BUS 561  
Seminar in Consumer Behavior  
Syllabus

Professor Sue Caple  
Office: Room 128, CBPM  
Winter 2011  
e-mail: scaple@laverne.edu

Course Description

Knowledge of consumer behavior principles is important for both the marketing manager and the public policy maker. In order to make good decisions, the manager must have an understanding of how buyers are likely to respond to actions of the firm or government. The course will focus on trends and developments in the field of consumer behavior. It will examine selected factors that condition individuals and groups as they select, consume, and evaluate goods and services. The course will stress theoretical approaches and models as well as practical applications relevant for management. We will use a combination of readings, on-line class discussions, and execution of projects (group and individual) to provide you with a better understanding of consumer behavior related concepts and applications.

Course Content

The following subjects are covered in the class:

A. Foundation and background of consumer behavior research
B. Marketing decision making
C. Consumer behavior research
D. The external and internal influences on consumer behavior
E. The consumer decision process
F. Marketing communications strategies
G. Media strategies
H. Future trends in consumer behavior research

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, the student will have acquired knowledge in the following areas:
A. The basic history of strategic thought as applied consumer behavior research
B. Determine the elements communication based on the behavior of a target market.
C. Recognize the symbiotic relationship between the influence of external and internal factors on consumer behavior.
D. Assess marketing mistakes and successes of firms using case analysis and other in-class activities.
E. Identify feasible strategic marketing alternative solutions in particular consumer product scenarios
F. Understand the ethical implications of consumer research and promotion.
G. Determine the impact of future trends on the consumer and marketing

Required textbook


Course Requirements

Summary of course requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group project presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption diaries</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual deconstruction exercise</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination one</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-line discussion</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Project – Consumption Experience Presentation

This group assignment uses visual and audio media to present and record an analysis of a particular consumption or cultural experience. This could include consumption experiences such as those witnessed at a concert, shopping mall, sporting activity, auction, etc. Working in a visual medium will enable you to think about the way you understand and analyze behavior around you. The culmination of this exercise will be a photographic/video/narrated essay. I will form groups of no more than five people the first week of class. The project consists of two parts:

1. **Pre-Production Planning Brief** – This is a short description and explanation of your idea. That is, what you are going to do and why you are going to do it. In an ideal situation, your team will all experience your choice of venue together. However, I realize with on-line classes, that you may not be able to physically connect. Therefore, another way you can do this is to choose one or two consumer behavior theories or topics we have discussed and each choose your own venues
(they should be similar, for example, a restaurant) to study it. Then you can compile your findings into one presentation. Either way you complete the assignment, reasons for your choice of idea will relate to several of the key concepts covered in the course. The brief will also include details about the medium that you will be using and there should be some references to its advantages and disadvantages. For example, an advantage of using a digital camera is that it can capture a moment in time and is often regarded as providing a “true” picture of the event. A disadvantage could be that it is too limited in its depth of vision to allow precise details to be recorded. Details of equipment required, equipment availability and dates of practice and final production should be included. In certain situations, you will need to consider whether permission to record the event is necessary, and if so obtained. Also include a contingency plan. This pre-production planning brief is due the second week of class, according to the class schedule.

2. **Presentation**
   Your team will “present” during the last week of class by uploading your presentation to youtube. The due date is in the syllabus. All class members will review other teams’ presentations and ask and respond to questions after the presentations are posted. Remember that this is an exercise designed to enable you to express yourself in a different medium and to observe people’s consumption experiences in a different way. It is NOT an exercise in photojournalism. However, as with all forms of communication, your ideas should be clear, coherent, and easy to understand. The emphasis of the project should be on the ideas and content, not the technical details. You will be graded on creativity, ties to marketing concepts, demonstration of understanding of material covered in class, and outside research conducted.

**Individual Project – Consumption Journals**

Beginning the second week of class, you will keep a diary of consumption activity. This should primarily be your own consumption, but you could observe others, as well. You will make two substantive entries (minimum 200 words) a week under Content – Consumption Journals in Blackboard. The objective of this assignment is for you to develop a reflective and evaluative approach to your own consumption. The approach is interpretive, similar to an anthropologist’s fieldwork diary. Reflecting on your own personal consumption should help you to put yourself in the place of other consumers. Consumer behavior concepts from class readings and discussions and outside readings should be applied to help you interpret and analyze the experience or observation. Each entry should comprise:

1. Description of the experience. You may want to include copies of ads, websites, etc. to aid in the description
2. Analysis – Analyze what you think is happening. For example, how does the behavior fit (or not) with the concepts and theories discussed in class?
These consumption experiences will be entered under “Journal” under Content on BB. I will be the only one who can see them and I can begin to give you feedback immediately to let you know if you are completing them correctly. You may include pictures or other materials to aid in your explanation of your experience. However, .jpg files cannot be directly attached, so please include them in a work document, then attach that. Reference using APA style if you use an outside source for your explanation. The running schedule for the consumption diaries is located on the schedule.

Individual Deconstruction Exercise

You will choose two consumer product/service advertisements for competing products/services in the same product category (for example, Coke and Mountain Dew) and write a deconstruction of them which explains key-message, execution, positioning, and communication strategies. This will be a two-page paper, single-spaced. Grades will be awarded according to clarity, coherence, and appropriateness of explanation. The exercise will consist of:

1. A denotation identifying the most significant elements of the advertisements, in other words, a description of the ads.
2. A connotation providing a clear explanation of what the different elements of the ads might mean and how they contribute to the communication of the message. Why did the company choose this approach instead of another?
3. Comments on how effective you consider the ads to be in reaching and appealing to their target audience and in positioning themselves in relation to their competitors.

This assignment is due the week designated in the course schedule and submitted through Safe Assign on Blackboard. Please include electronic pictures of the ads. HOWEVER, Safe Assign does not accept .jpg files, so please include them in your Word document.

On-line Exercises and Participation.

We will be doing a number of on-line exercises to anchor concepts and ideas from the text. Some suggestions and guidelines for discussion are listed below.

1. Evidence of preparation. Read all chapters for the week. Be ready with your own interpretation of the issues and make comments and ask questions based on your view.
2. Constructive orientation. Make comments that will help highlight important issues and that can improve understanding of the issues.
3. In reviewing other teams’ presentations, add value and contribute useful comments. It is not very interesting to simply rehash what the presenting team said and did. Consider whether there is some value that you can add to the presentation from your analysis that would add to a better understanding of the issue or would help the presenting group to analyze the issue more effectively.
You might ask why some other approach, analysis, or idea was not used, based on your analysis and interpretation.

4. The Discussion Board for the week runs from Monday – Sunday.

5. You are required each week to post one substantive comment to each posted issue in Discussion Board. Also, you are required to post two substantive comments to other students’ discussion (two different students for all issues).

**Midterm and Final Examinations**

All exams will cover readings and class discussions. The first exam covers chapters 1-8 and the final exam covers chapters 9-20 (excluding chapter 19). All exams will consist of short answer/essay questions. Due dates for the exams are on the schedule. There will be no make-up exams. The exams will be posted on the designated date in the schedule under “Course Content” and submitted by the due date to Safe Assign.

**NOTE:** All assignments and exams with due dates are in a separate file under Course Information called “Assignments”

**Letter grade assignment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93+% (930-1000)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Achievement outstanding relative to course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92% (900-1000)</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89% (870-890)</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86% (830-890)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Achievement significantly above average relative to course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82% (800-820)</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79% (770-790)</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76% (730-760)</td>
<td>C       Achievement that meets course requirements in all respects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 01/03-01/09   | Introduction  
Chapter 1 – Consumer Behavior and Marketing Strategy  
Chapter 2 – Cross-Cultural Variations in Consumer Behavior |
| 01/10 – 01/16 | Chapter 3 – The Changing American Society: Values  
Chapter 4 – The Changing American Society: Demographics and Social Stratification  
Chapter 5 – The Changing American Society: Subcultures  
Consumption diary entries begin 01/10  
Pre-production report due 01/16 at midnight |
| 01/17 – 01/23 | Chapter 6 - The Changing American Society: Families and Households  
Chapter 7 – Group Influences on Consumer Behavior  
Chapter 8 - Perception |
| 01/24- 01/30  | Chapter 9 – Learning, Memory, and Product Positioning  
Chapter 10 – Motivation, Personality, and Emotion  
Midterm will be posted on BB 01/26 and is due 01/30 at midnight |
| 01/31-02/06   | Chapter 11 – Attitudes and Influencing Attitudes  
Chapter 12 – Self-Concept and Lifestyle |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Chapter Information</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/07 – 02/13</td>
<td>Chapter 13 – Situational Influences</td>
<td>Ad deconstruction assignment due by midnight 02/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/14 – 02/20</td>
<td>Chapter 14 – Consumer Decision Process and Problem Recognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 15 – Information Search</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/14 – 02/20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/21-02/27</td>
<td>Chapter 16 – Alternative Evaluation and Selection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 17 – Outlet Selection and Purchase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/21-02/27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/21-02/27</td>
<td>Chapter 18 – Postpurchase Processes, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Commitment</td>
<td>Consumer diary entries end 02/27 at midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/28 – 03/06</td>
<td>Chapter 20 – Marketing Regulation and Consumer Behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post team presentations on youtube (due 03/06 at midnight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/07 – 03/13</td>
<td>Final Exam (will be posted on Blackboard 03/07 and is due at midnight on 03/11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Presentations On-line Discussion (ends 03/11 at midnight)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In Progress and Incomplete Policy**

In Progress grades are reserved for those directed studies, independent studies, field work courses, senior projects, and graduate culminating activities where the contract at the time of registration specifies a date of completion which is beyond the end of the term of registration. The intent of the IP policy is to provide for individualized study which, in its inception, requires more than the normal term or semester to complete. An IP grade will become an NCR or F, depending upon the grade option, if not cleared within one year following the term of registration.

Incompletes are authorized only when it is impossible for the student to complete the course because of illness or other justifiable cause and only with a formal written petition from the student to the professor. In completing the petition, the student contracts to complete the work specified in the petition. The completed petition must be filed prior to the last day of the term. Petitions are available from the Registrar. Students who receive an INC in a term that ends between September 1 and January 31 must complete their courses by the following May 31. Students who receive an INC in a term that ends between February 1 and April 30 must complete their courses before the following August 31. Students who receive an INC for courses that end between May 1 and August 31 have until the following December 31 to complete their courses. INC grades not
completed by the appropriate deadline will become NCR or F grades depending upon the grade option.

**Academic Honesty**

Each student is responsible for performing academic tasks in such a way that honesty is not in question. Unless an exception is specifically defined by an instructor, students are expected to maintain the following standards of integrity:

a. All tests, term papers, oral and written assignments, recitations, and all other academic efforts are to be the work of the student presenting the material.

b. Any use of wording, ideas, or findings of other persons, writers, or researchers requires the explicit citation of the source; use of the exact wording requires a “quotation” format.

c. Deliberately supplying material to a student for purposes of plagiarism is also culpable.

When academic honesty is in question, the following may occur:

1. A faculty member who has clear evidence that academic honesty has been violated may take appropriate disciplinary action. Appropriate disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, requiring the student to rewrite a paper or retake a test, giving the student an F on the assignment and/or in the course, and/or recommending expulsion. If the action includes giving a course grade of NCR or F and/or a recommendation for expulsion because of academic dishonesty, the faculty member must report the action to the Department Chair and/or Academic Dean (or to the Campus/Program Director for off-campus situations).

2. If a faculty member has reason to suspect academic dishonesty (even after having seen requested additional or revised work when appropriate) and the student denies the allegation, the faculty member may refer the matter to the Provost (through the Campus/Program Director for off-campus situations). Following due process an Academic Judicial Board may be formed to investigate the matter and make a recommendation to the Provost about whether academic honesty has been violated. The Provost will then take appropriate action which may include, but is not limited to, academic probation, suspension, or expulsion. In this process students may be asked to produce earlier drafts of their work and/or original notes and resources, other samples of writing, or documents deemed appropriate or necessary by the Board.

3. Grades of F or NCR received in courses due to academic dishonesty will be filed with appropriate documentation for future reference in the office of the Provost by the Department Chair, Academic Dean, or Campus/Program Director. Students receiving an F or NCR as a result of academic dishonesty will be sent a letter from the Provost noting that a second offense will result in expulsion.

Note: to help you better understand what plagiarism is, you will be required to complete a brief tutorial on plagiarism and forward the grade you receive by e-mail to me.
Other Issues

- Guidelines for written reports: Single-spaced, 12-point font with APA referencing standards.
- Late work is not accepted.
- No extra credit work will be offered. Makeup examinations will be provided only in cases of documented medical illness.
- Each student is responsible for performing academic tasks in such a way that honesty is not in question. See the policy in the Class Catalog.
- Modification of this syllabus may be made at any time at the professor’s discretion.
- Additional policies for on-line courses are available under Course Information.
- Technical assistance: The Blackboard Help Desk is your first source for assistance with any Blackboard technical issues: 909-953-3511, x4089 or e-mail, bbhelp@laverne.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to read through and follow these guidelines. Any input, suggestions, or feedback are welcome.