

# CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

MKTG 6226 – SPRING 2016

- Professor:** Dr. Mary Steffel, Assistant Professor of Marketing  
Email: [m.steffel@neu.edu](mailto:m.steffel@neu.edu)
- Class Location/Times:** M 7:30 – 9:30 (Dodge Hall 370)
- Office Hours:** By appointment in 202F Hayden Hall
- Course Materials:** All readings and course materials will be available on Blackboard; please check often for updates! Lecture notes will be available before each class; please download or print them before class to facilitate your note taking! In an effort to keep the material current and relevant to your interests, I may make changes to the syllabus as the course progresses and will communicate this in class and via Blackboard. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are up to date.

## Course Overview

A successful marketing strategy must be built around an understanding of consumers, and this same understanding can help consumers make better choices. This course introduces a framework for how to get one's ideas to "STICC," which I have developed to help consumers, researchers, and practitioners to analyze and understand consumers' thoughts, attitudes, and choices. STICC—as we will discuss in class—stands for "how to Study consumers," "how to shape Thoughts," "how to Influence attitudes," "how to impact Choices," and "how to prompt Change." This course will incorporate the latest research in psychology, marketing, and other social sciences to help you understand why consumers act as they do.

## Course Objectives

Students in this course will have the opportunity to learn:

- How to effectively study consumers and successfully target the right audience.
- How to shape consumers' thoughts by effectively getting their attention, shaping their perceptions, and making a lasting impression.
- How to influence consumers' attitudes by priming consumers, persuading them, leveraging social influence tactics, and getting them to conform to expectations.
- How to impact choices by putting them in the right frame of mind, presenting their options in the right context, and improving predictions.
- How to use these insights to practice corporate social responsibility and prompt change.

## About the Instructor

I am thrilled to be joining you all for this class in consumer behavior! I received my Ph.D. in psychology from Princeton University in 2009 and my Ph.D. in marketing from the University of Florida in 2012. My research examines consumer judgment and decision making. I conduct experiments to examine when consumers call upon others to help them make decisions, what the barriers are to accurately gauging others' preferences and effectively choosing on their behalf, and how these barriers can be overcome. To learn more, visit my web site: [www.marysteffel.com](http://www.marysteffel.com).

## Course Format

This course is designed to provide you with an overview of core concepts in consumer behavior as well as in-depth insight into practical problems that you have faced or will face as marketers. This is an advanced level, project-based course in which you conduct a case study drawing from your own and others' professional experiences as well as science-backed insights into consumer behavior to develop guidelines for designing effective consumer-driven marketing strategies. This course is designed to be adaptive to your interests and needs, and as such, will depend in large part on your input and contributions. You will work as individuals, as teams, and as a class to explore the topics you deem most integral to your professional success.

### Case Study = 60%

The capstone of this course will be to conduct case study on a specific topic in consumer in order to develop guidelines for designing effective consumer-driven marketing strategies. The goal of the case study is to enable you to explore a certain topic in depth and gain experience applying behavioral science to solve a meaningful problem. You will choose your a topic and team on the first day of class. You will also choose what readings and research you will do to for the project, and I will gladly offer input and suggestions. You will work as a team both in and outside of class to meet your weekly deliverables and develop a final project, specifically:

- Case Workshop (= 5%): You will conduct a case workshop in the first 15 minutes of the class session on your topic in which you will present your problem to the class, lead a discussion about possible marketing strategies, and raise key questions about consumer behavior that will be integral to building an effective strategy to address your problem. The point of the case workshop is for your team to develop your case study, and thus, your goal at this stage is to identify key questions rather than to present a solution. You will receive a grade of 5 = exceptional, 4 = good, 3 = needs work.
- Weekly Deliverables (5 x 5% = 25%): You will collaborate with your teammates on a weekly deliverable for your case study in the last 20-30 minutes of each class session, with the exception of exam dates (I will use this time to offer feedback and meet with groups with an upcoming case workshop.). The point of these deliverables is to break down the components of the case study into measurable benchmarks to ensure that your team is on pace to produce a well-vetted final product. Thus, the goal is to make meaningful progress on the assigned aspect of your case study, and, in some cases, you may need to prepare individually or collectively in advance to meet your deliverable. You will receive a grade of 5 = exceptional, 4 = good, 3 = needs work.
- Case Study (= 20%) and Case Presentation (= 10%): You will deliver a 5-page case study (double-spaced) and a 10-minute presentation on the last day of class. Your project should describe a practical marketing problem that you or others have faced that requires insight into consumer behavior, identify and evaluate possible strategies for addressing your problem based on scientific research, and highlight what your case reveals about how to develop effective consumer-driven marketing strategies. I will meet with groups individually and provide a grading rubric in advance to help you prepare. You will be graded on the quality of the project as a whole as well as your individual contribution as judged by your classmates and by me.

### Exams = 30%

There will be two exams based on the lectures and readings (each exam = 15% of your grade). The goal of the exams is to facilitate mastery of a solid breadth of knowledge in consumer behavior and train you to apply this insight to make better marketing decisions. Exams will be open-note and will consist of multiple choice and short essay application questions. *Note: Exams must be taken at their scheduled times. If extraordinary circumstances require you to reschedule, you must arrange for an excused absence in advance (or receive a score of zero).*

### Participation = 10%

Your active participation in class discussions, case workshops, and group collaboration time is a vital part of this course and will thus constitute 10% of your grade. You should read the material assigned for each class and download and/or print the lecture notes in advance. You should also meaningfully contribute to class discussions and actively engage in group collaborations. Attending class, listening earnestly, coming prepared, and pulling your weight on weekly deliverables will earn you an average grade of 8/10. To earn full points, you must engage in exceptional participation by regularly and meaningfully contributing to class discussions as well as leading group efforts and substantially advancing your team's goals on the case workshop, weekly deliverables, and case study. Missing class, arriving late, checking email or Facebook, texting, letting your phone buzz or ring during class, or having side conversations is distracting you, to me, and to your classmates and will result in deductions from your grade. Additionally, your teammates depend on you, and so coming unprepared, slacking, and sidetracking will also result in deductions. Your grade will be determined by you, your teammates, and me. If you read the whole syllabus, wear green to the first class and get a reward!

### **Grading Scale**

Letter grades will be assigned as follows (*Note: there will be no rounding*):

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
%	> 92%	90-92%	87-89%	83-86%	80-82%	77-79%	73-76%	70-72%	67-69%	63-66%	60-62%	< 60%

### **Attendance Policy**

You are responsible for attending class and submitting deliverables and exams on time. Deliverables are due on the assigned date, regardless of whether you attend class, so be sure to communicate with your group if you must miss a class. Exams and projects must be submitted at their scheduled times except in the event of an emergency or if an excused absence is arranged in advance. For an absence to be excused, you must 1) notify me of your intention to miss class via email in advance and 2) provide a legitimate reason and documentation of that reason for the absence. If class is ever cancelled, lectures will be posted online and deliverables and exams will be postponed to the next class.

### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to act in accordance with university policies regarding academic integrity, as outlined in the student handbook. Any student found to have cheated or plagiarized will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

### **Additional Resources**

Please let me know if you are experiencing difficulty with the course so we can work together to develop a plan to help you succeed. For students needing special assistance, contact the Disabilities Resource Center - 20 Dodge, x2675 to register for special accommodations. Additional tutorial help as well as English Language help/editing is available through the International Student Center - 405 Ell, x2310, and English Language Center - 10 Belvidere, x2455.

# CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: HOW TO GET YOUR IDEAS TO...

## HOW TO **S**TUDY CONSUMERS

Date	Topic	Required Readings	Events/Deliverables
1/11	Introduction	<i>No assigned readings!</i>	Choose Groups
1/18	MLK Day		
1/25	Research Methods	<i>CASE: Campbell's Soup Company How Companies Learn Your Secrets Battling Bad Science*</i>	1. Propose Case
2/01	Segmentation	<i>SURVEYS: VALS and Big 5 Marketing to Millennials Inside the Big Data of Campaign 2016</i>	Guest Speaker

## HOW TO SHAPE **T**HOUGHTS

2/08	Attention	<i>Made to Stick, Ch. 1 Anywhere the Eye Can See... FTC Guidelines on Native Ads</i>	2. Define the Problem
2/15	President's Day		
2/22	Memory	<i>Seven Sins of Memory, Ch. 1 The Riddle of Experience vs. Memory* Why Songs Get Stuck In Your Head</i>	3. Review the Theory

## HOW TO **I**NFLUENCE ATTITUDES

2/29	Priming	<i>Hidden Persuasion Making "Sense" of Advertising Does Sex Sell Long-Term Brand Success?</i>	<b>Exam 1</b>
3/07	SPRING BREAK		
3/14	Influence	<i>Influence Weapons of Persuasion to Save Energy Why Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted</i>	Guest Speaker

## HOW TO **C**HOICES

3/21	Framing	<i>A Perspective on Judgment and Choice What Was I Thinking? Macy's Sued for Inflating 'Original' Prices</i>	4. Evaluate Strategies
3/28	Choice	<i>Are We In Control of Our Decisions?*</i> <i>The Tyranny of Choice Everything You Knew Of Love Is Wrong</i>	Peer Feedback
4/4	Prediction	<i>The Surprising Science of Happiness* Happier Spending Do TV Commercials Make You Happier?</i>	5. Submit Draft

## HOW TO **P**PROMPT **C**HANGE

4/11	Prompting Change	<i>Nudge, Introduction Obama Uses Behavioral Science A Nudge In the Wrong Direction</i>	<b>Exam 2</b>
4/18	Patriot's Day		Team Meetings
4/25	Conclusion	<i>No assigned readings!</i>	<b>Submit/Present Case</b>

\*Also available in video and audio format via TED.com