**Essay II—Consumption and Communication**

**Thesis/Topic proposal—**Tuesday, March 24 (Due to me via email sometime that day. This is simply to make sure that you don’t go completely off the rails by choose an approach that is untenable. The thesis you propose might change as you get into later stages of drafting.)

**Peer Review—**Tuesday, March 29 (Post draft by 10:00 am. Peer review by midnight)

**2.1 Due—**Thursday, April 2 (midnight)

**2.2 Due—**Thursday, April 16 (midnight)

**Description:** In 1500-2000 words, make an original argument that addresses the question of how people in our contemporary society use consumption as a rhetorical practice, a method of communicating messages about identity, affiliations (regional, economic, institutional, etc.), interests, or personality. Some examples that have worked in the past are:

* The conspicuous consumption of diet products and/or organic food.
* Consumption of Mac products.
* The use of luxury brands in hip hop videos and music.

Truly exceptional (A-level) arguments will get beyond the obvious—“people wear business suits to communicate professionalism and to enhance their ethos”—and make fresh, even original observations that invite the reader to look at modern culture in a new and interesting way.

Because we are thinking about consumption as a rhetorical practice, you want to think about intended messages vs. unintended messages as well as audience and context. If you are, for example, describing the ways in which UT Greeks communicate status and affiliation (as a few students have done), then part of your job is to illuminate a context with which your audience may not be familiar.

Your evidence may include examples from popular culture (television, magazines, films), news media, blogs, academic work, or your personal life. Simply remember that this paper is designed to be more argumentative than expressive, individual rather than personal. If you are going to use yourself, family, or friends as an example, make sure that you have other examples that reach beyond your limited range of experience and that your overall argument is accessible and appealing to a broad audience.

Because this is an argumentative paper, you ought to be paying attention to the various forms of rhetoric available to you. Present yourself as credible, use tangible, logical examples, but don’t be boring.

**Minimum requirements (for a C):**

1500-2000 words.

A clear, feasible, original argument (approved by March 24).

Judicious use of concrete examples rather than pure generalization, assertion, or speculation.

Sources documented using MLA format—both in-text citations and a Works Cited page.