

MAR 3503: Consumer Behavior
University of Florida, Spring 2011

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Office Hours: Mon & Tues 10:00-11:30, or by appointment	
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Class Meetings

Sec 2935:	MW 9-10 (4:05 – 6:00)	STZ 103
Sec 4302:	TR 5-6 (11:45 – 1:40)	STZ 103
Sec 2937:	TR 9-10 (4:05 – 6:00)	STZ 103

Course Readings

We will be drawing on several “popular” books dealing with consumer behavior issues, written by prominent researchers. These are all available via Amazon.com or other major booksellers.

Mindless Eating, by Brian Wansink (2006, Bantam, ~\$10, [link](#))

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion, by Robert Cialdini (2007, Collins, ~\$12, [link](#))

Nudge, by Richard Thaler & Cass Sunstein (2008, Penguin, ~\$11, [link](#))

The upside is that these books are entertaining and actually fun to read. The downside is that, unlike traditional textbooks, the chapters aren’t always self-contained and topics don’t match up to the lecture sequence so cleanly.

A packet of slide noteshells (& some supplemental readings) is available from Target Copy (1412 W. University).

Course Overview

This course will build upon research in psychology, marketing, and other social sciences to help you better understand how & why consumers act as they do. As we learn how to characterize and predict consumer behavior, we will discuss implications for marketing strategy, consumer welfare, and public policy. An important component of the course will be a focus on the research process; we will spend quite a bit of time examining not just basic conclusions about consumer behavior, but also exploring *how* researchers have arrived at these conclusions. This focus should not only help you better understand the topics we cover, but should also leave you better prepared to critically evaluate (and perhaps conduct) consumer research in the future.

Specifically, completion of this course will provide you with:

- A foundation in basic consumer psychology.
- An understanding of the numerous processes & influences that shape consumer behavior.
- Insight into how to investigate consumer behavior, and the appropriate conclusions to draw from consumer research.
- Insight into which marketing strategies are most likely to reach, inform, and persuade consumers.
- Insight into the consumers who surround you, such as your friends, your family, and yourself.

Student learning outcomes

This course addresses the following student learning outcomes for the marketing major:

- Consumer behavior: Students will develop an understanding of consumer motivations and decision processes.
- Market segmentation: Students will develop an understanding of the traditional bases for segmentation and how segmentation can inform marketing strategy.
- Communications skills: Students will effectively produce, interpret, and analyze written text, oral messages, and multi-media presentations used in business.
- Critical thinking skills: Students will apply their substantive knowledge to marketing situations (cases, scenarios) in an analytic manner.

Course format and expectations

The course will be a mix of lecture & discussion. Everyone's thoughtful participation is required to make the discussions productive, but I would like the "lectures" to be as interactive as possible. As such, I expect each of you to attend each class and to be prepared. Prior to each class, you should complete the assigned reading, noting the questions that you have. You should also think about how the reading fits with the topics covered to date, and try to recall recent marketing & personal consumer experiences that are relevant to these topics. Lecture noteshells will generally be available for each lecture. Please recognize that they contain only a subset of the material presented in class; they may not contain critical examples or full explanations. Please do not rely only on the noteshells to help you learn all of the details covered in class; they are in no way a substitute for attendance and careful note-taking.

Grading

Your grade will be based upon the following criteria, described in more detail below:

3 Exams (75 points each)	225 points possible
Group Project (written report & presentation)	40 points
Class Participation (including small exercises & quizzes)	35 points

The following scale will be used for converting from total points to letter grades:

Total Points (out of 300)	Grade
275 and up	A
265-274	A-
255-264	B+
245-254	B
235-244	B-
225-234	C+
215-224	C
205-214	C-
195-204	D+
180-194	D
below 180	E

Exams: Three exams will be given in class (see last page for dates). The second exam is not cumulative, but it will pre-suppose some understanding of topics covered on the first exam. The third exam *will* be cumulative. There will be no separate final exam given in the exam period. All exams are closed-book, and they will draw from lectures and readings. The exams will feature a range of question types, such as multiple choice, one-word answer, short answer, and longer answer. More specific information will be given prior to each exam to help you prepare.

A note on exam grading: Your grade is necessarily based on the answers you provide on the exam form. I can only evaluate what you actually write on the exam form, not what you may have intended to write. Unclear expression of a concept is indistinguishable from misunderstanding of the concept. In other words, it is your responsibility on the exams to clearly express your answers in understandable English.

Group Project: You will complete a group project designed to help you gain experience with the course material by developing strategies for researching consumer behavior. More specific instructions and grading criteria will be given later in the semester, but some preliminary words about the group project: Groups will design and implement a consumer research project, and they will communicate their findings in a written report and an oral presentation. I will divide the class into groups, but I will give you some input into those divisions. It is your responsibility to develop a mutually convenient plan to work together. Your group grade will be based on the quality of both the written report and the presentation.

Class Participation: You can earn up to 35 points for class participation, including performance on several short quizzes, and on completion of short assignments and exercises. Attending class and being prepared is necessary to get the full set of points, but is not sufficient. I want you to give thoughtful contributions and examples, and ask questions. Points will be assigned based on the quality, not the sheer quantity, of your contributions.

Extra Credit: The exams may offer extra credit points for those who correctly and thoughtfully answer specific extra questions. There will not be any opportunities to receive additional extra credit by completing extra papers or projects at the end of the semester. With this in mind, it would be wise to take advantage of extra credit whenever it is offered.

Missed Exams and Quizzes: If an emergency will cause you to miss an exam, you must contact me prior to the exam or quiz to arrange for a make-up. No make-up exams or quizzes will be given if arrangements are not made before the exam. Missed exams will earn 0 points. No early exams will be given.

Academic Honesty: While most students are honest, some feel the need to engage in various forms of academic dishonesty, such as giving or receiving assistance during exams. **I take all incidents of academic dishonesty very seriously.** In cases where there is compelling evidence of cheating, all students involved will receive a failing grade for the class and may be subject to further penalties from the University.

Disability Resources: If you are requesting accommodations for any aspect of this class, please first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide you with documentation, which you should then provide to me. I am happy to make any necessary accommodations.

Lateness, cell phones, and general etiquette: Being late to class and letting your cell phone ring during class are disruptions that are a nuisance to everyone – and they are easily avoided. Please be on time, and when you arrive, turn off any device (including laptop computers) that may be disruptive or distracting to the class. (Disruptive behavior can naturally affect your class participation score.)

Approximate Course Schedule

Date	Topics / Assignments	Readings
Week 1 (Jan 5-6)	Course Introduction	
Week 2 (Jan 10-13)	Consumer Behavior Research Methods I Research Methods II / Exposure & Attention	Wansink Ch 1
Week 3 (Jan 19-20)	<i>No class on Jan 17-18 (MLK day)</i> Sensation & Perception	Wansink Ch 2-3
Week 4 (Jan 24-27)	Learning Memory	Wansink Ch 8
Week 5 (Jan 31-Feb 3)	Reasoning & Inference Attitudes I	Wansink Ch 4, 6
Week 6 (Feb 7-10)	Attitudes II Persuasion	Cialdini Intro, Ch 1, 3
Week 7 (Feb 14-17)	Exam 1 on Feb 14-15 Compliance & Social Influence I	Cialdini Ch 2, 6 Wansink Ch 5
Week 8 (Feb 21-24)	Compliance & Social Influence II Decision Making I	Cialdini Ch 4; Nudge Ch 3 Nudge Intro
Week 9 (Feb 28-Mar 4)	Decision Making II Decision Making III	Nudge Ch 4-5
<i>Spring Break</i>		
Week 11 (Mar 14-17)	Judgment & Prediction I Judgment & Prediction II	Nudge Ch 1
Week 12 (Mar 21-24)	Decision Making under Uncertainty I Decision Making under Uncertainty II	
Week 13 (Mar 28-31)	Exam 2 on Mar 28-29 Consumer Differences / Outline of Project	
Week 14 (Apr 4-7)	Post-choice Ethical & Legal Issues	Wansink Ch 9-10 Nudge Ch 17
Week 15 (Apr 11-14)	Group Presentations (All Reports due Apr 14) Group Presentations & Course Wrap-up	
Week 16 (Apr 18-20)	Review; Q&A on Apr 18 Exam 3 on Apr 19-20	

MAR 3503, Consumer Behavior, Spring 2011: Supplemental readings

Get Out of That Rut and Into the Shower, *New York Times*, Aug 13, 2006.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/13/business/yourmoney/13mgmt.html?_r=2&pagewanted=print

Hearts, Not Minds, *Washington Post*, Jun 30, 2008.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/29/AR2008062901875_pf.html

When Voters Lie, *Wall Street Journal*, Aug 2, 2008.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121763171653206035.html#printMode>

Anywhere the Eye Can See, It's Likely to See an Ad, *New York Times*, Jan 15, 2007

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/15/business/media/15everywhere.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print

Using Menu Psychology to Entice Diners, *New York Times*, Dec 23, 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/23/dining/23menus.html?pagewanted=print>

A Hint of Hype, A Taste of Illusion, *Wall Street Journal*, Nov 20, 2009.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703683804574533840282653628.html#printMode>

Can a Dead Brand Live Again? *New York Times*, May 18, 2008.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/18/magazine/18rebranding-t.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print

Schwartz, B. (2007). When words decide. *Scientific American Mind*, 18(Aug/Sep), 36-43.

<http://www.nature.com/scientificamericanmind/journal/v18/n4/pdf/scientificamericanmind0807-36.pdf>

Just, D. & Wansink, B. (2009). Smarter lunchrooms: Using behavioral economics to improve meal selection, *Choices*, 24(3). http://www.choicesmagazine.org/magazine/pdf/article_87.pdf