

“Advertising has done more to cause the social unrest of the 20th century than any other single factor.”  
[Clare Boothe Luce](#)

**HIST 410/510: American Consumerism**  
**Spring 2012**  
**Mondays & Wednesdays 12-1:20pm**  
**175 Lillis Hall**

*Professor Jamie Mayhew Bufalino*  
*Office: 340W McKenzie Hall*  
*Office hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 1:30-3pm (or by appt)*  
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**Course Overview:**

This course will examine the emergence of United States consumer culture in the 1880s and trace its development in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Students will examine and discuss primary documents including advertisements, political propaganda, and social commentary as well as secondary sources chronicling the historical significance of consumer culture. Topics of discussion will include the development of the advertising industry, consumer credit, social networking and global trade policies. It will also consider the impact of consumerism on American culture including notions class, race, gender, economics, politics, & personal identity.

**Teaching Method:** This is a reading intensive course. It is vital that students come to class prepared to discuss the day’s reading assignments. Most of our class time will consist of group discussion. There will be occasional short lectures to provide necessary context for course readings.

**Required Texts:**

Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*  
Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*  
Naomi Klein, *No Logo: 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*  
Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*  
Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*  
Additional readings on course website (BB)

## **Attendance Policy & Participation:**

As class participation is vital to the success of this course, attendance is mandatory. More than two absences from class will severely impact students' participation grade. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the day's readings.

## **Course Assignments**

Student grades will be determined on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Analysis Papers – 10 short papers analyzing assigned readings (1 page). See further instructions below. (20% of course grade)
2. 5-page essay. Specific Instructions Forthcoming. (15% of course grade)
3. Final Essay (8-10 pages) Specific Instructions Forthcoming (35% of course grade)
4. Class Participation (30% of course grade)

## **Incompletes, Late Assignments, and Academic Dishonesty**

Incompletes will be given in rare cases such as serious illness but must be discussed with me prior to the end of the term. I reserve the right to accept late essays if circumstances warrant it. You must contact me for approval of late essays. Analysis papers will not be accepted late due to the nature of the assignment. Academic dishonesty, which includes all forms of misrepresentation of one's work (plagiarism of published works including online sources or passing off the work of another student as one's own), will result in automatic course failure. I will pursue disciplinary action for plagiarism through appropriate university channels.

## **Instructions for Analysis Papers**

Students will be divided into two groups. Students will write a one-page double-spaced paper analyzing the day's reading for each class meeting to which their group is assigned. This will occur 10 times throughout the quarter or once per week (see attached course schedule). This is not a formal essay but should include the following elements – a brief summary of the main argument of the reading(s), and a critique of that argument. The best papers will also ask questions, make connections to other readings and previous discussions, or otherwise illustrate a significant engagement with the readings. The purpose of these papers is to allow students to direct the discussion each day. Analysis papers are due via email (PDF only please) by midnight on the day the reading will be discussed. Group members work independently.