# Sociology of Consumption

## Prof. Stefano Gnasso

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of the course is to describe the underlying logic which, diachronically over the last 50 years, have brought socio-cultural processes into relation with consumer behavioural habits.

This is intended to guide students in their future careers in the field of advertising communication.

*Knowledge and understanding*

The course aims to provide students with the knowledge they need to understand the importance of consumerism in contemporary society. This will be achieved via a diachronic approach to the development of society, marketing and corporate organisation from the post-WW2 era onwards. Students will learn about aspects of narratology and social psychology in this context.

*Applying knowledge and understanding*

The course will present various case studies so that students can see the theories they are learning applied in practice. Examples of corporate and political communication, both contemporary and otherwise, will be analysed from a narrative and sociological perspective, including through practical classes focused on examples of advertising communication.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will study the diachronic evolution in the social and anthropological meanings of consumption in our country, starting with its industrialization.

It will then highlight the corporate response to this in terms of how marketing and communications strategies are organised and also in terms of organisational setups.

An outline will then be given of how the consumer products on offer are devised, produced and marketed, after having identified the peculiar nature of the relationship of demand set up between these products and the people they are intended for.

More specifically, the course will be divided into the following topics:

1. Importance of branding/identity in consumption.
2. The dynamics of consumption: from meeting needs to the search for experiences.
3. The relationship between experience and narration.
4. The meaning of consumption in the postmodern age: the citizen-consumer.
5. Developments in the ritual meaning of consumption.
6. Narratives for new rituals of consumption.
7. The relationship between consumption and generational identities.

***READING LIST***

S. Gnasso-P. Iabichino, *Existential marketing*, Hoepli, Milan, 2014. Only the first part

V. Codeluppi, *Manuale di sociologia dei consumi,* Carocci, Rome, 2005.

The following parts

First part, all.

Second part, chap. 5 and 6.

Third part, chap. 7.

3. S.Gnasso, *Pandexit*, Ed. Il Sole 24 Ore, Milano, 2022. The Introduction and the first two essays (Gnasso, Ventura).

A text chosen from:

Z. Bauman, *Homo consumens,* Erikson, Trento, 2007.

P. Meloni, *Antropologia del consumo*, Carocci, Rome, 2018.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be taught in lectures with plenty of references to specific cases.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Oral examination.

Students must demonstrate that they know the information, definitions and key concepts related to the course syllabus. The must also demonstrates their familiarity with the topics and underlying issues discussed in lectures.

The assessment criteria are as follows: relevance of answers, appropriate use of terminology, coherent and well-structured discourse and sound reasoning, and ability to identify conceptual links and ongoing issues.

It is possible to do a written examination (made by three open-ended questions), to be sat before normal exam session, marked from 0 (no response) to 10 (exemplary response).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The students must possess basic knowledge in relation to Sociology course.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.