

180MC Work and Leisure in the Digital Age

Today

10 – 10.45am

Activity

11 – 12am

Lecture 1

Lunch break

12:30 – 1.30pm

Case study

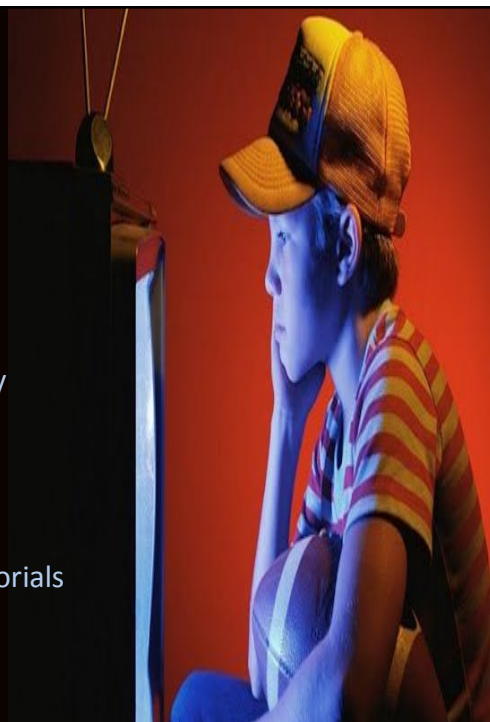
1.30 – 2.30pm

Lecture 2

Break

3 – 3:50pm

Group tutorials



Tutorials: ETG22/3

	3:00	3:10	3:20	3:30	3:40
Gemma	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Mafalda	Group 6	Group 7	Group 8	Group 9	Group 10

Topics:

- Q&A
- Brief for assignment 4
- Final essay

Assessment

- CW 1: Four group presentations
(50% of module mark)
- CW 2: An individual 1,500-word essay.
The essay is a critically reflection on
the four project presentations
(50% of module mark)
- **Submission date 7th March 2014**
by 23.55pm via Moodle



Final essay brief

Referring directly to the four project presentations you have undertaken during the module, critically reflect on how this work has informed your understanding of the various ways in which open and social media platforms have impacted upon the organisation of everyday cultural life. Your essay should refer to the following aspects:

- personal identity
- modes of social discourse and interpersonal communication
- comparisons with more conventional media forms such as television and newspapers
- the political economy of social and open media

Activity

- As a group, summarise your 3 previous group presentations
- Using the feedback provided, identify your strengths and weaknesses and what steps you can take to improve on your overall performance
- Bring your work along for the tutorials
- During the week, start working on your essay structure.



Classic theories of leisure

Leisure and social control

Leisure and consumption

Leisure and class

Leisure and gender

Taste

Lecture 1

Classic Theories of Leisure

Leisure as a product of the modern organisation of work in the economic, political and social context of industrial capitalism

Pre-industrial society did not organise time in a strict work/non work opposition

Tayloristic ideas of optimisation and standardisation

Leisure and control

State-promoted sports
Teamwork, discipline, obedience to leadership
Links with the military

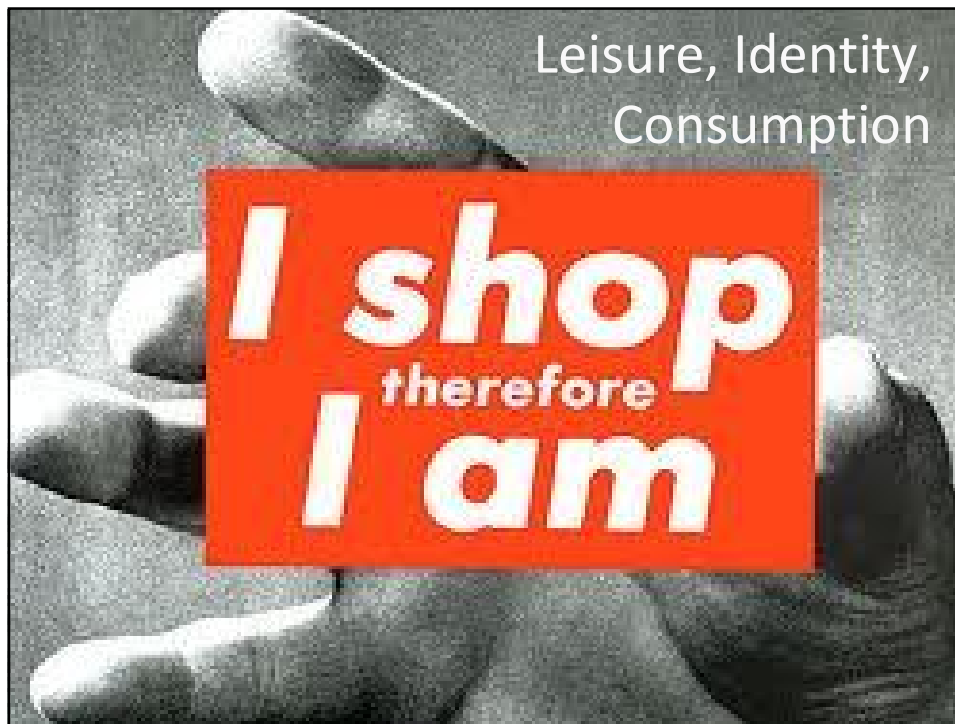


Leisure as the Opium of the Masses

Leisure is integral part of capitalism

Passive and individualised leisure
reinforces capitalist work ethics
and promotes consumerism





Leisure, Identity,
Consumption

Conspicuous Consumption

Unproductive ruling classes can
afford leisure

Display of wealth and status via

- Conspicuous consumption
- Conspicuous leisure

Fashion and beauty, sports,
scholarship and learning...





Leisure and Class

Who decides what is 'valuable' leisure?

Traditional working class practices are a legitimate cultural expression

Oppositional and collective grassroots action

"The leisure which the bourgeoisie attained has given us much of cultural value. But ... There is a distinct working-class way of life, which I for one value" (Williams 1958: 15)



Working Class Leisure

Growing literacy:
circulating libraries
and serial novels

1847: Ten-Hour Bill
brought workers
more leisure time

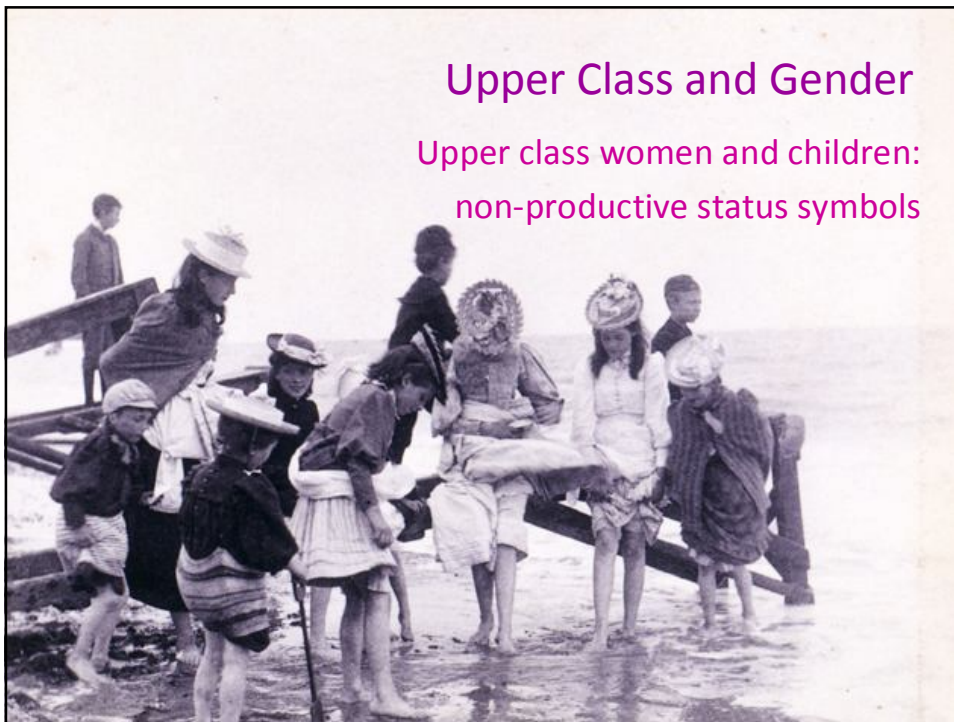
Opium of the masses?
Commercialisation of leisure?

A space for pleasure and resistance to the dominant social order?



Upper Class Leisure: Taste

"systems of domination find expression in virtually all areas of cultural practice and symbolic exchange, including such things as preferences in dress, sports, food, music, literature, art and so on, or, in a more general sense, in **taste** ... Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed." (Johnson, 1993: 2)



Upper Class and Gender

Upper class women and children:
non-productive status symbols

Leisure and Gender

Conspicuous
consumption within
consumerism is
connotated female

Taste reinforces gender
hierarchy:

Football is ok -
Romance reading is less ok -



Social disapproval of classed and gendered leisure



Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier



Bourdieu and Taste

Taste is socially constructed

Taste is formed by and dependent upon a set of historical socio-cultural economic classifications

Taste classifications are hierarchical. Dominant groups determine what is valued and what is not



The story so far

Classic theories of leisure

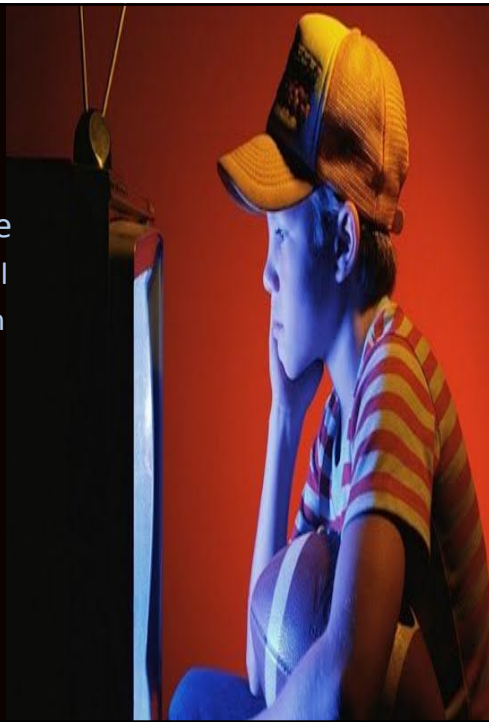
Leisure and social control

Leisure and consumption

Leisure and class

Leisure and gender

Taste



LUNCH BREAK!
Back at 12.30



Leisure in the digital world: playbour
Social control, consumption, class, gender
Fun work
Useful leisure
Self-discipline
Neoliberalism at play
Grinding
Emotional labour

Lecture 2

THE INTERNET AS PLAYGROUND AND FACTORY

New Media

De-materialisation of
technology

New Consumption

Prosumer

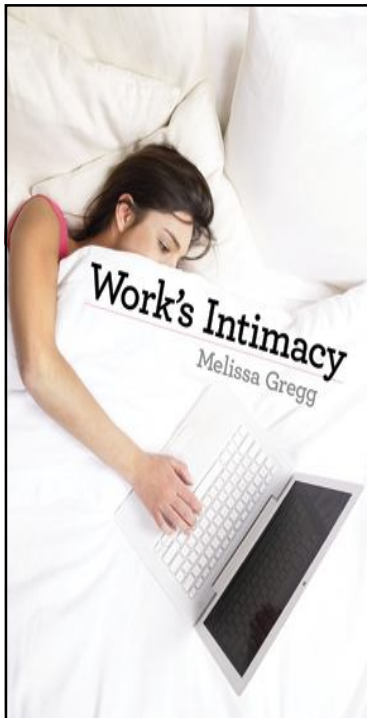
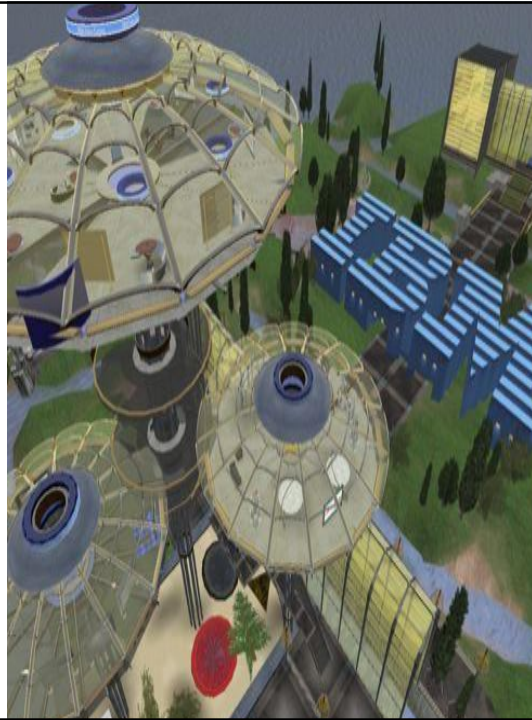
Audience as commodity

New Economy

User-generated content

Weightless capitalism

Free labour



The Digital Workplace

Reconfiguration of the classic
capitalist work/non-work
opposition:

- time
- place
- activity

*The way we see playbour depends
on key questions of engagement,
subjectivity, agency.*

Fun work is fun!

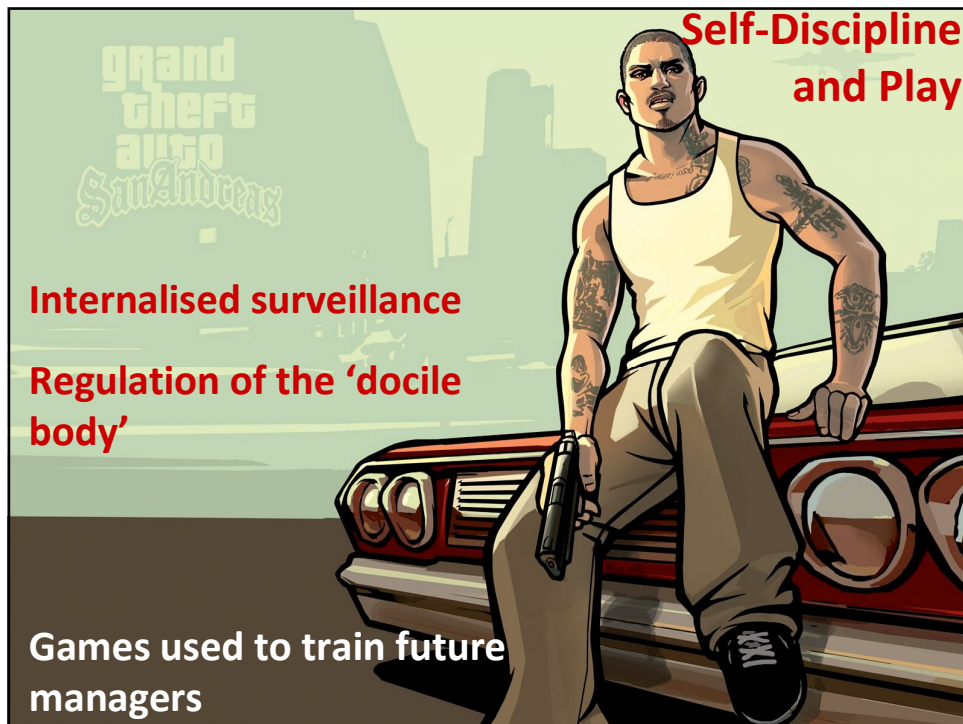
Corporate



Fun Day

...and social control





Choice, freedom, flexibility: playbour
as (neoliberal) personal identity

“No matter how variously working tasks
or productive activities can be
considered useful, it is a physiological
truth that they are functions of the
human organism, and that all these
functions, their content and their shape
are essentially expenditures of brain,
nerves, muscles, human organs”

Playbour as false consciousness: we
think we are playing, but it's still work.



Grinding and Farming

iSweat

Free
or forced



Emotional labour and gender



Engagement, Subjectivity, Agency

Office workers compelled to have fun
Modders and fans working free of charge
Managers chosen from previous gamers
Grinders in sweatshops
Chinese prisoners grinding forcibly
Emotional labourers

Who gets paid?
Who gets transferable skills?
Who is forced, who isn't?
What circumstances?

***What engages us:
the activity itself, our attitude, or both?***

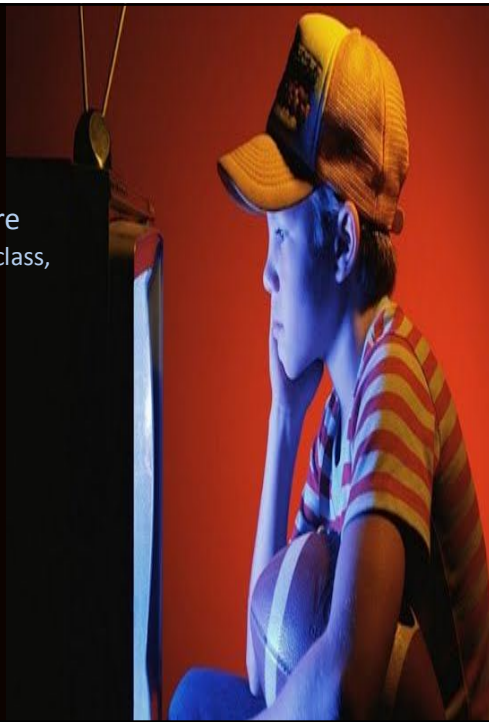
The story so far

Part 1. Classic theories of leisure

Social control, consumption, class,
gender, taste

Part 2. Playbour: leisure in the digital world

Fun work
Useful leisure
Self-discipline
Neoliberalism at play
Grinding
Emotional labour



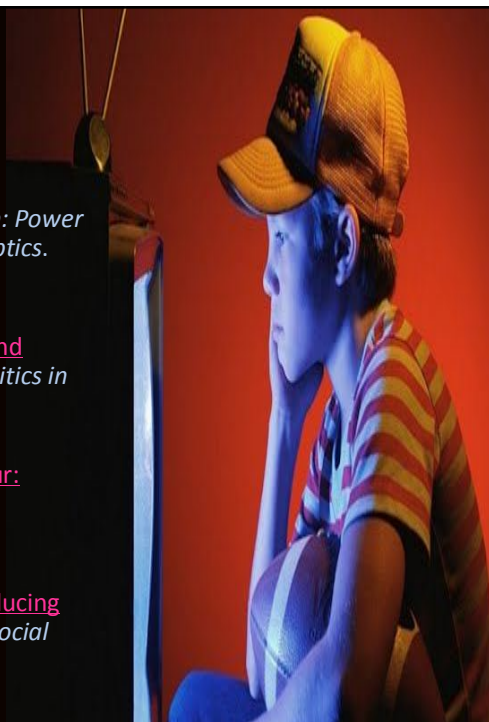
Readings

Chun, W. (2006). *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Goggin, J. (2011) "[Playbour, farming and labour](#)." *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 11(4): 357-368.

Kücklich, J. (2005) "[Precarious Playbour: Modders and the Digital Games Industry](#)" *Fibreculture* 5

Terranova, T. (2000) "[Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy](#)." *Social Text* 63, vol. 18 no.2, pp. 33-58.



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Group Presentation Brief

Choose a specific example of a digital activity involving playbour, and analyse its practices and meanings.

- Who is participating?
- What types of engagement are participants displaying?
- What are their subjectivities?
- What types of agency do they have?
- How do they conceptualise their practice?
- How can we describe the socio-cultural context?
- What type of discourses are enacted?
- Make sure you employ the concepts illustrated today and discussed in the readings.

