

## **Luxury, Consumption, and Sociability in Eighteenth-Century France**

**Jessica Fripp**

### **Description**

This course explores the role of the decorative arts in eighteenth-century France. We will examine furniture, porcelain, and other objects, considering them as part and parcel of social practices of the period. These objects could, among other things, mark social status, project identity, and structure social interactions. The first half of the semester will focus on eighteenth-century debates about luxury, sociability and taste, and the conditions of production and sale of decorative objects. The second half of the semester we will turn to different approaches for considering the function of these objects in sociable practices of the period, how they were used in the construction and expression of the self, and their roles in the increasingly separating realms of public and private life.

### **Course Objectives**

The class aims to introduce you to the history of eighteenth-century decorative arts, and the use of furniture, porcelain, and other objects in daily life. You will learn how to approach the decorative as objects of both historical and art historical inquiry, and to use visual representations of these objects in paintings, prints, and literature along with primary source material as evidence for the historical function of the decorative arts and debates about consumption and luxury. You will learn to look attentively, to formally analyze material culture, to think critically about its display, and to use terms and concepts that will assist you in speaking and writing about visual objects with precision, clarity, and confidence.

### **Teaching Method:**

While this course will necessitate some lecturing on background material, the class will mostly take the form of image-driven class discussion based on the weekly assigned readings. Students are strongly advised to take notes in all classes. Participation in class discussion is expected and required for successful completion of this class.

### **Readings**

There is one required book for this class (see below). Other readings can be found on Canvas.

### **Required**

Dena Goodman and Kathryn Norberg, *Furnishing the Eighteenth-Century: What Furniture Can Tell Us about the European and American Past* (New York: Routledge, 2007)

(Available at Barnes and Nobles, also on reserve in the CH library)

### **On Reserve:**

Kimball Fiske, *The Creation of the Rococo Decorative Style*

Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France*

Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior: Decoration and Social Spaces in Eighteenth-Century Paris*

Robert Fox and Anthony Turner, ed. *Luxury Trades and Consumerism in ancien régime Paris*

Sarah Coffin, *Rococo: the continuing curve, 1730-2008*

John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds. *Consumption and the World of Goods*

Carolyn Sargentson, *Merchants and luxury markets: the marchands merciers of eighteenth-century Paris*

Denise Ann Baxter and Meredith Martin, eds. *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe: constructing identities and interiors*

Annik Pardailé-Galabrun, *The Birth of Intimacy: privacy and domestic life in early modern Paris*

## **Requirements and Evaluation**

Attendance and informed participation in class discussions are expected of all students. Please note that I will follow the Parsons attendance policy and that more than one absence will affect this portion of your grade. In addition, there will be one short paper due at midterm and a longer research paper due at the end of the semester. Late work will only be accepted with my prior approval.

25%--In-class participation, which will include your contribution to discussion.

20%--Museum Paper (midterm)

20%--In-class presentations of assigned readings, plus write-ups, due one week after presentation.

35%--Research paper, topic to be determined with my help, which will be a 15-20 page paper.

Please note that you should consult the Chicago Manual of Style as a guide for citing sources.

Ideally, I would like to do presentation of your research in progress, but due to conflicts w/ holidays/conferences, I currently don't have time in the schedule for it. If we can come up with make up classes that fits everyone's schedule, then we can make time for this, and that presentation will count towards your final paper grade.

## **Academic Honesty and Integrity**

Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.

### University Policy

The New School views "academic honesty and integrity" as the duty of every member of an academic community to claim authorship for his or her own work and only for that work, and to recognize the contributions of others accurately and completely. This obligation is fundamental to the integrity of intellectual debate, and creative and academic pursuits. Academic honesty and integrity includes accurate use of quotations, as well as appropriate and explicit citation of sources in instances of paraphrasing and describing ideas, or reporting on research findings or any aspect of the work of others (including that of faculty members and other students). Academic dishonesty results from infractions of this "accurate use". The standards of academic honesty and integrity, and citation of sources, apply to all forms of academic work, including submissions of drafts of final papers or projects. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the standards of academic honesty and integrity.

Students are responsible for understanding the University's policy on academic honesty and integrity and must make use of proper citations of sources for writing papers, creating, presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research. It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. Individual divisions/programs may require their students to sign an Academic Integrity Statement declaring that they understand and agree to comply with this policy.

The New School recognizes that the different nature of work across the schools of the University may require different procedures for citing sources and referring to the work of others. Particular academic procedures, however, are based in universal principles valid in all schools of The New School and institutions of higher education in general. This policy is not intended to interfere with the exercise of academic freedom and artistic expression.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating on examinations, either by copying another student's work or by utilizing unauthorized materials
- using work of others as one's own original work and submitting such work to the university or to scholarly journals, magazines, or similar publications
- submission of another student's work obtained by theft or purchase as one's own original work
- submission of work downloaded from paid or unpaid sources on the internet as one's own original work, or including the information in a submitted work without proper citation
- submitting the same work for more than one course without the knowledge and explicit approval of all of the faculty members involved
- destruction or defacement of the work of others
- aiding or abetting any act of academic dishonesty
- any attempt to gain academic advantage by presenting misleading information, making deceptive statements or falsifying documents, including documents related to internships
- engaging in other forms of academic misconduct that violate principles of integrity.

### **Plagiarism:**

**Plagiarism** is the use of another person's words or ideas in any academic work using books, journals, Internet postings, or other student papers without proper acknowledgment. Examples of this include using an author's words in your own essay and not citing them; paraphrasing an author's words—that is changing the exact wording but lifting the exact meaning—and not citing them; lifting sentences from websites (Wikipedia or other online sources) and not citing them. Avoiding plagiarism will be reviewed in class. But for further information on proper acknowledgment and plagiarism, including expectations for paraphrasing source material and proper forms of citation in research and writing, students should consult the *The Bedford Handbook*. The New School University Writing Center also provides useful online resources to help students understand and avoid plagiarism. See [www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/usefullinks.html](http://www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/usefullinks.html)

Plagiarism is one of the most serious infractions possible within the academic community. Its commission will result in a failing grade for the written assignment in question. Its commission can lead to failing this course, and being placed on academic probation. Its repeated commission in multiple courses can result in expulsion from The New School.

A final note: students must receive prior and explicit permission from both instructors to submit the same or substantially overlapping material for two different assignments. Submission of the same work for two assignments in separate classes without the prior permission of instructors is plagiarism.

## **Schedule**

### **1. August 27 Introduction**

- Mimi Hellman, "Object Lessons: French Decorative Art as a Model for Interdisciplinarity," *The Interdisciplinary Century: Tensions and Convergences in Eighteenth-Century Art, History, and Literature. Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford: SVEC, 2005), 60–76

- Daniel Roche, “Furniture and Objects,” in *A History of Everyday Things: the birth of consumption in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 193-220

## Section I: Key Terms in Context

### 2. September 3 Sociability

- Dena Goodman, “Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime,” *History and Theory* 31, n. 1 (February 1992):1-20.
- Daniel Gordon, “Five Ideal Types,” and “The Language of Sociability,” in *Citizens without Sovereignty* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 33-42; 43-85
- Mimi Hellman, “Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, n. 4 (Summer 1999): 415-445

### 3. September 10 Luxury

- Denis Diderot, “Regrets on Parting with My Old Dressing Gown,” in Diderot (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 325-333.
- Saint-Lambert, Jean-François de. “Luxury.” *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d’Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*. Translated by Claude Blanchi. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2003.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.048>
- Bernard Mandeville, “Preface” and “The Grumbling Hive or Knaves turn’d honest,” in *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices Publick Benefits*, first published 1714, reprint 1962.  
<https://archive.org/stream/fableofthebeesor027890mbp#page/n0/mode/2up>  
(Feel free to read more!)

### 4. September 17 Taste

- d’Alembert, Jean Le Rond, Denis Diderot, Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, and François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire. “Taste.” *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d’Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*. Translated by Nelly S. Hoyt and Thomas Cassirer. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2003.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.168>
- Pierre Bourdieu, “A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste,” *Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 11-96
- La Font de Saint Yenne “Reflections on some Causes of the Present State of Painting in France,” Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger, eds., *Art in Theory 1648-1815, in An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, 554-561

### 5. September 24 no class (Rosh Hashanah)

## Section II: Networks of Production and Consumption

### 6. October 1 Producing Luxury

- Katie Scott, “Space of Production,” *Rococo interior: Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 13-77
- Christine A. Jones, “The Hidden Life of Porcelainiers in Eighteenth-Century France,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 23, n. 2 (Winter 2010-11): 381-408

- Carolyn Sargentson, "The Merchants' role in design," *Merchants and Luxury Markets: The Marchands Merciers of Eighteenth-Century Paris*, (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1996), 44-58

### **7. October 8 Disseminating Design**

- Sarah D. Coffin "Radiating Rococo: The Dissemination of Style through Migrating Designers, Craftsmen, and Objects in the Eighteenth Century" in *Rococo: The Continuing Curve, 1730-2008*, (New York: Smithsonian Institution, 2008), 102-135
- Lesley Ellis Miller, "Paris-Lyon-Paris: dialogue in the design and distribution of patterned silks in the 18th century," *Luxury Trades and Consumerism in ancien régime Paris*, (Burlington: Ashgate, 1998), 139-167

### **8. October 15 Class Cancelled (NCFS) – Midterm Assignment**

### **9. October 22 Global Influences**

- Madeleine Dobie, "Orientalism, Colonialism, and Furniture in 18th-c France," *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century*, 13-36
- Maxine Berg, "Asian Luxury and the Making of the European Consumer Revolution," *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, ed. by Berg and Eger (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 228-244
- Dawn Jacobson, "The Pleasure of Life," *Chinoiserie* (London: Phaidon, 1993), 59-87

### **10. October 29 Marketing Luxury**

- Natacha Coquery, "The Language of Success: Marketing and Distributing Semi-Luxury Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris" *Journal of Design History* 17, no. 1, Disseminating Design: The French Connection (2004): 71-89
- Andrew McClellan, "Watteau's Dealer: Gersaint and the Marketing of Art in Eighteenth-Century Paris" *Art Bulletin* 78, n. 3 (September 1996): 439-453
- Cissie Fairchild, "The Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. Brewer and Porter (London: Routledge, 1993), 228-248

## **Section III Public/Private**

### **11. November 5 Displaying Taste and Class**

- Katie Scott, "Counterfeit Culture on the Right Bank," *The Rococo Interior: Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris*, 213-239
- Kathryn Norberg, "Goddesses of Taste: Courtesans and their Furniture in Late Eighteenth-Century Paris," *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century*, 97-114
- Natacha Coquery, "Fashion, Business, Diffusion: An Upholsterer's Show in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century*, 63-77

### **12. November 12 Decorating Sociable Spaces**

- Annik Pardaillhé-Galabrun, "Home Decoration," *The Birth of Intimacy: Privacy and Domestic Life in Early Modern Paris* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 145-174
- Mary Salzman, "Decoration and Enlightened Spectatorship," *Furnishing the Eighteenth-Century*, 155-166
- Mimi Hellmann, "The Joy of Sets," *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century*, 129-154

### **13. November 19 Social Spaces**

- Bettina Dietz, Thomas Nutz, "Collections Curieuses: The Aesthetics of Curiosity and Elite Lifestyle in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 29, n. 3, (Fall 2005): 44-75
- Charlotte Guichard "Taste Communities: The Rise of the *Amateur* in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 45, n. 4, (Summer 2012): 519-547

### **November 26 No Class (Thanksgiving)**

### **14. December 3 Private Spaces**

- Annik Pardaillhé-Galabrun, "Daily Actions in the Privacy of the Home," *The Birth of Intimacy: Privacy and Domestic Life in Early Modern Paris*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 73-83, 94-112
- Dena Goodman, "The *Secrétaire* and the Integration of the Eighteenth-Century Self," *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century*, 183-203
- Carolyn Sargentson, "Looking at Furniture Inside Out: Strategies of Secrecy and Security in Eighteenth-Century French Furniture," *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century* 205-236

### **15. December 10 NO CLASS – Final papers due**