

Topics in Consumer Cultural Research

Master (6851), Summer Term 2025

--- last updated 14 Feb 2025 ---

Application			
	Application submission deadline: Monday 7.4.	12 pm (noon)	https://moodle.europa-uni.de LS Marketing (Brunk & Eisend) (Bewerbungsverfahren)
Welcome Session: Introduction and allocation of projects*			
Prof. Dr. Katja Brunk Dominika Niewiadomska	Thursday 10.4.*	11 am - 2 pm	Room GD 205
Individual consultations			
Prof. Dr. Katja Brunk Dominika Niewiadomska	Thursday 17.4. Request appointment by Tuesday 15.4. 9 am	9 am – 3 pm	In presence or online
Prof. Dr. Katja Brunk Dominika Niewiadomska	Thursday 24.4. Request appointment by Tuesday 22.4. 9 am	9 am – 3 pm	In presence or online
Prof. Dr. Katja Brunk Dominika Niewiadomska	Wednesday 30.4. Request appointment by Monday 28.4. 9 am	9 am – 3 pm	In presence or online
Presentation submission			
	Deadline: Monday 5.5.	12 am (midnight)	via Moodle
Presentation and oral examination*			
Presentation and oral examination	Tuesday 13.5.* Wednesday 14.5.*	2 pm – 6 pm 10 am – 6 pm	Room AM 02

* Attendance is compulsory

Relevance and Introduction to Consumer (Cultural) Research

Today we live in a consumer society, a society in which the buying and selling of goods and services is the most important social and economic activity. For any commercial business, the end consumer of its goods and/or services is a vital stakeholder. Understanding consumer behavior is an important cornerstone of effective marketing and, as a consequence, an essential strategic tool for overall business success.

Learning how consumers think, feel, perceive and behave is also relevant from a societal perspective. Governments' control over corporations and businesses is steadily diminishing. On the one hand, this can be attributed to increasing corporate influence in politics, e.g. through lobbying activities and party funding. On the other hand, this is a result of ever-increasing globalizing business activities and thus complex international supply chains which complicates holding companies accountable. It has therefore become the consumers' role and responsibility to function as a social and environmental control of business. Thus, bringing about societal and environmental change related to consumption (e.g. reducing carbon emission or plastic waste; banning unethical corporate practices such as slave labor) strongly hinges upon mobilizing and convincing consumers to make ethically motivated purchase decisions and therefore 'vote' with their consumption choices, e.g. by means of boycotts and buycotts or changing habitual practices. Understanding and influencing consumer behavior at the individual, social and cultural level is therefore a vital challenge of our time and of interest to businesses, governmental organizations, NGOs and overall society alike. This seminar will focus on the latter – **understanding consumers and consumption at the cultural level** – by analyzing most recent consumer cultural research published in the world's most prestigious academic journals.

Research in consumer culture (also commonly referred to as "CCT" research) analyzes consumption and market dynamics, as well as addresses consumer behavior phenomena in their broader socio-cultural context. This is in contrast to more psychologically oriented consumer behavior studies, which view the consumer as an individual decision maker, disregarding his/her embeddedness in a larger social and cultural environment. Empirical CCT research leverages theories from sociology, anthropology and cultural studies and is *qualitative* in nature, whereby the focus is to explore consumer behavior in depth (explain), rather than producing generalizable or statistically representative findings (measure).

Objective

This course aims to provide an introduction to various recent topics of consumer cultural research for students at the Master level. Participants will:

- 1) Review and fully comprehend an empirical research article published in one of the world's most leading academic marketing journals
- 2) Identify the article's main contribution to knowledge creation
- 3) Critically evaluate the conducted research and identify opportunities for future research
- 4) Present the article with the objective of transforming complex academic information into simplified, more easily understandable knowledge
- 5) Attempt to transfer the newly gained knowledge to a business or public policy-making context

Course Format

Learning objectives are achieved through a mixture of seminar meetings, individual consultations and an in-presence project presentation, discussion and oral examination. Students will be allocated one research article, which they must thoroughly analyze and present.

Mode of Communication, Teaching and Course Materials

Communication for any course-related matters will exclusively take place in Moodle. We are unable to answer individual email requests. Instead, we will open a Q&A communication thread for general questions in Moodle, where we can reply directly to your posts and all course members can benefit from the information provided. All course materials including articles to be analysed will be uploaded on Moodle (<https://moodle.europa-uni.de>).

Prerequisites

- The course will be taught and evaluated in English, i.e. all course materials, consultations and presentations will be in English.
- Successful completion of the/a Consumer Behavior course is a benefit, but not a requirement.
- The number of students for this seminar is limited. If the number of applicants exceeds the spaces available, selection is based on grades in previous marketing classes.
- Attending the introductory meeting and your presentation and oral exam is compulsory. No exceptions will be made and absence will lead to failing the course.

Application Procedure

Via Moodle: <https://moodle.europa-uni.de> -> LS Marketing (Bewerbungsverfahren)

To apply, please fill in the application form, adding your current certificate of matriculation and a record of your grades ("Notenausdruck" for Bachelor and Master), which must include proof that you have passed a Marketing Introduction course. We accept records in German or English. When submitting grades from a foreign university, please **ensure to convert your grades to the German grading** system, or else we cannot accept your application. **Please note:** Once accepted to participate in the seminar, we will inform you via email or Moodle and provide you with further information.

Examination

To receive 6 ECTS course credits, hand in your article presentation by the deadline (5.5.2025 at 12 noon via Moodle). No alternative examination procedures will be offered. No exceptions will be made and late submissions will not be accepted and evaluated with a grade of 5.0. The final grade will be based on the quality of your submitted presentation (40%) and oral examination, which includes your own presentation, discussion and your ability to answer questions about the article (60%). The **use of artificial intelligence** (e.g., Chat-GPT) to work on your project is **not allowed**. We will only accept submitted projects that include the signed declaration as outlined in our [seminar paper template](#).

Contacts

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