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
(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 students’ 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

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

Section I: Key Terms in Context

2. September 3 Sociability


3. September 10 Luxury

• 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


5. September 24 no class (Rosh Hashanah)

Section II: Networks of Production and Consumption

6. October 1 Producing Luxury


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 Institute, 2008), 102-135

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

10. October 29 Marketing Luxury

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

12. November 12 Decorating Sociable Spaces
• Mary Salzman, “Decoration and Enlightened Spectatorship,” Furnishing the Eighteenth-Century, 155-166
13. November 19 Social Spaces


November 26 No Class (Thanksgiving)

14. December 3 Private Spaces


15. December 10 NO CLASS – Final papers due