OVERVIEW
This class explores objects and sociality in mutual determination. Drawing on examples from the built environment (architecture, infrastructure), from the world of ordinary household goods (toasters, clothes, toilets), from various cultural and historical contexts (Renaissance England, Victorian America) and from worlds of waste (garbage, recycling), we ask questions about the politics of things and about their shifting roles in everyday life. We explore the logistics of fashion systems, the link between goods and geography, and the impact of changing corporate organizational modes. Our perspective includes political economy as well as theoretical standpoints influenced by the likes of Bruno Latour and Howard Becker, along with the empirical guide of what Mary Douglas calls “an anthropology of consumption.”

Students are responsible for weekly readings, active class participation, regular responses to questions posted on our Blackboard discussion forum, and a research project that will be the basis of a 5-minute conference presentation and a 15-page final paper. The research topic must be approved by the instructors.

Project Deadlines

- September 26: Abstract (250 words maximum; less is better)
- October 24: Outline
- November 14: Preliminary bibliography
- December 5: Rough draft to Harvey and Robin for comment (optional)
- December 10: Rough drafts back to students
- December 15: Conference
- December 18: Final papers due

1. September 5 | Orientation and Contesting Approaches; Goods as Bads


Recommended
Calhoun, Craig. Pierre Bourdieu in Context.


2. September 12 | Goods as OK (and a lot more)


--Chapter 1: Goods, Bads, and the Lash-Ups in Between


Recommended

--Chapters 1 and 2 (p1-54)


3. September 19 | Methods from Stuff


**Recommended**


**4. September 26 | Lash-Up, Habitus and Actor-Network Approaches**


**Recommended**


**5. October 3 | Gender, Race, Class**


--Chapter 4 (p91-124)


Recommended

6. October 10 | Form and Function


Recommended


--Part I (p21-148)


7. October 17 | Fashion


Recommended


8. October 24 | Shopping, Choosing and Identity


**Recommended**


**9. October 31 | Sanctification and Preservation**

Guest: Glenn Wharton


**Recommended**


**10. November 7 | Buildings**


**11. November 14 | Waste and Discards / Guest: Samantha MacBride**


--Introduction (p1-22); Chapter 1: Rags and Bottles (p23-47)


12. November 21 | No Class

13. November 28 | Place and Region in the Making of Goods


**Recommended**


14. December 5 | Corporate Organization


**15. December 12 | Ecology and Social Reform**

Daly, Herman. 1996. *Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development*. Boston: Beacon Press. --Introduction (p1-23); Chapter 4 (p75-93)

--Chapter 4 (p62-81); Chapter 6 (p111-124)


**Recommended**


**December 15 (Saturday): Social Life of Material Culture Student Conference**

**Final papers due December 18**