

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

## COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title	Course Code Number	Time/Place	Credit Value
Consumers & Consumption	SOCI 342	M/W 3:30-5:00 IRC-4	3

## CONTACTS

Course Instructor(s)	Contact Details	Office Location	Office Hours
Clayton Childress (he/him)	clayton.childress@ubc.ca	ANSO 1316	In-person and on zoom; please sign up at: <a href="https://childress.youcanbook.me/">https://childress.youcanbook.me/</a>
<p><u>A Note on Questions, Canvas, Email, and Office Hours:</u> I'm usually available for brief questions before and after class. Email is a useful medium for questions and that require a sentence or two to ask and a sentence or two to answer. For longer questions or conversations let's chat during office hours.</p>			
Teaching Assistant	Contact Details	Office Location	Office Hours
Parker Muzzerall (he/him)	parker.muzzerall@ubc.ca	ANSO 3116	Mondays 12:00-1:00p in person or over Zoom (link on Canvas)

## COURSE OVERVIEW

"Taste is what brings together things and people that go together . . . taste is a matchmaker" (Bourdieu, 1984: 241)

How does what we consume convey who we are? Are the messages we send from our consumption intentional or unintentional, easy to decode or obscure, and used as ways to connect or ways to divide? How is our consumption read by others? Does what you consume make you unique or typical? How do your tastes affect your life chances? What is the relationship between tastes and meaning making? When it comes to taste, how influenced are you by the people around you, and how much of your tastes are rooted in things beyond your control? Does any of this matter, and if so, when and how does it matter, and when and how does it not? In this course we will answer all these questions.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

This course uses a mix of lectures, large and small group discussion, individual participation, engaging with multimedia. All materials are eligible for inclusion on tests and other assessment opportunities.

Our goal is for each meeting of the class to be informative, dynamic, lively, and productively surprising. This requires your participation. Regular "Participation" – how much you do or don't talk, sit up or fall asleep – isn't really what most of us want from our students. Instead,

participation comes in many forms. It includes *preparation* (e.g. reviewing readings and material before class), *focus* (avoiding distractions during class activities), *presence* (being engaged and responsive during group activities), *asking questions*, *listening* (hearing what others say, and what they’re not saying), *specificity* (referring to specific ideas from readings and discussions), and *synthesizing* (making connections between readings and discussions).

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS**

<b>Weeks</b>	<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Graded Work</b>
Week 1 Welcome to the Course	<b>JANUARY 8:</b> Meetings, Greetings, and Setting up for a Successful Semester <b>JANUARY 10:</b> A Very Important Day About Us	
<b>UNIT 1: Division through Hierarchy</b>		
Week 2 Distinction and Fields	<b>JANUARY 15:</b> Bourdieu, P., Sapiro, G., & McHale, B. (1991). "First lecture. Social space and symbolic space: introduction to a Japanese reading of distinction." <i>Poetics Today</i> , 12(4), 627-638. <b>JANUARY 17:</b> Thomson, P. (2014). "Field" in ed. M. Grenfell, Bourdieu: Key Concepts. Taylor & Francis	
Week 3 Symbolic Violence and Social Closure	<b>JANUARY 22:</b> Friedman, S., & Kuipers, G. (2013). The divisive power of humour: Comedy, taste and symbolic boundaries. <i>Cultural sociology</i> , 7(2), 179-195. <b>JANUARY 24:</b> Williams, C. L., & Connell, C. (2010). "Looking good and sounding right" aesthetic labor and social inequality in the retail industry. <i>Work and Occupations</i> , 37(3), 349-377.	
Week 4 Reconsidering Capitals	<b>JANUARY 29:</b> Carter, P. L. (2003). "Black" cultural capital, status positioning, and schooling conflicts for low-income African American youth. <i>Social problems</i> , 50(1), 136-155. <b>JANUARY 31:</b> Bryson, B. (1996). "Anything but heavy metal": Symbolic exclusion and musical dislikes. <i>American sociological review</i> , 884-899.	
Week 5 Closing out Unit 1	<b>FEBRUARY 5:</b> Film Day! (for reading-to-film reflection #1) <b>FEBRUARY 7:</b> Mini-Term #1 (in class)	Mini-Term #1
<b>UNIT 2: Division through Openness</b>		
Week 6 From Snob to Omnivore	<b>FEBRUARY 12:</b> Peterson, R. A., & Kern, R. M. (1996). Changing highbrow taste: From snob to omnivore. <i>American sociological review</i> , 900-907. <b>FEBRUARY 14:</b> Childress, C., Baumann, S., Rawlings, C. M., & Nault, J. F. (2021). Genres, objects, and the contemporary expression of higher-status tastes. <i>Sociological Science</i> , 8, 230-264.	Writing Assignment Opportunity 1/3 by Friday at 5PM
Week 8 Authenticity and Appropriation	<b>MARCH 4:</b> Johnston, J., & Baumann, S. (2014). "Eating Authenticity" and "Seeking Exoticism" (pp. 61-111) <i>Foodies: Democracy and distinction in the gourmet foodscape</i> . Routledge. <b>MARCH 6:</b> Oshotse, A., Berda, Y., & Goldberg, A. (2023). Cultural Tariffs: Appropriation and the Right to Cross Cultural Boundaries. <i>American Sociological Review</i>	

Week 9 Modes of Consumption	<b>FEBRUARY 26:</b> Sherman, R. (2018). 'A very expensive ordinary life': consumption, symbolic boundaries and moral legitimacy among New York elites. <i>Socio-Economic Review</i> , 16(2), 411-433. <b>FEBRUARY 28:</b> McCoy, C. A., & Scarborough, R. C. (2014). Watching "bad" television: Ironic consumption, camp, and guilty pleasures. <i>Poetics</i> , 47, 41-59.	
Week 9 Closing out Unit 2	<b>MARCH 11:</b> Film Day! (for reading-to-film reflection #2) <b>MARCH 13:</b> Mini-Term #2 (in class)	Mini-Term #2
<b>UNIT 3: Meaning, Identity, and Belonging</b>		
Week 10 Meaning	<b>MARCH 18:</b> Radway, J. A. (1983). Women read the romance: The interaction of text and context. <i>Feminist studies</i> , 9(1), 53-78. <b>MARCH 20:</b> Shively, J. (1992). Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of western films among American Indians and Anglos. <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 725-734.	Writing Assignment Opportunity 2/3 by Friday at 5pm
Week 11 Belonging	<b>MARCH 25:</b> Salganik, M. J., & Watts, D. J. (2008). Leading the herd astray: An experimental study of self-fulfilling prophecies in an artificial cultural market. <i>Social psychology quarterly</i> , 71(4), 338-355. <b>MARCH 27:</b> Warikoo, N. K. (2007). Racial authenticity among second generation youth in multiethnic New York and London. <i>Poetics</i> , 35(6), 388-408.	
Week 12 Closing Out Unit 3	<b>APRIL 1:</b> No Class (Easter) <b>APRIL 3:</b> Film Day! (for reading-to-film reflection #3)	
Week 13 Wrapping Up	<b>APRIL 8:</b> The What, The So What, And the Now What <b>APRIL 10:</b> Review	Writing Assignment Opportunity 3/3 by Friday at 5PM

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Students will be able to display comprehension of the intersection of cultural theory, taste, and meaning as it relates to consumption, inequality, and identity.
2. Students will be able to identify similarities and differences across different theories as it relates to motivation and performance of consumption practices. media industries in the creation, production, and distribution of culture.
3. Students will be able to evaluate the impact of different types of sociodemographic differences (as well as their limits) on taste and meaning making.
4. Students will be able to apply theories and perspectives from the course to real-world settings and examples.
5. Students will leave the course with an analytic "tool-kit" for studying consumption, taste, and meaning making.

**LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

Students are expected to have completed the readings before class and to come to class prepared to extend the readings to different case studies and analyses. Students are expected to participate in class through small and large group discussions. They are expected to critically reflect on and analyze in-class activities and information through out-of-class written work.

**LEARNING MATERIALS**

All readings are available on Canvas, or through the library at <https://search.library.ubc.ca/>

### ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Type	Description	Date	Percentage
<b>Informed Attendance</b>	Reading quizzes are used to assess preparation (i.e. having done the reading), and engagement. The lowest three marks are dropped.	All course meetings with an assigned reading attached to them	15%
<b>Written Reflections</b>	Two 1500-word (each) reading-to-film reflections essays out of three possible opportunities.	Friday at 5PM in weeks 6, 10, and 13	15% x 2 (30)
<b>Mini-Term Exams</b>	Multiple choice; fill-in-the-blank; short answer; essay question	In-Class, in Weeks 5 and 9	15% x 2 (30)
<b>Final Exam</b>	(1/2 on Unit 3; ¼ each on Units 1 and 2; Multiple choice; fill-in-the-blank; short answer; essay question	Exam period	25%

### UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

**Academic integrity:** Students who fail to uphold the standards of academic integrity may be charged with academic misconduct, which can be severely punishable (i.e. expulsion). Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and falsifying information. If you are unfamiliar with the range of behaviours that are included in UBC's definition of academic misconduct, please read through the description here: <https://academicintegrity.ubc.ca/regulation-process/academic-misconduct/>

### COURSE POLICIES

**Informed Attendance/Reading Quizzes:** Reading quizzes are closed book. You must put away all notes and close all other windows and tabs before beginning the reading quiz. Cheating during the reading quiz will result in: (1) a score on zero on two reading quizzes for the first violation, (2) a score of zero for the entirety of the informed attendance grade (15%) for the second violation, and (3) a score of zero in the course and an official submission of cheating to the university for the third violation.

**Test days:** During tests, bags are to be placed in the front of the room, and students will be guided to an available seat. Students are allowed to bring 1 pen and 2 pencils, an eraser, and a white out device to their seats. The instructor and/or TA will be monitoring the classroom to ensure that electronic devices such as smartwatches, smartphones, etc are not being used in the duration of the test. Students are not allowed to leave the room during the test, and if finished early, are not allowed to return once they have

left the class. All testing materials, including question packets and answer sheets, must be turned in to the instructor and/or TA before students retrieve their bags and depart.

**Missed in-class engagement:** In-class engagement, including reading quizzes, cannot be made up. Students' lowest 4 in-class engagement grades will be dropped, meaning that students can miss a small number of sessions without it having a negative impact on their grade. This is an *automatic concession* awarded to all students in the course regardless of if a formal concession has been filed or not.

**Missed tests:** In very exceptional circumstances, which require written approval for an academic concession from arts advising, may be possible. Ad hoc and impromptu concessions outside of the Arts Advising framework are not awarded in this class.

**Missed or late writing reflections:** Late reading responses are marked down five percentage points (e.g. from 85 to 80) for each 24 hour period from the due date, with a ten minute grace period from the due date and time, and no ten minute grace periods for each day following (example: a reading response is due at Noon on Tuesday. At 12:10 there is no penalty, from 12:11 until 12:00 on Wednesday there is a five percentage point penalty, a 10 percentage point penalty from 12:00 on Wednesday to 12:00 on Thursday, and so on). Ad hoc and impromptu concessions outside of the Arts Advising framework are not awarded in this class.

**Missed classes and lateness:** Attendance for the entire class period and on time arrival is required. Repeated absences will very likely impact your final grade. Lateness is also discouraged, as reading quizzes happen at the beginning of class. I will not excuse absences, so you do not need to email me to tell me you will not be in class or provide to me a doctors' note. If you have a family emergency or a major illness that causes you to miss multiple classes or deadlines, contact academic advising and request an academic concession. They will be in touch with me directly, saving you from having to share confidential or private details with me.

**Generative AI:** This course aims to foster critical thinking, analytical skills, and individual engagement with course material. To maintain the integrity of this learning environment and to prioritize genuine student contributions, the use of AI-generated tools, including ChatGPT or any similar artificial intelligence, is strictly prohibited during class sessions, examinations, writing assignments, and any related academic activities. Any student found violating this policy will face academic penalties, which may include receiving a failing grade on the assignment, examination, or the entire course, depending on the severity of the violation.

**Electronic devices:** these are useful but also highly distracting tools. For this reason, students may only use electronic devices in class for note taking and approved in-class activities. Students who are scrolling through social media, WhatsApp/iMessage, YouTube, and other distracting programs will be asked to leave.

**Office hours:** I hold regular in-person and Zoom office hours each week. All appointments can be viewed and booked via <https://childress.youcanbook.me/>. I encourage you to make an appointment individually, or with friends. It's a chance to talk with me about the course, tests, or other relevant matters.

**Communication:** I will send out announcements via Canvas and expect students check their email and/or Canvas daily. I respond promptly to emails during the work week between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm, but do not respond to emails over the weekend or after working hours. If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours on business days, your email might have ended up in my Spam folder. For this reason, I strongly suggest students use a UBC email account.

**Grading policies:** Final grades will be assigned in the following way (this is standard for UBC):

90-100	A+	76-79	B+	64-67	C+	50-54	D
85-89	A	72-75	B	60-63	C	0-49	F
80-84	A-	68-71	B-	55-59	C-		

Note that students have to earn the minimum number of points for each letter grade.

According to the UBC Guidelines:

An A grade is “Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.”

A B grade is “Competent performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.”

A D to C grade is “Adequate performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour.”

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#### LEARNING ANALYTICS

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This course will be using the following learning technologies: Canvas and iClicker. These tools capture data about your activity and provide information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, I plan to use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress
- Track your progress in order to provide you with personalized feedback
- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course
- Track participation in discussion forums
- Assess your participation in the course

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#### MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES

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**Early Alert Program:** I participate in the Early Alert Program which helps me support students who are facing difficulties that are interfering with school. If you are feeling stressed, please notify the TA or me and indicate that you would like assistance. While we are not trained to help with personal problems, we can get you help from people who can assist you. Any information that they receive from you or us is

strictly confidential and is in the interest of your academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit [earlyalert.ubc.ca](http://earlyalert.ubc.ca).

**Mental health:** UBC students have access to 50-minute single sessions with a registered mental health provider at 604-822-3811. UBC has also contracted with “Aspiria – SAP powered by Snapclarity,” which is a free, 24/7 app (Google Play and Apple App Store), website, and phone resource that provides further services to students. These include personal counselling, life coaching, and more. You can use the app or website to submit an online request for referral, which is processed in 1-2 business days.

**Crisis support:** If you or a friend are in need of immediate help and don’t know who to turn to, please call Crisis Centre BC at 604-872-3311 or toll free 1-866-661-3311.

**Academic resources:** If you are citing research and need a quick guide, the Harvard ASA style guide is helpful (<https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/asastyleguide.pdf>). The Purdue Owl Writing Lab has the best overall resources: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html). The UBC Library has an entire section devoted to helping students succeed in Sociology courses: <http://guides.library.ubc.ca/sociology>. If you want help with your writing, please visit the UBC Centre for Writing and Scholarly Communications (<https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/improve-your-writing/>). And finally, if you are making a poster for a presentation, here is a great UBC template to get you started <https://it.ubc.ca/services/desktop-print-services/printing-services/poster-templates>.

**Student advising:** In addition to office hours and peers in this class, students should be aware that there are multiple other sources for support in Sociology. Adalynn Mai is the Student Services Advisor and her main responsibility is undergraduate and graduate student advising. Ms. Mai is in ANSO 2108 and can be reached at [soci.ugrad@ubc.ca](mailto:soci.ugrad@ubc.ca) or 604-827-5206.

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#### COPYRIGHT

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