

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
Departments of Sociology/Anthropology and
Department of Law

**CONSUMING PASSIONS: THE REGULATION OF
CONSUMPTION, APPEARANCE AND SEXUALITY**

Professor Alan Hunt

SOCI 5204 / LAWS 5008
Friday 11.30 - 2.30 - LA 715

Winter 2009

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OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesday 10.30 - 11.15
Friday 10.15-11.15

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will be organised as a research seminar. Participants will be encouraged to undertake some preliminary research in some field of the regulation of consumption. The course will examine a distinctive feature of modernity, namely, the shifts in the targets of governmental regulation and their links to the government of the self with respect to the regulation of consumption in its diverse expressions, including private pleasures and excitements.

The course will start with an examination of three key concepts that come out of different intellectual traditions: 'consumption', 'governance/regulation', and 'moral regulation'.

COURSE ORGANIZATION:

This is a 3 hour seminar class. The first few classes will explore the key concepts for a sociology of consumption and regulation; thereafter different fields of consumption will be explored. During the early weeks a series of preparatory exercises will assist in the selection of a topic for individual Term Paper.

COURSE EVALUATION:

Evaluation will be based primarily on one Term Paper; 80% will be allocated to the final paper submitted. The remaining 20% will be allocated for written preparatory assignments. The paper should normally be between 6,000 - 8,000 words. Papers should be word-processed; they should be handed to me personally or deposited in the department Drop-Off Box in Soc/Anthro. or Law. Papers should be submitted by no later than **Friday 10th April 2009**. (You are advised to keep a copy of your paper). Please note that I reserve the right to conduct an oral examination on papers submitted if there is a suspicion of plagiarism.

COURSE OUTLINE:

NB. SEE 'SEMINAR READINGS' DOCUMENT FOR WEEK-BY-WEEK COURSE READINGS

SOME THEORETICAL TRADITIONS:

We will start with a consideration of a number of intellectual traditions which it may be possible to bring into contact in order to explore selected topics within the regulation of everyday life.

CONSUMPTION: the relation between consumption and production; the role of productionism within major traditions (Marx, Weber, etc.). The political economy of consumption. The critique of consumption; mass consumption and capitalism (Veblen). The sociology of consumption; desire, excitement and pleasure. Consumption and civilization (Elias); consumption and distinction (Bourdieu).

CONSUMER CULTURE:

Locating 'popular culture' and 'mass culture'; culture wars and the reform of popular culture.

MORAL REGULATION:

projects of moral regulation; cultural revolution, symbolic politics and moral panics.

FASHION AND THE ORDERING OF APPEARANCE:

‘Reading the body’ appearance and recognizability; conformity and transgression. Regulation of dress as case study of the regulation of everyday life.

REGULATION OF SEXUALITY:

Consuming sex?

Consuming sexual representations: eroticism and pornography.

REGULATING CONSUMPTION:

Body, food, diet and self-regulation.

The cultural politics of alcohol and tobacco.

Regulating recreation.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS:

Regulations governing such matters as course registration and withdrawal, grades and appeals can be found on the university’s website: www.carleton.ca/cu0708uc/acadregsuniv.html.

Requests for academic accommodation should be made to the Paul Menton Centre before March 14th 2009.

Alan Hunt
January 2009