



MKTG 711 - Consumer Behavior

Monday/Wednesday 12:00-1:30pm

Instructor: Prof. Annie Wilson, Ph.D.

Office hours: In person and via Zoom by appointment.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide students with working knowledge of the major theories and research findings in the area of consumer behavior. The goal of this course is for students to gain a deeper understanding of the psychologies behind behaviors, judgments, and decision-making, and to gain insight into how to apply them to influence behavior in the marketplace. By the end of this course, students should not only be familiar with a large body of consumer behavior literature, but should also be able to identify theories as they play out in the real world, and be able to apply behavioral principles to a variety of marketing problems.

Course Structure and Materials

You will be assigned a variety of readings, podcasts, and video content to prepare for lectures - these should be completed by the day they are listed on the class schedule. They are provided to give you adequate background to engage meaningfully in the lecture content. Lectures will not be a reiteration of the assigned materials, rather they will complement the materials. This class is intended to be highly interactive and will rely heavily on student participation.

Course Policies

No electronic devices are permitted in class. Late submissions of assignments will not be accepted. Class slides will be posted AFTER each lecture as will recordings of each lecture for those unable to attend a session. *If you are not feeling well, please do not attend class.*

Assessments

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

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|-----------------------------------|-----|
| ○ Class Participation | 10% |
| ○ Discussion Exercises | 15% |
| ○ 3 Case Write-ups | 30% |
| ○ Group Project 1: Brand Audit | 20% |
| ○ Group Project 2: Influencing CB | 25% |

Assessment Details

Class Participation (10%)

The value of this course depends heavily on the insights generated through class discussion. Constructive participation is based on analysis rather than opinion, and builds on the discussion flow. Quality is more important than quantity when it comes to class participation. Your participation grade will also be based on your attendance. In order to not incentivize you to attend class when you are not feeling well, there will be an optional discussion board on Canvas that will also count toward your participation grade.

Discussion Exercises (15%)

You will be assigned ten discussion exercises throughout the semester. The goal of these exercises is for you to reflect on various aspects of the course, how they would apply certain concepts, or consider where they have seen concepts successfully or unsuccessfully applied in real-world examples. These exercises will be graded based on effort and analysis rather than on opinion or any specific recommendations made (grades will be out of 3, with a 3 reflecting thorough analysis and effort, a 2 reflecting moderate analysis and effort, and a 1 reflecting minimal effort or intelligibility of the submission).

Case Write-Ups (30%):

You will be assigned three case write-ups. More details to follow.

Project 1: Brand Audit (20%):

This assignment is a group project (2-3 members per group). You will select a brand (or specific product) of your choice and audit the brand's marketing practices based on the key consumer behavior principles discussed in class including your evaluations of how the brand facilitates motivation/opportunity/ability, exposure and attention, attitudes and perception, identity signaling, and the decision-making process generally. More details to follow.

Project 2: Influencing CB in the Marketplace (25%)

This is a group project in which each team (5-6 members) will do a deep dive into the consumer decision making process of a specific product or service of your choosing. This could be a product or service that you are interested in developing for an entrepreneurial enterprise or one that is already currently on the market. Your job is to 1) identify one key behavior or metric that you would like to change (i.e. what is the marketing problem you are solving?); 2) map out each stage of the consumer decision process/journey, and indicate the barriers and opportunities at each stage; 3) describe the type of research you would want to do in order to better understand and identify the key barriers and potential solutions - why did you select this type of research? What do you hope to learn or answer through it?; 4) Suggest one solution for solving the marketing problem based on your research and the barriers/opportunities you identified, indicate why you selected to focus on this solution and describe up to three other solutions you considered and why you did not choose them; 5) Do a "pre-mortem" of your solution: is there potential for unintended consequences? If so, what are they and why might they occur? How can you mitigate them? What will you do if your solution does not work? How would you interpret this outcome and what would you do next?

Course Schedule (DRAFT)

Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
Monday	8/29	Introduction to Consumer Behavior		
Wednesday	8/31	Motivation, Ability, Opportunity	A	
Wednesday	9/7	Exposure & Attention		Discussion Exercise 1
Monday	9/12	Attitudes	B	Discussion Exercise 2
Wednesday	9/14	Perception	C	
Monday	9/19	Preferences & Choice	D	
Wednesday	9/21	The Decision-Making Process		Discussion Exercise 3
Monday	9/26	Identity & Signaling	E	Discussion Exercise 4
Wednesday	9/28	Influence & Persuasion	F	Discussion Exercise 5
Monday	10/3	Prospect Theory		Brand Audit Project Due
Wednesday	10/5	Pricing & Payments	G	Discussion Exercise 6
Monday	10/10	Headspace vs. Calm Case	H	Case Write-Up
Monday	10/24	Consumer Behavior in the Digital Age	I	Discussion Exercise 7
Wednesday	10/26	Experiential Consumption	J	Discussion Exercise 8
Monday	10/31	BMW Films Case	K	Case Write-Up
Wednesday	11/2	<i>Guest Lecture</i>		

Monday	11/7	<i>Guest Lecture</i>		
Wednesday	11/9	"Cool" Consumption	L	Case Write-Up
Monday	11/14	Behavioral Science	M	Discussion Exercise 9
Wednesday	11/16	<i>Guest Lecture</i>		
Monday	11/28	Experimentation	N	
Wednesday	11/30	Group Presentations I		Influencing CB Project Due
Monday	10/5	Group Presentations II		
Wednesday	10/7	The Big Picture		Discussion Exercise 10

Readings:

- A. Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986), "The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion," in *Communication and Persuasion* (pp. 1-24). Springer, New York, NY
- B. - McCracken, G. (1989). Who is the celebrity endorser? Cultural foundations of the endorsement process. *Journal of consumer research*, 16(3), 310-321.
Recommended: Dinnin Huff, A., Humphreys, A., & Wilner, S. J. (2021). The Politicization of Objects: Meaning and Materiality in the US Cannabis Market. *Journal of Consumer Research*.
- C. - Mayyasi, Alex and Priceonomics (2016), "How Subaru Came to be Seen as Cars for Lesbians," *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/06/how-subaru-came-to-be-seen-as-cars-for-lesbians/488042/>
- D. - Hsee, C. K. (1996). The evaluability hypothesis: An explanation for preference reversals between joint and separate evaluations of alternatives. *OBHDP*, 67(3), 247-257
-Hsee, C. K., & Hastie, R. (2006). Decision and experience: why don't we choose what makes us happy?. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 10(1), 31-37.
- E. -Belk, R. W. (1988). Possessions and the extended self. *JCR*, 15(2), 139-168.
- Savary, J., & Dhar, R. (2020). The uncertain self: How self-concept structure affects subscription choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 46(5), 887-903.
-Escalas, J. E., & Bettman, J. R. (2005). Self-construal, reference groups, and brand meaning. *Journal of consumer research*, 32(3), 378-389.
- F. -Cialdini, R. B. (2001). The science of persuasion. *Scientific American*, 284(2), 76-81.
-Friestad, Marian, and Peter Wright (1994), "The Persuasion Knowledge Model: How People Cope with Persuasion Attempts," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(1), 1-31.
- G. -Gourville, J., & Soman, D. (2002). Pricing and the psychology of consumption. *HBR*.
-Gourville, J. T. (1998). Pennies-a-day: The effect of temporal reframing on transaction evaluation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4), 395-408.
-Hamilton, R. W., & Srivastava, J. (2008). When 2+ 2 is not the same as 1+ 3: Variations in price sensitivity across components of partitioned prices. *JMR*, 45(4), 450-461.
- H. Israeli, Ayelet and Annie Wilson (2021), *Headspace vs. Calm: A Mindful Competition*, HBS Case #9-521-102.
- I. Belk, R. W. (2013). Extended self in a digital world. *JCR*, 40(3), 477-500.
-"Everything Brands Need to Know about NFT Marketing," *AdAge*.
-"Roblox's in the Heights Success Shows Power of Platform for Brands," *AdAge*.
-"Snap Takes over Shake Shack in New York for the Week," *AdWeek*.
-AdWeek's "Metaverse Marketing" podcast (Episodes 1-4)

- J. -Keinan, A., & Kivetz, R. (2011). Productivity orientation and the consumption of collectable experiences. *Journal of consumer research*, 37(6), 935-950.
-“Winning in the Experience Economy,” Forbes
- K. Moon, Youngme and Kerry Herman (2002), *BMW Films*, HBS Case #9-502-046.
- L. Anik, Lalin, Stephen E. Maiden, and Addison Corriher (2020), *A Supreme Case of Coolness?*, HBS Case #UV8134.
- M. -“Want to Perfect your Company’s Service? Use Behavioral Science,” *HBR*.
-“Improving Health Care by Gamifying It,” *HBR*.
-“How Digital Design Drives User Behavior,” *HBR*.
-“Can AI Nudge us to Make Better Choices,” *HBR*.
- N. -“Leaders: Stop Confusing Correlation with Causation,” *HBR*.
-“Why Business Schools Need to Teach Experimentation,” *HBR*.