

Material Culture

SOCI/ANTH441/2A, Fall 2014

1 of 2

Instructor: Alex Enkerli

Office: H-1125-28

Office Hours: Tuesdays 13:00–14:30

Class Meetings: Wednesdays 10:15–13:00

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Extension: 5408

Classroom: MB-3.255



The focus of this course is the study of material objects and their role in the production of social life and culture. This course argues for the importance of considering nonhuman things in sociology, anthropology, and modern social theory.

The course is structured around two components. The first is an overview of theoretical approaches to the study of material culture through case studies and the second is an engagement with interpretive methodologies for the social study of material culture in which students will be required to complete an empirical research project on the sociology/anthropology of a “thing.”

Course Requirements and Evaluation Scheme

Seminar Contributions	10	End of Semester
Complementary Texts	10	Ongoing
Project I: Description of a Thing	20	October 8
Project II: Presentation	25	November 5–26
Project III: Final Paper	35	December 5

A+	90-100	C	63-66
A	85- 89	C-	60-62
A-	80- 84	D+	57-59
B+	77- 79	D	53-56
B	73- 76	D-	50-52
B-	70-72	F	40
C+	67-69	R	20

Course Policies

- Attendance is required during all class meetings, **including during class presentations**. Seminar contributions can be made face-to-face or online, privately or publicly.
- Work on core and complementary texts should be done before the class meetings for which they are assigned.
- Assignments for the course should be submitted *online* on or before their due date. Hard copies of assignments **will not be accepted**. Assignments submitted after the due date will incur a grade penalty and may be graded much later than other assignments.
- Extra credit **will not be given** in this class. However, if you submit an assignment *at least one week in advance of its due date*, I will provide you with feedback and allow you to rewrite your assignment based on this feedback. Rewriting an assignment does not guarantee a better grade but should enhance your learning process and might allow you to improve your grade.
- Some elements of this course outline are subject to change during the semester. If such changes are made, I will notify you in advance, both in class and online.
- In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Course Schedule

10/09	DiSalvo, Carl. "Critical Making as Materializing the Politics of Design." <i>The Information Society</i> 30, no. 2 (March 2014): 96–105.
17/09	Magaudda, Paolo. "When Materiality 'Bites Back': Digital Music Consumption Practices in the Age of Dematerialization." <i>Journal of Consumer Culture</i> 11, no. 1 (March 25, 2011): 15–36.
24/09	Bates, Eliot. "The Social Life of Musical Instruments." <i>Ethnomusicology</i> 56, no. 3 (September 13, 2012): 363–95.
01/10	Griswold, Wendy, Gemma Mangione, and Terence E. McDonnell. "Objects, Words, and Bodies in Space: Bringing Materiality into Cultural Analysis." <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> 36, no. 4 (October 30, 2013): 343–64.
08/10	Pickering, Lucy. "Toilets, Bodies, Selves: Enacting Composting as Counterculture in Hawai'i." <i>Body & Society</i> 16, no. 4 (December 20, 2010): 33–55.
Project I: Description of a Thing (Due October 8)	
15/10	Prell, Christina. "Rethinking the Social Construction of Technology Through 'Following the Actors': A Reappraisal of Technological Frames." <i>Sociological Research Online</i> 14, no. 2 (2009). Van Osch, Wietske, and Orr Mendelson. "A Typology of Affordances: Untangling Sociomaterial Interactions through Video Analysis." (December 5, 2011). <i>ICIS 2011 Proceedings</i> . Paper 1.
22/10	Vilar Rosales, Marta. "The Domestic Work of Consumption: Materiality, Migration and Home-Making." <i>Etnografica</i> 14, no. vol. 14 (3) (October 01, 2010): 507–25. Ylimaunu, Timo, James Symonds, Paul R Mullins, A.-K. Salmi, Risto Nurmi, T. Kallio-Seppa, Tiina Kuokkanen, and Annemari Tranberg. "Street Mirrors, Surveillance, and Urban Communities in Early Modern Finland." <i>Journal of Material Culture</i> 19, no. 2 (February 20, 2014): 145–67.
29/10	Bell, Joshua A, and Haidy Geismar. "Materialising Oceania: New Ethnographies of Things in Melanesia and Polynesia." <i>The Australian Journal of Anthropology</i> 20, no. 1 (April 2009): 3–27.
05/11	Greer, Shelley. "Heritage and Empowerment: Community-based Indigenous Cultural Heritage in Northern Australia." <i>International Journal of Heritage Studies</i> 16, no. 1–2 (January 2010): 45–58.
Project II: Presentation (November 5–26)	
Project III: Final Paper (December 5)	