

Dr. Cothran
Paper 2

For this assignment, you will need to write a 3-5 page paper that explores both your ideas and some current research on one of the following topics. Your paper should be typed (in 12 point font) and double-spaced. It should also include a Works Cited page that lists **two reputable online sources** and at least one article that we have read for class. At least two of these outside sources must either be quoted or referenced in the body of your paper.

1. James J. Farrell argues that shopping centers express a variety of cultural messages. Choose a shopping center (a local mall, a WalMart, etc.) and write an essay that explores the particular values, habits, and pleasures it promotes. What stories does this place “sell” to those who go there? How exactly are these stories expressed? Are these healthy stories?
2. James J. Farrell describes the mall as an art gallery. Would you agree with this sentiment? What is art, exactly? Are picture ads in store windows, rainbow piles of cashmere sweaters, or packages of bath gel forms of modern art? Why or why not?
3. Jon Pahl claims that “malls are designed to be like temples” (463). William Kowinski discusses “Mallaise” and the ways in which malls cause us to feel disoriented, out of normal time, or even ill. Is this true? How does the design and architecture of a mall (that you regularly visit) affect human psychology?
4. For some middle class Americans, has the shopping center (and the pleasures of buying things) replaced older forms of meaning (often found in religion)? Is this a bad thing? (Jon Pahl writes: “the success of the mall’s offer of salvation depends upon my coming to feel a fabricated sense that somehow I lack something that only the mall, as a cathedral of the market, can provide” [467].)
5. How is class/ethnicity portrayed within the mall? Are certain classes/races misrepresented or ignored? How do these presentations affect society’s views of these classes/races?
6. Look at Postrel’s discussion of the intersection of freedom and shopping in twenty-first century Afghanistan. Is materialism a valuable and important aspect of human psychology? Even though the pleasures of consumption are often defined as dangerous and false, are they meaningful and valuable to people across the globe? Discuss!