Marketing 952: Information Processing Perspectives on Consumer Behavior

Patti Williams
Fall 2014
Meeting Time: Fridays 1:30-4:30
Location: JMHH 741

The purpose of this graduate seminar is to provide students with an introduction to topics in consumer behavior from a classical social psychological perspective.

Each week we will discuss a topic of consumer behavior research, drawing primarily upon readings from marketing and psychology. Students are responsible for all primary readings, which will be discussed in a seminar-format in class. Each week, we will discuss 6 papers. Warning: It’s going to be a lot of reading! Students will also be assigned to be the “discussion leader” for individual sessions. I will assign these sessions to students in advance.

These readings were selected to illustrate: how basic social science research and consumer behavior research are related; how theories and concepts are applied, adapted, constrained and combined when applied to consumer issues; and how research streams evolve over time. Each student (not just the day’s discussion leader) should come to the seminar prepared to discuss each article in depth and to present comments about the major ideas, contributions or shortcomings of each paper. Additional readings may be listed to provide background information and to guide students interested in further investigation of a topic.

As part of their discussion leader role, students will be asked to provide concise contribution statements for their assigned paper. In addition, students will develop their ability to professional and constructively critique scholarly articles throughout the seminar and will be given the responsibility to lead class discussion of selected articles from the reading list.

Evaluation:
Class Participation and Idea Papers: 50%
Final Research Proposal and Presentation: 50%

Student Responsibilities

Class participation: It is vital that students come to class prepared for discussion. What you get out of this course depends upon what you, and your fellow students, put into it. You cannot expect to develop your research skills by passively attending class and taking careful notes. You should be an active listener, thinking carefully about the concepts and issues raised, and a willing and active participant, able to present your analysis and your viewpoint to the class when opportunity presents itself.

You should be prepared to discuss each article on the syllabus in depth, including your ideas about the contributions and/or shortcomings of each. A good preparation tool is an outline of the hypotheses, study designs, theoretical contributions and limitations of each paper.
We will rotate discussion leaders for each topic. Each of you will be responsible for preparing an overview of the articles and questions for discussion for a topic throughout the semester. Your job in class will not be to lecture to your classmates. Rather, you will be stimulating discussion—all will be expected to participate. In your role as discussion leader, you should come to class with contribution statements written for each paper in the session. (Please see JCR’s description of contribution statements to guide you: http://ejcr.org/contribution-statement.htm).

**Short idea papers:** These short idea papers should identify a basic problem, outline hypotheses, describe appropriate experimental design and procedure to investigate these hypotheses and briefly discuss how you would analyze the data. The paper should end with a “contribution statement” which makes it clear how the investigation of this idea would contribute to the current state of literature. These papers should *not* include a literature review and should be no more than 2 pages long.

Due dates for short idea papers: 11/7 and 11/21, in class.

**Final Research Proposal:** Each student will submit a 8-12 page final research proposal (written in either JCR or APA format). This proposal may be based on your research ideas or may be something entirely new. You can go outside the boundaries we cover in class, but should generally relate to the topics covered in this seminar. This paper should include a clear presentation and motivation of the research question and your proposed contribution, a concise mention of key findings from the literature, well articulated and developed hypotheses, and a plan to test your hypotheses (an experiment or model). Your proposal should reflect reading (beyond what is included in this syllabus) in your selected area. Your proposal need not have any empirical data collection or analysis. However, you are required to develop a proposal that is detailed enough in terms of hypotheses to be tested, experimental design, method and procedure, so that I am able to assess the proposal carefully and give you constructive comments.

Due dates for the paper are as follows:

December 1, 2014: Email me a 2-page overview of your motivation, predictions and method for your research proposal. I will provide individual feedback. (Due by 5pm, 12/1).

Week of 12/8/14: Final papers due and in class presentations. Date to be determined based upon all of our schedules.
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<tr>
<th>Session#/Date</th>
<th>Topic/Assignment</th>
<th>Discussion Leader/s</th>
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<td>1. 10/20/2014</td>
<td>Perception &amp; Attention</td>
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<td>2. 10/31/2014</td>
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<td>3. 11/7/2014</td>
<td>Search &amp; Categorization</td>
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<td>4. 11/14/2014</td>
<td>Attitudes &amp; Persuasion</td>
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<td>5. 11/21/2014</td>
<td>Affect &amp; Emotion</td>
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<td>6. 12/5/2014</td>
<td>Discrete Emotions &amp; Social Identity</td>
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<td>7. Week of 12/8/2014</td>
<td>Final Presentations</td>
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**Summary of Assignment Due Dates:**
- 11/7/2014: Idea Paper #1 Due, in class
- 11/21/2014: Idea Paper #2 Due, in class
- 12/1/2014: Research Proposal 2 page overview due, 5pm
- Week of 12/9/2014: Final Paper and Presentation due
Session 1: Perception & Attention  
October 20, 2014

Session 2: Learning & Knowledge
October 31, 2014


Session 3: Consumer Search & Categorization
November 7, 2014


Session 4: Attitudes & Persuasion
November 14, 2014

Session 5: Affect & Emotions
November 21, 2014


Session 6: Discrete Emotions & Social Identity
December 5, 2014

Final Session: Final Presentations (Date and Time TBD, Week of 12/8/2014)

Your presentation of the research proposal in class should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Plan for no more than 20 minutes and allow about 5 minutes for questions at the end.

- In the time allotted, give an overview of:
  - What are you researching?
  - What is the intended contribution, given past literature?
  - What are your hypotheses and how are these derived from the literature?
  - What is your experimental methodology?
  - Highlight some unanswered questions/limitations and directions for future research.

- You should use slides, but please limit the information on each slide. This is good practice for all the research presentations that I know you have coming to you in your future lives as academics!