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Course Objectives:

The purpose of this graduate seminar is to provide students with an introduction to topics in consumer behavior. The class will be organized in a way that allows you to 1) gain exposure to a breadth of consumer behavior topics; 2) gain depth in areas of your choice; and 3) gain practical experience to prepare you for life as a researcher. These objectives are discussed in detail below.

- The first objective is to introduce the student to behavioral science approaches to the study of consumers and consumer behavior. This breadth objective will be achieved through our weekly class meetings. Each week we will discuss an aspect of consumer behavior, drawing primarily upon readings from marketing (e.g., Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing Research, etc.) and psychology (e.g., Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Journal of Experimental Psychology). Students are responsible for primary readings, which will be discussed in a seminar-format in class. Additional readings may be listed to provide background information and to guide students interested in further investigation of a topic. 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 should come to the seminar prepared to discuss each primary article in depth and to present your ideas about the central focus, contributions, or shortcomings of each article.

- The second objective is to provide students with the opportunity to develop skills relevant to the conduct of behavioral research in marketing. Among these skills include conceptual skills (e.g., the ability to identify important research problems, develop a theoretical model, develop and evaluate theoretically derived hypotheses), empirical skills (e.g., the ability to select and evaluate research settings and methodologies, develop measures and manipulations), integrative skills (using inductive reasoning to understand the relationships among a group of papers, develop propositions) and critical thinking skills (using deductive reasoning and analytical thinking to identify and rule out alternative explanations, evaluate the quality of logical verbal arguments). This is accomplished by writing four short idea papers (details of
which are available later in the syllabus) and conducting other short assignments designed to socialize students to academic life. Students will practice various research activities, including: article reviews, response to reviewers, presentations, experimental design, theory development, testing and application.

- The final objective is to provide students with the opportunity to pursue and evaluate behavioral topics of interest to them. As researchers in formation, the students will find this course useful for: 1) designing, executing, defending, and ultimately publishing your own research, 2) evaluating the research ideas and outputs of others. Doing one’s own research is of immediate and continuing importance. In this regard, each student will be required to develop and present an in-depth research paper for potential submission to a refereed journal that publishes consumer psychology research

**Course Requirements:**

Students’ will be evaluated on the quality of their in-class participation (30%) and their performance on a set of assignments (30%), and the completion of a final presentation and paper (40%).

**In Class Participation.** The class will meet as a seminar once per week to discuss, critically analyze, and (in some cases) synthesize the assigned readings. *A high level of student participation is expected.* 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 actively listen and think critically about the concepts and issues raised. You should be willing and able to present your analysis and viewpoint to the class when the opportunity presents itself. You will also be asked to serve as a discussion leader; i.e., lead seminar participants in a critical analysis, evaluation and integration of selected readings. The discussion leader will be responsible for conducting the discussion and for time management during their session. If you are not a discussion leader, it does not exempt you from reading or participating in the discussion.

In class, all students are expected to have thoroughly read and evaluated each of the assigned papers. In reading papers, you should be prepared to discuss such as issues as:

A. **Issues raised by a specific paper:**

- What makes this research a significant contribution (or not)?
- What is the conceptual model that guides this research (if any)?
- Is this research based on theory? If so, does this paper apply existing theory to a new area or does it extend and build on existing theory?
- What are the major (conceptual, methodological, analytical) strengths or limitations of this paper?
- Is the research logically derived (i.e., does the paper’s positioning fit with the hypotheses, do the hypotheses fit well with the research design, are the measures appropriate to test the hypotheses, does the analysis allow an appropriate test of the hypotheses, are the conclusions logically based on the analyses?)
- What new research questions are raised by this paper?
• How does this paper relate to other papers you have read in this or other seminars?

B. Issues raised by the group of papers:

• How do the papers fit together (what redundant or complementary research issues does each address)
• Is there a conceptual model that integrates the papers?
• If so, what future research priorities/ideas would you identify?

Students should come to class prepared to discuss each of the questions noted above and in the sections described below.

In addition to in-class work, students are expected to complete a set of four idea papers and a final presentation/project. The idea papers and final paper are intended to provide students with an opportunity to develop research ideas that may prove useful for future research activity in their area of interest.

**Idea Papers and Reviewing.** Each of the short idea papers should be based on an interesting/novel idea that integrates your research interests and the seminar readings. In the idea paper you will need to identify the basic problem/phenomenon of interest, identify the research question and explain why it is important/relevant, outline a set of hypotheses, describe the experimental design and procedure in as much detail as possible, and briefly discuss how you would analyze the data. Each idea paper should include a short literature review and should be no more than 3 pages long in total (minimum 11 pt font). Each of you will also have the opportunity to review each other’s papers.

**Thought Papers.** Two thought papers are required in this course, both being no longer than 2 pages in length. Paper 1 is due on the second day of class. It should be written to convey what consumer behavior research means to you, what do you expect to learn and how this learning will influence your own area of research. Paper 2 is due at the end of the semester and should convey your key takeaway from this course. In this paper, I want to know what lessons you learned in this course that have helped your development as a scholar.

**Final Project.** The final paper may be based on one of the research ideas from an idea paper or may be another idea. It should include a literature review as well as much more detailed versions of all of the sections in the idea paper. Ideally, the final project should have some preliminary data to test the key hypotheses. Papers are typically 20-30 pages in length and written in either JCR or APA format. Please see page 5 for some recommendations regarding writing a behavioral paper.
Academic Integrity

All University policies regarding Academic Integrity must be followed. You are encouraged to discuss assignments with your fellow students and professors, but the written work must be completed on an individual basis. You cannot submit work in this class that you have submitted (or intend to submit) in another class. It is critical to attribute ideas, indirect and direct quotes, and any other materials to their proper source. Bottom line: Do not cheat. Do not plagiarize. Do not pass off others’ work or ideas as your own. Always cite all reference materials that you use. When in doubt, err on the safe side. If issues of academic integrity arise in this class, consult me immediately.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Introduction: A Focus on Ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>Perceptual and Sensory Issues</td>
<td>Thought paper 1 due.</td>
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<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Goals and Goal-directed Behavior</td>
<td>1st idea paper due.</td>
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<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>Motivation and Attitudes</td>
<td>Project outline due.</td>
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<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>Choice, Judgment and Decision-making</td>
<td>2nd idea paper due.</td>
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<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>No class (ACR)</td>
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<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Choice, Judgment and Decision-making</td>
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<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Mood</td>
<td>Mid-semester Project Update</td>
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<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>3rd idea paper due.</td>
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<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Interplay of Affect and Cognition</td>
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<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Prediction and Misprediction</td>
<td>4th idea paper due.</td>
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<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Preparation/Conferences for Final papers</td>
<td>Thought paper 2 due.</td>
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<td>Nov 22</td>
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<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Final paper due</td>
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Writing a Behavioral Paper

Introduction
  Positioning
    Importance - big picture - knowing the literature and important issues
    State purpose early and often
    Issue in marketing/conceptual issue/combination of the two
    Not no one has studied this (as the main reason)
  Overview of the paper
  Literature Review and Hypotheses
    Use only what you need for the case at hand
    Use subheads and overviews of coming points - try to have a logical flow
    Summarize main points you want the reader to get
    Hypotheses - explicit or not?
  Method
    Overview
    Sections - see psychology journals
      Ss, Design, Procedure, Measures, Analyses
  Results
    Only present results relevant to hypotheses
    Organize by H (repeat) or by major dependent variable
    Try to present in some logical flow
    Use tables and figures
    Discuss after presenting - discussion section for each study

Overall Discussion
  Summary
  Relate back to introduction and purpose - conclusions
  Some issues better in discussion than up front

References
  Pick a style and stick with it - either the journal you’ve targeted or APA
Session 1: Foundation Issues in Behavioral Research in Marketing: A Focus on Ideas

**Issues:** Goals and Structure of Course, Discussion of Core Concepts, interesting research, constructs, conceptual definitions, independent variables, dependent variables, moderators, mediators, theory, hypotheses, research contexts, publishing academic research.

**Spotlight:**


[http://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work.html)

Shawn Achor motivates us to do more and to do better. He says, “If we study what is merely average, we will remain merely average.”

AND


Steven Levitt makes a living by turning conventional wisdom on its head. Thought leaders such as Steven motivate the best of us to focus our efforts on interesting questions that go against the grain.

**Reading:**

*Murray Davis (1971), “That’s Interesting!”*

This classic article indicates some of the criteria that might be used in judging interesting ideas. This is a foundation paper as it articulates the criteria you should use in evaluating how interesting research ideas are and in developing research ideas of your own. The critical factor affecting the impact of any research is the extent to which it addresses and interesting and important research question. Reviewers will be evaluating your work and others according to whether and how much it meets the criteria of “interestingness.”


One researcher presents a set of rules of thumb about best practices for working in academia. Stimulus to talk about working style and becoming an academic. Please think about what you think it takes and how your working style and previous life is going to help you develop as an academic.
Session 2: Perceptual and Sensory Issues

Assigned Readings are marked by a *. Other readings are background articles.

Spotlight:

Steven Pinker on language:

http://comment.rsablogs.org.uk/2011/02/14/rsa-animate-language-window-human-nature/

Optional Spotlight:


Reference article:


Readings:


Additional readings


Session 3: Goals and Goal-directed Behavior

Spotlight:


Reference article:


Readings:


Additional Readings


Session 4 : Motivation and Attitude

Spotlight:


Optional Spotlight:

Rory Sutherland: Perspective is everything


Reference article:


Attitudes toward Objects: Product Categories/Firms


Attitude Behavior Linkages


**Attitude Dimensions/Functions**


**Attitude Strength**


**Motivated Reasoning**


**Integrative Models**


Session 5: Choice and Decision making

Spotlight:


Readings


Session 6: Choice and Decision making

Spotlight:


Additional Readings: Choice and Decision-Making


Session 7: Mood Effects

Spotlight:

Nic Marks: The Happy Planet Index  
http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/nic_marks_the_happy_planet_index.html

Overview of Mood Research


* Cohen, Joel B., Michel T. Pham and Eduardo Andrade, review article to be distributed.


Mood Effects on Decision Making


Pham, Michel Tuan, Joel B. Cohen, John W. Pracejus, G. David Hughes (2001), Affect Monitoring and the Primacy of Feelings in Judgment, Journal of Consumer Research, (September), pp. 167-188
**Mood Effects on Evaluations**


**Mood Effects on Persuasion**


Session 8: Emotions

Spotlight:

Helen Fisher tells us why we love + cheat


Optional Spotlight:

Philip Zimbardo shows how people become monsters ... or heroes


Overview of Emotions


Emotions and Decision Making


**Emotions and Coping**


Session 9: Interplay of Affect and Cognition

Spotlight:


Optional Spotlight:

Martin Seligman on positive psychology
http://www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_on_the_state_of_psychology.html

Readings


Additional Readings


Session 10: Prediction, Misprediction and Intertemporal Issues

Spotlight:

Dan Gilbert asks, Why are we happy?
http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy.html

Optional Spotlight:


Overview


Affective Forecasting and Misprediction


Intertemporal Issues


Additional Readings


