



MIT 3216G

The Culture of Consumption

Faculty of Information and Media Studies – Fall 2023

Instructor

Dr. Atle Mikkola Kjøsén

Email

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Lecture time and location

Mondays 9.30-12.30pm in UCC-63

In-person drop-in office hours

Thursdays 5-6.30pm in FNB 4118

Zoom office hours

By appointment

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for MIT 3216 is MIT 2100 F/G. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

This course examines the emergence, development, and social significance of our culture of consumption. Through the use of history, concepts, and theories, the contemporary role of consumption is assessed in relation to diverse topics, including agency, identity-formation, activism, space, and meaning, as well as touching on various consumption phenomena such as fast fashion and the demise of shopping malls. The course aims to develop student awareness of, and the ability to apply, historical and theoretical analyses to questions concerning our culture of consumption and why this is a uniquely capitalist culture.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this class students will be able to

- Define and apply key concepts used in the academic field of consumption studies and material culture in order to analyse and discuss the culture of consumption as such and the implications of a culture predicated on consumption, including specific types of consumption (e.g., digital, health, education, entertainment etc.).
- Explain how the culture of consumption emerged in the transition to, and developed in tandem with, modernity and the capitalist mode of production.
- Position the consumer and their behaviour within the structure-agency debate in order to discuss how the consumer is sovereign even as their behaviour is determined by the capitalist mode of production, phenomena like advertising and retail store design, and subject position.
- Explain and discuss how cultures of consumption are historically and geographically specific, as well as how acts of consumption are conditioned by history and geography.
- Explain and discuss how our culture and social world is made meaningful through consumption and material culture.

Assignments

A detailed description of these assignments has been uploaded to the course's OWL site in the

RESOURCES=>Assignment description folder.

All written assignments must be uploaded to the corresponding **ASSIGNMENT** tab on OWL. These assignments will be submitted to Turnitin.

To mark papers, I make use of the "track changes" function in MS Word to make suggested edits and provide marginal comments. This means that all papers must be submitted in a *word doc format*. Papers in other formats will receive only a global comment, perhaps with some illegible scribbles from my e-pencil (there is a reason I now use track changes).

All marked papers will be uploaded to the corresponding assignment tab, from which you can download the marked-up document.

Note: for all paper assignments, you have the option to write individually or in a pair.

Short paper (15%)

- *Due:* Various Thursdays, 11:55pm; submit through appropriate assignment tab in OWL.
- *File format:* word doc
- *Format:* 750-1000 words (1.5-2 line-spacing, 12pt, Times New Roman, consistent citation system).
- *Note:* You have the option to write individually or in a pair.

There are six separate short paper assignment descriptions based on course content from specific weeks, three prior to and after the reading week (*I strongly recommend that you submit prior to the reading week*). Detailed assignment descriptions can be found in the 'resources' => 'assignments' folder on OWL. The assignment descriptions have also been appended to this course outline.

Note: if you would like to write your short paper on course content from one of the weeks without a specific assignment description, please consult with the instructor first.

Due dates depend on the assignment you choose but will always be on the Thursday the week after thus giving you ten days from the lecture to finish. For example, if you choose to write on the assignment

“The meaning of things”, which is tied to the course material from February 6, the due date is Thursday February 16th, 11:55pm. All due dates are specified in the detailed assignment descriptions.

You will get the option to re-write and thus improve the grade of this paper after receiving comments and suggestions. The due date for the rewrite is one week after you’ve received your graded paper back. Please note that you may get an extension on this deadline.

Midterm (22.5%)

- *February 13th*, in class.
- *Format*: short-answer questions and/or essay

If there are essay questions for the midterm, the options will be circulated at least one week prior.

Final research paper (30%)

- *Due*: March 27th or April 10th, 11:55pm; submit through appropriate assignment tab in OWL.
- *File format*: word doc
- *Format*: 2000-2500 words (1.5 or double line-spacing; 12pt Times New Roman; consistent citation system).
- *Research*: Refer to minimum five (5) academic texts not assigned in the course and at least two (2) appropriate course-assigned texts.
- *Research question/ thesis statement*: your paper must have a clear research question or thesis statement.
- *Theoretical framework*: your paper must use a theoretical framework or at the very least use one concept as its analytical core.
- *Note*: You have the option to write individually or in a pair.

For this assignment you are asked to research and write a paper on a phenomenon related to the culture of consumption. This paper must engage with at least one concept/theory discussed in the course. You may expand your short paper into the research paper. If you have trouble coming up with a topic, I strongly recommend that you meet with me to discuss potential ones, preferably as early as possible in the term.

There are two due dates for the final paper. Students who submit on March 27th will have the opportunity to rewrite their paper after receiving comments. The due date for the rewrite is April 10th.

Final take-home exam (22.5%)

- *Due: during scheduled exam period; submit through appropriate assignment tab in OWL.*
- *Format: essay*

The essay question options will be circulated no later than April 10th.

Class engagement (10%)

This grade is based on active engagement (i.e., “participate”) with the class. Students will self-grade their engagement using the following criteria for what constitutes engagement:

- Preparation (reviewing assigned texts before class)
- Focus (avoiding distractions during class)
- Presence (engaged and responsive during group activities)
- Asking questions (in and outside of the classroom,)
- Listening (hearing what others have to say, and also what they are not saying)
- Specificity (referring to specific ideas from readings and discussions)
- Synthesizing (making connections between readings and discussions)

The self-assessment must be submitted by the last day of classes (April 10th) to the appropriate assignment tab on OWL.

Grading and rewriting papers

All assignments will be graded per the MIT grading guideline, which are summarized below (the complete MIT grading guidelines can be found on the last page of this outline).

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Note on citations and writing errors: over the last few years, some common mistakes in citations and grammar have crept into undergraduate writing. With regards to citations: students either don’t cite in-text sufficiently or provide incomplete citations, in particular not providing page numbers in citations.

With regards to writing, too many students submit papers that have clearly not been proofread for grammar, typos, punctuation and so on. In many cases, most of these mistakes are even pointed out by the spell check on word. **For incomplete in-text citations (including missing page numbers) and for egregious writing mistakes, 0.25 points per infraction will be deducted from the grade.**

All grades will be posted to OWL's **GRADEBOOK**. All graded papers will come with comments and suggested edits in track changes. Graded papers can be downloaded from the **ASSIGNMENT** tab on OWL.

You have the option to re-write your short paper and the final paper if you submit by March 27th. A rewrite means that you must engage with comments and suggested edits as provided in track changes, otherwise it will not be graded. ***The grade you receive for your rewrite will be the final grade of your assignment.*** I strongly recommend you choose to rewrite an assignment because you can make some remarkable improvements; past students have managed to increase their grade by two whole letter grades. Rewriting is one of the best ways to improve and become confident your scholarly writing and knowledge.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses. For your own protection, always keep a copy of your assignments. In case of loss, theft, destruction, dispute over authorship, or any other eventuality, it will be your responsibility to provide a copy of the assignment.

Extensions, Late Penalty and Make-up Tests

I give out extensions like candy on Halloween, you just have to ask (you don't have to give me a reason because that is none of my business). Both shit and life happens, and you're an adult who must take responsibility for your own learning.

If you haven't asked for an extension or submitted accompanying documentation of illness or emergency to the FIMS front office, you will receive a penalty of 3% a day for up to four days; on the fifth day, the paper will receive an automatic FAIL.

Travel schedules, employment, etc. will NOT count as legitimate reasons for missing or rescheduling an exam.

If you have a medical illness or compassionate grounds (i.e., death in family, house fire), please contact the FIMS front office for accommodation.

Make-up midterms will be scheduled by and administered by undergraduate student services (UGSS) on select days after the midterm period. More instructions about this will be shared via UGSS to students that writing the mid-term. Please note that students writing the mid-term will receive a different set of questions.

Communication Policy

The best way to contact me is via email (akjosen2@uwo.ca). When you send me an email, please put the course code (MIT 3216) in the subject line. I respond to most email inquiries within 48 hours. If you send an email after 5pm, I will most likely not answer it until the following morning. Emails sent after 5pm on Friday may not be answered until Monday morning.

Please send inquiries that can be answered with a sentence or two. For inquiries that require more thorough responses, please talk to me during a break in class, drop-in to my office hours, or request a meeting over Zoom.

To keep in touch and give you updates about the course, tips, and suggestions for assignments and more, I send announcements via OWL. These announcements will be pushed to your email. You are therefore required to periodically check your Western email account. Students are responsible for ensuring that their email account is working properly, including making sure it is not full.

PPE Requirements

Students will be expected to wear triple layer non-medical masks at all times in the classroom as per university policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons should seek accommodation through [Accessible Education](#).

Course delivery with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic

Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 landscape may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online (e.g., due to instructor having to self-isolate or a significant proportion of students isolating/being sick), either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). In the eventuality of the course being moved online, the instructor will provide an

updated course outline, which will outline online course lessons and related policies. The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Statement on the Use of Zoom Recording

Participants in this course are not permitted to record Zoom sessions (office hours or lectures if the course is forced to be delivered online), except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Zoom sessions will not be recorded by the instructor.



Course Schedule

All assigned texts, weekly lesson slides, and external course content are accessible on OWL, in the **RESOURCES** folder.

January 9 – Lesson 1: Introduction to the culture of consumption

Course outline for MIT 3216: The Culture of Consumption.

Assignments descriptions.

Browse the course site on OWL to become familiar with it.

Goodman, Douglas J., and Cohen, Mirelle (2003). "Consumption as a Culture" *Consumer Culture: a reference handbook*. Santa Barbera, CA: ABC-CLIO. 6-11.

Slater, Don (1997). "The Outlines of Consumer Culture". *Consumer Culture & Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 24-32

January 16 – Lesson 2: History 1: The conception and birth of the culture of consumption

Mukerji, Chandra (1983). *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism*. New York, NY: Colombia University Press. Pp. 1-29.

McKendrick, Neil et. al. (1982). *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England*. London: Europa Publications Limited. Pp. 9-33.

January 23 – Lesson 3: History 2: On the cusp of consumer culture: sumptuary laws and the modern self

Giddens, Anthony. (1997). *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Selections.

Goodman, Douglas J., and Cohen, Mirelle (2003). "Fashion" *Consumer Culture: a reference handbook*. Santa Barbera, CA: ABC-CLIO. Pp. 6-11.

Hunt, Alan (1996). *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*. Basingstoke: MacMillan Press LTD. Pp. 1-2, 18-39, 102-107.

- Note: pp.18-28 are optional.

January 30 – Lesson 4: Material Culture 1 – The social and cultural life of things

Kopytoff, Igor (1986). "The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process." In Appadurai, Arjun (Ed.) (1986) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in a Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 64-94.

Rees, Jonathan (2013). *Refrigeration Nation: A History of Ice, Appliances, and Enterprise in America*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press. Pp. 162-181, 190-194

Smithsonian (n.d.). "History of the Hope Diamond." Accessed September 2, 2022, from <https://www.si.edu/spotlight/hope-diamond/history>

February 6 – Lesson 5: Material Culture 2 – The meaning of things

Barthes, Roland (1972 [1957]). "Toys" *Mythologies*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Pp. 53-55

McCracken, Grant (1986) "Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods." *Journal of Consumer Research* 13(1):71-84.

Slater, Don (1997). "Chapter 5: The Meaning of Things." *Consumer culture & Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 131-147.

Turunen, Linda Lisa Maria (2018). *Interpretations of Luxury: Exploring the Consumer Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 13-29.

February 13 – Midterm

Essay question options will be circulated one week prior.

February 20 – Reading week

No class.

February 27 – Lesson 6: The leisure class and conspicuous consumption

Duffy, Brooke Erin and Hund, Emily (2015) "'Having it All' on Social Media: Entrepreneurial Femininity and Self-Branding Among Fashion Bloggers." *Social Media + Society*, July-December 2015: 1-11.

Mikkola Kjosén, Atle (Ed.) (2020). "Leisure class and conspicuous consumption."

- *Note:* This text has been edited together from the following dictionary entries on conspicuous consumption or the leisure class: "Conspicuous consumption" (Trigg) in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*; "Leisure class" (Loy) in *Encyclopedia of Recreation and Leisure*; and "Conspicuous Consumption" (Phillips) in *Britannica Academic*.

Wang, Yajin and Griskevicius, Vladas (2013). "Conspicuous Consumption, Relationships, and Rivals: Women's Luxury Products as Signals to Other Women." *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 40: 834-854.

March 6 – Lesson 7: The consumer

Baudrillard, Jean (1998 [1970]). *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: SAGE Publications. Pp. 60-72, 76-80.

Edgar, A. & Sedgwick, P. (Eds.) (1991). "Agency and Structure." *Cultural Theory: The Key Concepts*. London: Taylor and Francis. 10-11.

Reisch, Lucia A. (2011). "Consumer Sovereignty". Southerton, Dale (Ed.) (2011). *Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE. 324-325.

Slater, Don (1997). *Consumer culture & Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 54-59.

Trentmann, Frank (2006). "Knowing Consumers – Histories, Identities, Practices: An Introduction." In Trentmann, Frank (Ed.) (2006). *The Making of the Consumer: Knowledge, Power and Identity in the Modern World*. Oxford: Bloomsbury. Pp. 1–28.

March 13 – Lesson 8: Consuming entertainment, consumption as entertainment

Adorno, Theodore (1998[1941]). "On Popular Music." In Storey, John (1998) (Ed.) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. Athens, GA: Prentice Hall.

Zola, Emile (1883). *The Ladies Paradise*. Chapter 1 and 2.

Movie or TV show TBD (I am open for suggestions as long as it heavily features consumption).

March 20 – Lesson 9: Spaces of Consumption 1: The home

Corrigan, Peter (1997). "The Home." *The Sociology of Consumption: An Introduction*. SAGE Publications: London. 96-114.

Flanders, Judith (2003). "The Street". *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company. Pp. 390-416.

Munro, Kristin (2021). Solid waste management practices and their meanings in ecologically conscious households. *Nature and Space E*, vol. 4, no. 4. Pp. 1515-1532.

Young, Mischa, Soza-Parra, Jaime, and Circella, Giovanni (2022). "The increase in online shopping during COVID-19: Who is responsible, will it last, and what does it mean for cities?" *Regional Science Policy & Practice* vol. 14, issue S1: 162-178.

In-class screening:

MacGregor, Hugo (Dir.) (2011). *If Walls Could Talk: The History of the Home*. Episode 1: The Living Room. Daily Motion.

Final paper due at 11:55pm (for students who wish to rewrite their paper).

March 27 – Lesson 10: Spaces of consumption 2: From medieval markets to the department store, and e-commerce

Ebster, Claus & Garaus, Marion (2011). *Store Design and Visual Merchandising: Creating Store Space That Encourages Buying*. New York, NY: Business Expert Press. Pp. 7-33, 83-114

Goodman, Douglas J., and Cohen, Mirelle (2003). "After the department store" *Consumer Culture: a reference handbook*. Santa Barbera, CA: ABC-CLIO. 21-24.

Laermans, Rudi (1993). "Learning to Consume: Early Department Stores and the Shaping of the Modern Consumer Culture (1860-1914)". *Theory, Culture & Society* Vol 10: 79-102.

Manzerolle, Vincent and Daubs, Michael (2021). "Friction-free authenticity: mobile social networks and transactional affordances". *Media, Culture & Society*. March 2021.

Optional

Moss, Mark (2007). *Shopping as an Entertainment Experience*. London: Rowman and Littlefield. Pp 71-82.

Ritzer, George (2010). *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Continuity and Change in the Cathedrals of Consumption* 3rd Edition. London: SAGE. Pp. 1-22.

Underhill, Paco (n.d.). "A-Z Retail Tricks to Make you Shop." (note: this is a summary of some retail tricks taken from Underhill's *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*).

April 3 – Lesson 11: Consumer activism and ethical consumption

Carrier, James D. (2008). "Think Locally, Act Globally: The Political Economy of Ethical Consumption." *Research in Economic Anthropology*, vol. 28: 31-51.

Heath, Joseph and Potter, Andrew (2005). *The Rebel Sell: How the Counterculture Became Consumer Culture*. Selections Pp 3-11.

Watson, Bruce (2016). The Troubling Evolution of Corporate Greenwashing. *The Guardian*. Accessed September 2, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/aug/20/greenwashing-environmentalism-lies-companies>

Wettergren, Åsa. (2013). "Culture Jamming." *Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*.

April 10 — Lesson 11: Post-capitalist consumption?

Hoskins, Tansy S. (2014). *Stitched Up: The Anti-Capitalist Book of Fashion*. London: Pluto Press. Pp. 185-202

Leval, Gaston (2018 [1975]). "Chapter 8: Collectivist Book-keeping." *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution*. PM Press. Pp. 191-203.

Marx, Karl. "Chapter 1" *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. New York, NY: Socialist Labor Party

Note: This short lesson will primarily be based on discussions, hence preparing for this lesson by reading the assigned texts is vital. The remainder of the lesson will be used for in-class essay writing/editing with assistance from the course instructor.

Final paper and final paper rewrites due at 11:55pm.



NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2023

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

Accommodation Policies

Academic Accommodation

Students with disabilities work with [Accessible Education \(AE\)](#) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

Medical Consideration

Students who have medical grounds for academic consideration for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth **10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty (for FIMS students this is [Undergraduate Student Services](#)).

Students are required to provided

documentation in the form of a [Student Medical Certificate](#). It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or during office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that **individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student**, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor.

If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire, or some other exceptional crisis, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave should contact their Academic Counsellors with valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Advisor. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). The gender-based violence and survivor support case managers are located in Thames Hall (3114-3127 office suite.) To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness](#) for a complete list of supports.

SUPPORT SERVICES - LINKS

[FIMS UGSS](#): academic advising; career services

[Psychological Services](#): Information about accessing mental health supports

[Medical Services](#): Student health related services

[Office of the Registrar](#): Financial Information, Timetable, Exam Schedules, Academic Calendar Information

[Academic Support and Engagement](#): Central Academic Supports, including [Writing Centre](#), [Learning Development](#), [Transition and Leadership Supports](#), and [Careers and Experience](#)

[Accessible Education](#): Assessment and recommendations for students with disabilities

[Accessibility Information](#): Information to help support barrier free access, including floor plans, accessible washroom locations, service disruptions etc.

[Indigenous Student Services](#): Includes information about financial support, indigenous self-identification, orientation, and tutor support

[Western International](#): Information and support for international students and students seeking to go on exchange

FIMS Grading Policy

FIMS Undergraduate programs now have the following class average policy:

First year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.

Second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2025, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%. The third year required (MIT 3100) is expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar**. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.