



*Russians watch an American-style kitchen,
1959 Moscow Exhibition*

History 6394

CRN: 80173

Seminar in History:

The History of Consumption

Fall 2020

Online

Dr. Sarah Mass

smmass@shsu.edu (best way to get in touch)

(832) 510-8005 (Google voice, second best)

(936) 294-3836 (office number)

Office Hours:

W 6-7pm, by appt. over Zoom

Course Description

This course is the capstone seminar for the Masters in History. During the semester, we will build the research and writing skills necessary for you to produce an article-length research paper. This includes defining a field of inquiry, summarizing and assessing historiography, analyzing primary and secondary sources both on their own terms and in synthetic analysis, and structuring an extended research project around a historical question that is both answerable and academically important. We will work through these skills in three units, the last of which is entirely devoted to your individual research paper. Reading in this course is top heavy: be prepared to get through 400 pages per week in the first two weeks, after which reading will taper off and we will turn to research skills and writing. The theme of the course is the “History of Consumption”; the secondary and primary sources that will aid your research paper reflect this theme.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing

Course Objectives

Critical reading and evaluation skills: Practice identifying, tracking, and evaluating scholarly arguments in article-length writing

Source and archive literacy: Recognize the possibilities and limitations of particular source bases and how they shape historical research questions

Sub-field literacy: Distinguish the defining questions and trends in the history of consumption, and how these have developed over time and change according to geographic and temporal focus

Scholarly research and writing skills: Apply the principles developed in our conversations and readings to produce a article-length research paper of your own design

Required Reading

Frank Trentmann, *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (Harper Perennial, 2016)

Shane Hamilton and Sarah Phillips, *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St Martins, 2014)

Various scholarly articles posted on Blackboard

Attendance Policy

While we are not meeting in person, you will be expected to log on to Blackboard weekly to complete discussion board posts that will count towards your participation. You must check your SHSU email at least twice a week for updates from me.

Course Assessments and Grading

Weekly discussion board	225 points
<i>25 points each, 10 weeks, due Tuesdays 11:59pm (can miss one)</i>	
<i>No extensions</i>	
Cropped Analysis	100 points
<i>September 22, 11:59pm</i>	
Annotated Bibliography and Abstract	200 points
<i>November 10, 11:59pm</i>	
Zoom check-in	75 points
<i>Week 16 (November 30), by appt</i>	
Final Research Paper	400 points
<i>December 8, 11:59pm</i>	

900-1000 points	A
800-899 points	B
700-799 points	C
600-699 points	D
0-599 points	F

Late Work

Some deadlines in this course are firm. Weekly discussion board participation must be completed as you go, there will not be extensions or make-ups if you miss a week. For the remaining writing assignments the dates listed are “goal” dates, rather than due dates. If you submit the assignment by the goal date, I will give detailed feedback that will help you improve your writing in future assignments. If you miss the goal date, you will not have points deducted for a late submission, but you will also not receive detailed feedback (just a grade). There are multiple reasons for sticking to the goal dates: you will get my feedback, you will stay on top of the content, and you will not be overwhelmed with work at the end of the semester. However, this is an extraordinary semester and I know there will be family, health, and work issues that may arise suddenly. The goal date system is meant to reduce anxiety around firm due dates, while still giving you an incentive for completing work on time. All work must be submitted by Dec 8 to receive a grade.

University Policies

Please refer to the University Policies around Academic Dishonesty, Religious Holy Days, Students with Disabilities Policy, and Visitors in the Classroom [here](#)

Classroom Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the discussion board and in any zoom meetings in the same manner they would in a face-to-face classroom: base your arguments in evidence from our readings, respond respectfully to differing interpretations, and build on conversations collaboratively. Any disruptive behavior in these online forums will result in a zero for that week's discussion board grade.

Getting in Touch

I am here as a guide and a resource for the material in this course. My aim is to be as responsive as possible when you have questions or concerns: I will strive to return your email within 24 hrs. If it is sent on the weekends, I may take a little longer. If you are having an internet connectivity problem, please call me on my google voice account: (832) 510-8005.

Semester Schedule

	Week and Topic Covered	Writing due	Secondary Sources to read	Primary Sources to read
Unit 1 What is the History of Consumption?	Week 1 What is the History of Consumption?	Discussion board post	Trentmann, <i>Empire of Things</i> , Part One	
	Week 2 What differentiates a scholarly article?	Discussion board post	Trentmann, <i>Empire of Things</i> , Part Two Trentmann and Carlsson-Hyslop, “The Evolution of Energy Demand in Britain”	
	Week 3 What is an academic journal?	Discussion board post	Back catalogue of <i>History of Retailing and Consumption</i> [skim abstracts] Five-year back-catalogue of scholarly journal [skim abstracts], plus <i>one</i> article from that back catalogue	
	Week 4 What can consumption histories answer about other fields?	Discussion board post	Berg, “The Nazi Rag Pickers and Their Wine” Byfield, “Feeding the Troops: Abeokuta (Nigeria) and World War II” Jacobs, “‘How About Some Meat?’: The Office of Price Administration, Consumption Politics, and State Building from the Bottom Up, 1941-1946”	
	Week 5 What is the final assignment for	Discussion board post	Hamilton and Phillips, <i>The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics</i> , Part One	Hamilton and Phillips, <i>The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics</i> , Part Two (select one primary source)

	this class?			
Unit 2 How do I find and use primary sources in a scholarly article?	Week 6 How do I use published primary sources in a scholarly article?	Cropped analysis Discussion board post	Hartigan O'Connor, "Public Sales and Public Values" Kwass, "Consumption and the World of Ideas" Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization"	Published source that you could use to answer your preliminary research question
	Week 7 How do I use periodicals in a scholarly article?	Discussion board post	Gorsuch, "There's No Place Like Home" Hart, "A British Atlantic World of Advertising? Colonial American 'For Sales' Notices in Comparative Context" Pooley, "Children's Writing and the Popular Press in England, 1876-1914"	Periodical that you could use to answer your preliminary research question
	Week 8 How do I use ego-documents in a scholarly article?	Discussion board post	Cinotto, "Leonard Covello, the Covello Papers, and the History of Eating Habits among Italian Immigrants in New York" Gerristen and McDowall, "Material Culture and the Other" Vickery, "Women and the World of Goods"	Ego-document that you could use to answer your preliminary research question
	Week 9 How do I use visual sources in a scholarly article?	Discussion board post	Moskowitz, "It's Good to Blow Your Top" Murillo, "'The Devil We Know': Gold Coast Consumers, Local Employees, and the United African Company, 1940-1960" Schwartz, "The Musée Grevin: Museum	Visual source that you could use to answer your research question

			and Newspaper in One” in <i>Spectacular Realities</i> [ebook available through NGL]	
	Week 10 How do I use archival sources in a scholarly article?	Discussion board post	Elena, “What the People Want” Stein, “Falling into Feathers”	Archival source you could use to answer your research question
Unit 3 Writing a scholarly article	Weeks 11-13	Annotated Bibliography and Abstract		
	Weeks 14-16	Final Paper		

Deadlines

Unit 1

8/18, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

8/25, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

9/1, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

9/8, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

9/15, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

9/22, 11:59pm: Cropped Analysis (100 points)

Unit 2

9/22, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

9/29, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

10/6, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

10/13, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

10/20, 11:59pm: Discussion Board Post (25 points)

Unit 3

11/10, 11:59pm: Annotated Bibliography and Abstract (200 points)

11/30-12/4: Zoom Check-In (50 points)

12/8, 11:59pm: Final Paper (400 points)