, 6
11. Demonstrate effective research skills including online resources.	Research essay; tutorial presentation	5, 6
12. Display a capacity and enthusiasm for learning and continuing intellectual development.	Research essay; tutorial presentation; class discussion	5,6

LEARNING AND TEACHING RATIONALE

The selected course readings embody both detailed historical, and more contemporary empirical, content and a number of contrasting disciplinary frameworks and traditions. Guidance in lectures and structured tutorial discussions will further explore, draw out and contextualise the differences between differing interpretations and insights.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Lectures and structured tutorial discussions will require students to critically apply interpretive concepts facilitating the development of critical thinking. The research essay and tutorial presentations will enable students to develop research skills and critical thinking through the lens of topics particularly interesting to them. In addition to feedback on the research essay the tutorial presentation and development of an essay outline enables feedback from both peers and the lecturer.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All classes run Monday 9-12am in Morven Brown LG2, starting with a lecture followed by a tutorial. Tutorials are detailed in a separate handout (available on Moodle along with tutorial readings from week 0).

Weeks	Topic	Date	Lecture Content	Assessment/Tutorial
Week 1	Overview & Rationale:	29/7	Lecture 1: 'Prosperity Without Growth'?	Course Organization discussed. Tutorials Presentations Allocated.
Week 2	The Emergence of Consumer Society 1	5/8	From 'Private Vices' to 'Public Benefits'?	Tutorial Presentations. Essay Proposal Discussion.
Week 3	The Emergence of Consumer Society 2	12/8	The Emergence of Contemporary Material Culture	Tutorial Presentations. Essay Proposal Discussion.
Week 4	The Emergence of Consumer Society 3	19/8	The Invention of Comfort	Tutorial Presentations. Essay Proposal Discussion.
Week 5	Technology and the Consolidation of Consumer Society 1	26/8	The Rise of Manufacturing	Tutorial Presentations. Essay Proposal Discussion.
Week 6	Technology and the Consolidation of Consumer Society 2	2/9	The 'Co-evolution' of Technology and Consumer Society	Tutorial Presentations. Essay Proposal Discussion.
Week 7	Technology and the Consolidation of Consumer Society 3	9/9	The Example of Automobility	Tutorial Presentations. Final Research Essay Proposal Due.
Week 8	Case Study: Air Conditioning 1	16/9	'The End of the Long Hot Summer'	Tutorial Presentations. Essay Development Discussion.
Week 9	Case Study: Air Conditioning 2	23/9	The Material Culture of Air Conditioning	Tutorial Presentations. Essay Development Discussion.
	Semester Break			
Week 10	Public Holiday	7/10		
Week 11	Case Study: Air Conditioning 3	14/10	Air Conditioning, Shopping & Sustainability	Tutorial Presentations. Essay Development Discussion.
Week 12	Contemporary Perspectives	21/10	The 'Contexts' of Consumption	Tutorial Presentations. Final Research Essay Due.
Week 13	Conclusion/Class Event	28/10	Transforming Consumption?	Tutorial Presentations.

COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Student evaluative feedback on this course is welcomed and is gathered periodically, using among other means UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) process.

Student feedback is taken seriously, and continual improvements are made to the course based in part on such feedback. Significant changes to the course will be communicated to subsequent cohorts of students taking the course.

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Texts

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Journals

Students may find useful material in a broad range of relevant journals. The *Journal of Consumer Culture* and *Journal of Material Culture* are particularly relevant to matters pertaining to contemporary consumption.

Websites

Students seeking resources can also obtain assistance from the UNSW Library. One starting point for assistance is:

<http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html>

ASSESSMENT

The UNSW Assessment Policy is available at:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/academiclife/assessment/AssessmentPolicyNew.html>

Assessment task	Length	Weight	Due Date	Related Learning Outcomes (see page 4)
Final Written Research Essay	~3000 Wds	50%	21 October	1-6
Final Research Essay Proposal	~500 Wds	15%	9 September	1-6
Tutorial Presentation	~15 Mins	10%	Delivered weekly. Allocated Week 1.	1-4, 6
Tutorial Presentation Writeup	~1500 Wds	25%	Due the week after tutorial presentation	1-4, 6

GENERAL INFORMATION

Essay Submission

- The cut off time for essay submissions in the School is **4pm** of the stated due date.
- 2 copies must be submitted - 1 paper copy and 1 electronic copy.

- The hard/paper copy should be posted into the Assignment Drop Boxes outside the front counter of the School of Humanities and Language on level 2, Morven Brown Building by 4pm on the due date. A completed cover sheet must be securely attached to assignments. The School is not responsible for any missing pages from poorly bound or stapled assignments.
- In addition, a soft copy must be sent by 4pm on the due date by email to assessment@unsw.edu.au. All emailed assessments sent to assessment@unsw.edu.au will receive an electronic acknowledgement.

Important Note

- Electronic copies emailed to assessment@unsw.edu.au will not be marked. Only hard copies submitted in the drop boxes will be marked/assessed.
- The electronic copy will be used as evidence of assignment submission during appeal and dispute cases. Students have no recourse if a soft copy is not submitted. Therefore it is essential that students keep the electronic record of their sent assignment (e.g. If assignment was sent to assessment@unsw.edu.au: the original sent email with the attached assignment kept in their 'sent box' and the electronic acknowledgment.

Assignment Collection

Assignments should be collected from your lecturer and must be collected by the owner/author of the assignment. A Stamped Self Addressed Envelope must be provided on submission if students require their assignment to be posted back to their home address.

Assignment Extensions

A student may apply to the Lecturer/Tutor for an extension to the submission date of an assignment. Requests for extension must be made via myUNSW before the submission due date, and must demonstrate exceptional circumstances, which warrant the granting of an extension. If medical grounds preclude submission of assignment by due date, contact should be made with subject coordinator as soon as possible. A medical certificate will be required for late submission and must be appropriate for the extension period.

To apply for an extension please log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration

Late Submission of Assignments

Assignments submitted after the due or extended date will incur a 5% penalty per day excluding weekends (calculated from the maximum marks available for that assignment). Assignments received more than 7 calendar days after the due or extended date will not be allocated a mark.

ATTENDANCE

To successfully complete this unit you are required to attend minimum 80% of classes. If this requirement is not met you will fail the unit. Attendance records will be kept in both lectures and tutorials.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Students seeking information on plagiarism should visit the following web site:

<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html>

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

UNSW's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others.

Any OHS concerns should be raised with your immediate supervisor, the School's OHS representative, or the Head of School. The OHS guidelines are available at:

http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/ohs_policies/index.html

STUDENT EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Students who have a disability that requires some adjustment in their learning and teaching environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the course convener prior to, or at the commencement of the course. Alternatively, the Student Equity and Diversity Unit can be contacted on 9385 4734. Further information is available at:

<http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au>

GRIEVANCES

All students should be treated fairly in the course of their studies at UNSW. Students who feel they have not been dealt with fairly should in the first instance attempt to resolve any issues with their tutor or the course convenors. If such an approach fails to resolve the matter, the School of Humanities and Languages has an academic member of staff who acts as a Grievance Officer for the School. This staff member is identified on the notice board in the School of Humanities and Languages. Further information about UNSW grievance procedures is available at: <https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html>

OTHER STUDENT INFORMATION

myUNSW is the single online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing & current students and UNSW staff. To visit myUNSW please visit either of the below links:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au>

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html>