Topic Proposal

### Why is this topic significant for you right now?

For my final, I intend to delve into personal branding and hyper-consumerism in late capitalistic society as I have begun to research this topic for my course on cultural studies. These ideas affect how we all think and act in our everyday lives. Additionally, it pertains to my major in user experience design as I need to understand the motivations behind consumers' actions as well as how businesses cultivate and capitalize on those desires.

We have been in the stage of late capitalism since the beginning of the 20th century when individuals such as Sombart and Marx theorized the pitfalls of capitalism. But now more than ever is this idea prominent as with advanced technology it has escalated to a global scale. With these advancements and the naturalization of late capitalist ideals, it is becoming increasingly difficult to separate the pursuit of happiness from the pursuit of capital. Furthering my research into this and sharing my findings through both my research paper itself and this website will allow me to hopefully make others aware of the situation we are in and its implications. Our generation has shown that we are disgusted by the state of our political and economic systems yet we willingly fuel its fires. While I do not believe that I can educate others on this topic I hope to help open their eyes to who their actions benefit.

### **Who might you interview about this topic (you'll need to conduct 3 interviews) and why would you choose them?**

1. Social Media Influencers/Content Creators:

Influencers often excel at personal branding and understand how to present themselves as products to their audience. They can provide insights into the intentional crafting of personal images and narratives. I have several friends who are themselves social media influences or they are going to school to manage content creation.

* Matt Auckland, Rachel Manlubatan, or Ethan Letch

1. Marketing Psychologist or Consumer Behavior Expert:

Professionals in this field can shed light on the psychological aspects of personal branding and how individuals are perceived as products in the eyes of consumers. They can discuss the strategies behind creating marketable personal brands. I have several professors who work in the industry and can provide this insider perspective. These individuals will be very likely to give useful quotes as well as, further materials to include in my research.

* Sandra Kumorowski

1. User experience Students

Finally, UX designers focus on creating seamless and enjoyable interactions in the digital realm. They can speak to how individuals curate their online personas, the design choices that impact user perception, and the overall user experience in the context of personal branding. As well as understanding how different platforms shape user experiences. UX designers can discuss how platforms like social media influence the way individuals present themselves and how these platforms encourage or discourage certain behaviors. Furthermore, they have to understand and consider ethical implications, psychological perception, and data security. These provide peer perspectives that I will be able to use to validate my observations and create a more nuanced conclusion.

### **What are you hoping to learn about this topic between now and the end of this semester?**

I hope to learn more about the theories and ideologies behind our actions as individuals within our society today. For example, capitalist realism is a theory, and like all theories, it is meant to help us open our eyes. Even if we cannot escape capitalism we must be aware of how it works, who it works for, and in what ways it works through our actions. This extended inquiry will serve the purpose of educating and understanding how we embody the ideas of capitalism enabling it to be a decentralized system that self-replicates across generations. In this pursuit, I hope to uncover why we destroy and leave behind the concrete natural world for the abstract world of capital.

# Resources

[Mark Fisher: Capitalist Realism and Business Ontology](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Cb5XJH4NMI)

[Ghosts of Mark Fisher: Hauntology, Lost Futures, and Depression](https://youtu.be/gFyaNG9xbEU?si=vspJfREY4POd9aX3)

The Theory Toolbox: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=nlebk&AN=373154&site=ehost-live&scope=site&custid=s8989762&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_A>

Chapters:

* History
* The idea of Culture/nature
* Authority
* Author/reader relationship

[https://repository.uel.ac.uk/download/e1a52afa9ca5891569d05e63baf48a860fcaf061dc0cdca1f1539995a883dbc1/138448/consumerism%20and%20contradictions%201987%20reformatted%20mn%202013.pdf](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Frepository.uel.ac.uk%2Fdownload%2Fe1a52afa9ca5891569d05e63baf48a860fcaf061dc0cdca1f1539995a883dbc1%2F138448%2Fconsumerism%2520and%2520contradictions%25201987%2520reformatted%2520mn%25202013.pdf&data=05%7C02%7CHinkle01%40colum.edu%7C9a6badf6a37947b0317908dc33dc418b%7C243ef28877994efcaff5fde4e3f1c98d%7C0%7C0%7C638442268294725534%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=OiCwNp0uF5renV6tRBlvQnCMqqiR5FeMUBFoYZtx7Ow%3D&reserved=0)