

Sociology 342-101
Consumers and Consumption
2021-2022
Term 1

Schedule: MWF 12:00 – 1:00 pm
Location: West Mall Swing Space Room 121

Professor: Amy Hanser
Email: hanser@mail.ubc.ca
Office hours: Remote; see calendar on Canvas for times and to sign up

Teaching Assistant: Parker Muzzerall
Email: parker.muzzerall@ubc.ca
Office hours: See Canvas for details

I. Course Description

In many ways, consumption defines our lives—our identities as consumers are even more important, some would argue, than our identities as workers or as members of religious, ethnic, or other groups. But what are the implications of a society in which “you are what you buy”?

In this class, we will explore some of the different arguments about and approaches to consumption in modern society that have been adopted by sociologists and others. This course is divided into four major segments: “Consumption and Inequality,” “Critiques of Consumer Society,” “Consumption and Meaning,” and “Linking Production and Consumption.” We will touch on a wide range of themes, from the connection between consumption, taste, and inequality to arguments about the impact of consumption on our environment. We will also consider consumption as a source of meaning and a means for identity construction and expression in society today. The overall goal of this course is to provide you with a broad overview of debates and theories about consumption, and to provide you with an opportunity to engage with some of the debates and explore a consumption-related topic yourself.

By the end of this course, you should have a good understanding of the general sets of debates and theories about consumption, be familiar with some specific scholars and their arguments about consumption and consumer society, and be able to apply these ideas to specific examples. You will also, it is my hope, have whetted your appetite and want to learn more about how consumption and consumer practices shape our society and impact our world.

II. Course Format and Readings

Although I will avoid making any unnecessary changes to this course once the term has started, please be aware that the course schedule and format is subject to change at instructor discretion.

This class will meet three times a week for 50 minutes each meeting. Most weeks, our Monday and Wednesday class meetings will be devoted to lecture, and on Friday, class will be organized around class discussions, films or other group activities. Attendance will be taken at Friday class sessions.

Lectures

Class lectures will be available to you in two forms: First, I will provide in-person lecture sessions most Mondays and Wednesdays in class. This is what we have been missing for the past year! There will be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues during these classes as well.

In addition, I will also provide you with the full text of each lecture as well, posted online in the Canvas Module for the week. In each lecture, I will introduce the subject matter, discuss the important aspects of the weekly readings, and incorporate additional (hopefully interesting!) material related to the topic at hand. A key goal of my lectures is to help you understand the course readings and help you identify what aspects of the readings are important.

Group Discussions

During the term, you will be assigned to a discussion group, and most Fridays, you will be asked to participate in an in-class discussion with your group members about the week's topic. I provide more information about how these discussions will be organized, and the short assignment associated with them, below.

Office Hours

If you need to communicate with me one-on-one, I will also offer office hours, though this term I will offer office hours online (through Zoom) or by telephone and on an appointment-only basis. Appointments can be made through the SOCI 342 Canvas website or by email. This is not to discourage you from using office hours, rather it is just a safety precaution as we transition from pandemic to post-pandemic ways of doing things.

Readings

Please note, ALL course readings are available through the course's Canvas website. You will need a Campus Wide Login to access this resource:

canvas.ubc.ca

ALL required readings can be found either in PDF format or through a persistent URL link on the course's Canvas website. Each week's readings can be found under the module for the week (i.e. "Week 1," "Week 2," etc.). The course outline also includes

numerous “recommended” readings. These are for your reference only, and you are not expected to read them. Some of these readings might be useful for you when writing your short paper at the end of the term. They have not been posted on the course website, though often you can easily find them through the UBC Library website.

Weekly quizzes

Each week of class, I will provide a weekly quiz on the readings and lecture notes through the course’s Canvas website. These quizzes will be very short and will include several questions on the content of the weekly reading(s) and my lectures. These quizzes are optional and will not be graded; they are meant to help you keep up with the course material and also to give you a sense of how well you understand the weekly material.

III. Pre-requisites

Sociology 100, or with instructor approval.

IV. Assignments, Evaluation, and Grading Procedures

Grades will be calculated according the following formula:

Group Discussion Report	10%
Midterm exam (Oct. 20)	25%
Final exam (TBA)	25%
Paper proposal (due Nov. 9)	5%
Paper (due Dec. 14)	25%
Attendance and participation	10%

1. Group Discussion Report

One time in the term you will also be asked to write a short report, or overview, of your group’s weekly discussion. Each weekly discussion will be guided by a set of instructions and discussion questions. One time during the term, you will write a short commentary or overview on your group’s discussion (roughly two, double-spaced pages), due the Wednesday following the discussion. Guidelines for this assignment will be posted on the course Canvas website. The group discussion report will be worth 10% of your total mark.

2. Midterm and Final Exams

Both the midterm and final examinations will primarily test whether or not you have been keeping up with the course readings, have been following lectures, and have engaged with group discussions. The midterm will test course material from the first 6 weeks of the course and will be held on **Wednesday, October 20**; the final will primarily test course readings and lectures from the rest of the course and will be held on the scheduled final exam date (**To Be Announced**).

3. Paper

You will be required to produce one short paper. The paper assignment is made up of two parts.

You must first submit a one-to-two-page proposal for your paper, due **Tuesday, Nov. 9**. Detailed instructions for this portion of the assignment will be distributed on the course website. This proposal will be worth 5% of your total mark.

The paper itself will be roughly 6-8 double-spaced pages in length. (This does not include title page or references.) In this paper, you will be asked to discuss a topic related to one of the weekly themes covered in the course, and you should draw upon relevant readings from the course (at least three). This paper is due on **Tuesday, December 14**. This paper will be worth 25% of your mark.

4. Attendance and class participation

This portion of your grade will be primarily based upon your attendance at our Friday class meetings, which are devoted to group discussions and review of course material. Discussions are a crucial component of the course, and attendance is mandatory. Please note that attendance will be taken at these class meetings. If you miss one of these classes due to illness, please inform me about your absence. **By the same token, if you are ill, please do not attend class!** Given the need to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 by staying home when we are sick, attendance expectations are obviously more relaxed this year.

I understand that not everyone is equally comfortable engaging in class discussions, but everyone should make an effort to participate as much as possible. If you have concerns about this, please see me. Days when attendance will be taken are marked in the course outline with a *.

V. University and Course Policies, Expectations and Responsibilities

By enrolling in this class, you are expected to keep up with course material, and to complete your assignments in a timely and honest fashion, just as you should expect me to lecture and guide discussions effectively and give you feedback on your work in a timely (and honest) manner. It is my expectation that students will do their best to complete the entire reading assignment each week. Weekly reading assignments should be completed by Thursday evenings in order to be participate effectively in weekly group discussions.

I also expect that everyone will participate in discussions respectfully and be considerate of one another. This class should be a space in which everyone feels comfortable expressing their views, and I see it as my responsibility to help make it so. If you have any concerns about the course, or how discussions or class are being conducted, please contact me. I take your concerns seriously, and I appreciate student feedback.

Accommodation: UBC accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Centre for Accessibility. The University also provides accommodation to students whose religious obligations conflict with scheduled examinations or class attendance. If you will require accommodation on these grounds, please let me know in advance.

‘Early Alert’: During the term, I will do my best to reach out and offer support if I am concerned about your academic performance or well-being. I also encourage you to contact me if you need assistance. This is especially important given the uncertain and changing circumstances we are living under, as we slowly emerge from the pandemic. In addition, I may identify my concerns using Early Alert. The program allows academic, financial, or mental health concerns to be identified sooner and responded to in a more coordinated way. This provides you with the earliest possible connection to resources like academic advising, financial advising, counseling, or other resources and support to help you get back on track. The information is treated confidentially and is sent because I care about your academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit <https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert>.

Late Policy: Late written assignments will be penalized up to 5% for each day late. All completed assignments should be submitted through the course’s Canvas website. If you are concerned that you will miss a deadline for a course assignment, don’t be afraid to contact me about it ahead of time.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is both dishonest and violates University policy, and if I discover any cases of plagiarism or cheating, I will not hesitate to report it to the Academic Integrity Program; the ultimate consequence could be a failing grade in the course and suspension from the University. You are expected to give proper credit for ideas you borrow from others, even if you do not quote them word-for-word.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand what constitutes plagiarism. If you feel you do not understand what plagiarism is, consult this UBC website:

http://wiki.ubc.ca/Library:Academic_Integrity

There are many resources at UBC available to help you complete your academic work under your own power. If you need extra guidance in writing your term paper, know that I am available to help. You can also find tutoring services from AMS Tutoring (<https://www.ams.ubc.ca/services/tutoring/>) or the UBC Writing Centre (<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/improve-your-writing/>).

Grade Appeals: I am always happy to answer questions about marking and grading procedures and criteria, and I take marking of student work very seriously. The criteria used to evaluate course assignments will be elaborated in assignment guidelines and include not only comprehension but also such elements as critical analysis, originality, and insight as well as grammar, spelling and the like. Simply being unhappy with a mark is **not** grounds for re-evaluation or appeal. If, however, you feel your mark for a

particular assignment does not reflect the quality of your work, I ask: 1.) that you first wait about 48 hours before you request to discuss your mark; 2.) that you first approach the person who marked your assignment (Instructor or TA); and 3.) that you be prepared with short and specific written comments regarding why you believe you deserve a higher grade. Please also recognize that a re-evaluation of your work can result in a higher or a lower mark.

Communication: The best way to reach the course instructor is by email. If you type the course title in the subject heading of your email, your emails will be easier to spot and are likely to receive higher priority. If your questions regard assignment due dates, assigned readings, or other information included in the course syllabus, please consult the syllabus or a classmate before contacting me. I appreciate emails that begin with “Dear Amy” or “Dear Professor Hanser.” Avoid emails that start with “Hey” or with no greeting at all!

VI. Course outline

Week 1: Introduction: What is a Consumer Society?

What is a consumer society? Why do people consume, how is consumption organized in society, and why does it matter? And finally, what is consumerism and why does it represent something “new”?

Wednesday (September 8): Course Introduction (Lecture 1)

Friday (September 10): What is a “Consumer Society”? (Lecture 2)

Readings:

Required:

- Juliet B. Schor, “Introduction,” from Schor’s *The Overspent American* (Harper Perennial 1998), pp.3-24.
- Gary Cross, “The Irony of the Century,” Chapter 1 in *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America*. New York: Columbia University Press 2000, pp.1-13.
- Lecture notes

PART 1: Consumption and Inequality

Week 2: Consumption and Inequality

It makes sense for us to start the term by putting consumption and discussions of “consumer societies” and “consumer cultures” into perspective. First, we will consider the scope of material inequalities across the world and across time—how global are consumer societies? How recent, historically speaking, are consumer societies? Second, we will delve into some theories about the role that consumption plays in shaping social inequalities.

Monday (September 13): Consumption, Affluence and Global Inequalities (Lecture 3)

Wednesday (September 15): Consumption and Theories of Inequality (Lecture 4)

Friday (September 17): In-class discussion*

Readings:

Required:

- Andrew B. Trigg. 2001. "Veblen, Bourdieu, and Conspicuous Consumption," *Journal of Economic Issues* 35(1): 99-115.
- Lecture notes

Recommended:

- Claude Fischer and Michael Hout. 2006. *A Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last 100 Years*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Branko Milanovic. 2012. "Global Inequality: From Class to Location, from Proletarians to Migrants," *Global Policy* 3(2): 125-134.
- Arjun Jayadev, et al. 2015. "Who's Got What, Then and Now? A Fifty Years Overview from the Global Consumption and Income Project," https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2602268.

Week 3: Inequality and the Practice of Consumption

Inequality among consumers is not simply a matter of quantitative differences; inequality also takes the form of distinctive consumer practices that then reflect, and sometimes to reinforce, social divisions. But how do consumer preferences vary across social groups, and especially across social hierarchies? Are some cultural preferences more highly valued than others? And are things changing—are we moving from a society with snobs to one with "omnivores"?

Monday (September 20): Inequality and Consumer Practices (Lecture 5, Part 1).

Wednesday (September 22): Inequality and Consumer Practices, cont. (Lecture 5, Part 2); short film ("People Like Us: Social Class in America")

Friday (September 24): In-class discussion*

Readings:

Required:

- Richard A. Peterson and Roger M. Kern. 1996. "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore," *American Sociological Review* 61(5): 900-907.
- Rachel Sherman. 2017. *Uneasy Street: The Anxieties of Affluence*, chapter 3, "'A Very Expensive Ordinary Life': Conflicted Consumption." Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp 92-121.
- Lecture notes.

Recommended:

- Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*. Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Bethany Bryson, 1996, “Anything But Heavy Metal: Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes,” *American Sociological Review* 61: 884-899.
- Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann, “Democracy versus Distinction: A Study of Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food Writing,” *American Journal of Sociology* 2007 113(1): 165-204.
- Zachary Hyde. 2014. “Omnivorous Gentrification: Restaurant Reviews and Neighborhood Change in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver,” *City and Community* 13(4): 341-359.
- Tak Wing Chan. 2019. “Understanding Cultural Omnivores: Social and Political Attitudes,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 70(3): 784-806.

Week 4: Institutions of Consumption and Inequality—Consumer Credit

Modern, consumer societies are, in some ways, built upon consumer credit—the ability of consumers to borrow money. This week, we consider the development of consumer credit in North America, examining one of the key institutions of modern consumption. We will examine why these institutions are important and what implications they hold in terms of social inequality. I will also give you a sense of how consumer credit is both a global phenomenon but also deeply shaped by local and especially national contexts.

Monday (September 27): Consumer Credit and Why it Matters (Lecture 6)

Wednesday (September 29): Credit Inequalities (Lecture 7)

Friday (October 1): In-class discussion*

Readings:

Required:

- Barbara Kiviat. 2019. “Credit Scoring in the United States,” *Economic Sociology* (The European electronic newsletter), 21(1): 33-42.
- Read about credit scores and credit reports in Canada:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/credit-reports-score/credit-report-score-basics.html>
- Lecture notes

Recommended:

- Marion Fourcade and Kieran Healy. 2013. “Classification situations: Life-chances in the neo-liberal era,” *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 38(8):559-572
- Akos Rona-Tas and Alya Guseva. 2018. “Consumer Credit in Comparative Perspective,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 44: 55-75.
- Rachel E. Dwyer. 2018. “Credit, Debt and Inequality,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 44: 237-61.

PART 2: Critiques of Consumer Society

Week 5: Commodification, Advertising, and Corporate Power

Some of the most powerful and enduring critiques of consumerism focus on the impact of markets on culture, the power of corporations in dictating the content of consumer culture, and the role that advertising plays in shaping consumer wants and desires.

Monday (October 4): Advertising, Corporate Power, and Consumer Culture Critiques (Lecture 8)

Wednesday (October 6): Film (“The Merchants of Cool”)

Friday (October 8): In-class discussion*

Readings:

Required:

- Juliet B. Schor. 2007. “In Defense of Consumer Critique: Revisiting the Consumption Debates of the Twentieth Century,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 611:16-30.
- Thomas C. Frank. 1997. “Advertising as Cultural Criticism: Bill Bernbach versus the Mass Society,” pp.52-73 in *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lecture notes.

Week 6: Ethical Consumption: Sustainability, Fair Trade and Social and Environmental Justice

This week we will consider some of the new critiques of consumerism and consumer societies from the perspectives of environmental sustainability and social justice. Can consumers act as ethical citizens, or is consumption a fundamentally flawed framework for thinking about sustainability or fairness?

Monday (October 11): **Thanksgiving – No class!**

Wednesday (October 13): Green Consumption, Ethical Consumption, and the Limits of the “Good” Consumer (Lecture 9)

Friday (October 15): In-class discussion*

Readings:

Required:

- Michael F. Maniates, “Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?” *Global Environmental Politics* 2001 1(3): 31-52.
- Margaret M. Willis and Juliet B. Schor. “Does Changing a Light Bulb Lead to Changing the World? Political Action and the Conscious Consumer,” *The*

ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 2012 644:160-190.

- Lecture notes

Recommended:

- Emily Huddart Kennedy, Harvey Krahn and Naomi T. Krogman. "Are we counting what counts? A closer look at environmental concern, pro-environmental behavior, and carbon footprint," *Local Environment* 2013:1-17.
- Matthew Adams and Jayne Raisborough, "Making a Difference: Ethical Consumption and the Everyday," *British Journal of Sociology* 2010 61(2): 256-274.
- Julie Guthman, "Fast food/organic food: reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow'," *Social and Cultural Geography* 2003 4(1): 45-58.

Week 7: Midterm Exam

Monday (October 18): Midterm review

Wednesday (October 20): **In-class midterm exam**

Friday (October 22): **No class** – get started on the readings for next week

PART 3: Consumption, Identity and Meaning

Week 8: Consumption and Identity

In addition to the many critiques of consumption, consumerism, and consumer society, there are also those who argue that consumption offers people an avenue for individual fulfillment, a means for self-expression or the construction of individual and collective identities, and even a means to challenge traditional constraints of society. They ask a different set of questions about consumption: How does consumption fit into people's everyday lives? What role does it play in helping people make sense of their worlds and their places in them? This week, and in the following several weeks, we take a bottom-up look at consumption.

Monday (October 25): Meaningful Consumption (Lecture 10)

Wednesday (October 27): Brands, Nations, and Collective Consumer Identities (Lecture 11)

Friday (October 29) In-class discussions*

Readings:

Required:

- Daniel Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, chapters 1-2, pp.1-31.

- Russell W. Belk, “Possessions and the Extended Self,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 1988 15:139-168.
- Albert M. Muniz, Jr. and Thomas C. O’Guinn, “Brand Community,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 2001 27:412-432.
- Lecture notes

Recommended:

- Daniel Miller, *A Theory of Shopping* (Polity, 1998).
- Igor Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process,” in A. Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- Michaela DeSoucey. 2016. *Contested Tastes: Foie Gras and the Politics of Food*. Princeton University Press.
- Enric Castello and Sabina Mihelj. 2018. “Selling and Consuming the Nation: Understanding Consumer Nationalism,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 18(4): 558-576.

Week 9: Consumption, Gender, Race and Ethnicity

What is the relationship between consumption and the expression of gendered and ethnic or racial identities? Do consumption practices, expectations and norms serve to construct such identities and categories as well as provide individuals an avenue for self-expression?

Monday (November 1): Consumption and Gender Identities (Lecture 12)

Wednesday (November 3): Race, Ethnicity and Consumption (Lecture 13)

Friday (November 5): Short film (Body typed”); in-class discussions*

Readings:

Required:

- Kate Cairns and Josee Johnston, “Feeding the ‘Organic Child’: Mothering through Ethical Consumption,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 2013 13(2): 97-118.
- Michele Lamont and Virag Molnar, “How Blacks Use Consumption to Shape their Collective Identity: Evidence from marketing specialists,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 2001 1(1): 31-45.
- Lecture notes.

Recommended:

- Douglas M. Stayman and Rohit Deshpande, “Situational Ethnicity and Consumer Behavior,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 1989 16:361-371.
- David Crockett. 2017. “Paths to Respectability: Consumption and Stigma Management in the Contemporary Black Middle Class,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 44: 554-581.

Week 10: Paper Proposal, Midterm Break

This is a very short week!

Our class meeting will be devoted to answering questions about the paper assignment and providing assistance with completing the paper proposal.

Monday (November 8): In-class guidance on paper proposal and final paper assignments

Tuesday (November 9): paper proposal due, to be submitted online.

Wednesday (November 10): **Midterm Break, no class!**

Friday (November 12): **Midterm Break, no class!**

Week 11: Kids and Consumption

Are kids consumers? Should they be? What does consumption mean to children, and how does children's consumer culture get defined? How important are parents, how important are peers? We'll explore some of these questions this week.

Monday (November 15): Children's Consumption (Lecture 14)

Wednesday (November 17) Gender and Children's Consumption (Lecture 15)

Friday (November 19): In-class discussions*

Readings:

Required:

- Allison J. Pugh, "Making Do," pp.48-82 in *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture* (University of California Press, 2009).
- Emily W. Kane, "'No Way My Boys Are Going to Be Like That!': Parents' Responses to Children's Gender Nonconformity," *Gender & Society* 2006 20(2):149-176.
- Lecture notes.

Recommended:

- Elizabeth Chin, "Anthropologist Takes Inner-City Children on Shopping Sprees," pp.117-141 in *Purchasing Power: Black Kids and American Consumer Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2001).
- Daniel Cook, "Pediocularity: From the Child's Point of View," pp.66-95 in *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer* (Duke University Press, 2004).

Week 12: Social Media, Virtual Worlds, and Modern Consumption

The Internet, and especially new forms of social media that operate on the Internet and through cellular communications system, have become increasingly intertwined with

consumption: We consume social media, ideas about consumption are communicated through social media, and our consumer purchases may be carried out online as well.

This week, we consider “virtual” worlds and consumption.

Monday (November 22): Consumption and Social Media (Lecture 16)

Wednesday (November 24): The New Digital Data of Consumption (Lecture 17)

Friday (November 26): In-class discussions*

Readings:

Required:

- Minna Ruckenstein and Julia Granroth. 2020. “Algorithms, Advertising, and the Intimacy of Surveillance,” *Journal of Cultural Economy* 13(1):12-24.

- Lecture notes

Recommended:

- Russell W. Belk, “Digital consumption and the extended self,” *Journal of Marketing Management* 2014 30(11-12): 1101-1118.
- Adam Arvidsson and Alessandro Caliandro, “Brand Public,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 2016 42:727-748.
- Carsten Schwemmer and Sandra Ziewiecki. 2018. “Social Media Sellout: The Increasing Role of Product Promotion on YouTube,” *Social Media & Society* 4(3): 1-20.
- Shoshana Zuboff. 2019. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. New York: Public Affairs.

PART 4: Conclusion: Linking Consumption and Production

Week 13: Linking Production and Consumption; Consumer Citizenship

When we trace a consumer good from production to consumption, what do we find? What is the social life of a pair of jeans, a cup of coffee, or a tomato, like? We will also take stock of the various approaches to and arguments about consumption that we have encountered over the course of the term, and we will turn our attention to the politics of consumption. Is it a basis upon which collective action or social movements can develop?

Monday (November 29): Linking Production and Consumption (Lecture 18)

Wednesday (December 1): Consumer Citizenship and the Possibilities for Political Consumerism (Lecture 19)

Friday (December 3): In-class discussions*

Readings:

Required:

- Tim Bartley et al, “Electronics: The Hidden Costs of Computing,” chapter 6 in *Looking Behind the Label: Global Industries and the Conscientious Consumer*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015, pp.179-208.
- Josée Johnston, “The citizen-consumer hybrid: ideological tensions and the case of Whole Foods Market,” *Theory and Society* 2008 37:229-270.
- Lecture notes.

Week 14: Review

Monday (December 6): Review for final exam and wrap-up (Lecture 20)

Final paper due Tuesday, December 14.

Final exam during the exam period; date, time, and place TBA. The format will be take-home style; your answers will be due on the date the university assigned us; I will release the questions one week in advance.