MKTG 5710 - CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND MOTIVATION
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - ST. LOUIS
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
SPRING SEMESTER 2011

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Office Hours: Monday- Friday 9-4; other hours by appointment.
Prerequisite: MKTG 5700 (Contemporary Marketing Concepts)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide students an opportunity to analyze the socio-psychological foundations of consumer behavior including personality differences, needs and wants, status symbols, social change and mobility, fads and fashions. Consumer spending and saving habits, product preferences, leisure-time patterns, shopping behavior and motivation research are examined for their impact on advertising, selling, and marketing management. These learning objectives are accomplished via lectures, class presentations, and research projects.

COURSE MATERIALS


Course Site: http://mygateway.umsl.edu
We will use the Blackboard course software to communicate in this class. I will post class announcements, grades, provide PowerPoint slides, and other pertinent information. It can also be used to communicate with classmates and as a portal to research on the Internet.

GRADING POLICY

Class Participation 20%
Exams (2) 40%
Seminar Presentation (Individual) 20%
Research Project (Group) 20%

Your final grade is based on the total number of points accumulated during the semester. Here is the breakdown of grade ranges: A = 94% and above; A- = 90-93%; B+ = 87-89%; B = 83-86%; B- = 80-82%; C+ = 75-79%; C = 65-74%; C- = 60-64% F = Below 60%

CLASS PARTICIPATION/DROP POLICY

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Class participation counts 20% of your semester grade. The purpose of this grading component is to ensure that you give to the class as much as you get out of it. During the course of the semester, we will be engaged in various activities such as analyzing cases, doing class exercises, participating in marketing debates, and other simulating learning experiences. Your grade will be based on the written portion of in-class assignments as well as your participation in discussions.

During the course of the semester, there may be occasions when you are not able to attend class. I can certainly understand an occasional absence, but you should keep in mind that many of the class participation grading opportunities are written and cannot be made up.

A student may drop this course with either a "withdraw/passing" or "excused" grade before the designated date. After this point, students will not be allowed to drop the course with a "excused" grade.

EXAMINATIONS

Exams will be designed to test your understanding of consumer behavior by allowing you to demonstrate your mastery of concepts, principles and terms used by marketing professional. In addition, you will be expected to integrate and apply these concepts, principles and terms to marketing problems.

There will be two exams (20% each). The exams consist of essay and short answer questions. The test questions will emphasize topics and issues discussed in class, but students are responsible for assigned text readings as well.

SEMINAR PRESENTATION

In my opinion, a seminar approach is an excellent complement to lectures in exploring the depth of marketing practice and consumer research. To add perspective on specific consumer behavior issues, each student will select a "special topic" to present to the class. The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with the chance of becoming an expert on a marketing topic of interest to you. I recommend that once you decide on a topic, consult with me on ideas for your presentation. During the course of the semester each student will be required to prepare a formal presentation based on one of the general seminar topics shown below:

- Demographics and Culture
- Consumer Group Dynamics
- Information Processing
- Attitudes and Lifestyles
- Information Search
- Evaluation and Store Selection

This is an excellent way of applying the concepts discussed in class. Your presentation should run approximately 15-20 minutes and cover the topics at hand. A short 3-5 page typed report must accompany your presentation. This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade. Below are some general guidelines in preparing this assignment.

Your topic should be relatively narrow in scope. *It should not be a chapter summary.* For example, in the Demographics and Culture seminar, an appropriate topic would be “Segmentation of Asian American Market”
or "The Evolution of Gender Roles in Advertising." In the Information Search Seminar, an interesting topic would be “How Social Media is used as an Information Sources by Consumers.” I will give you great latitude in deciding, but as a rule, the more you have to research a topic, the better. I recommend checking out previous marketing seminar Powerpoints found under “course documents” on the course web site.

Given the time constraints of this course, I realize that it will be extremely difficult for you to become an expert on any topic in a few two weeks. However, I do expect you to do some background work (read articles) or consult some current information source (trade magazines, newspapers, etc.) to become abreast of your topic. I would also recommend talking to industry experts as a way of gaining real insight.

In discussing your topic, you should accomplish two things: explain and demonstrate. By this I mean to explain what your topic is conceptually, how it relates the chapter topic in general, what are the most important research findings on the topic, when does it work and under what conditions is it ineffective. In demonstrating the use of the concept or tactic in "real world" practice, discuss how companies employ the concept strategically, show web sites or ads that utilize the concept, and discuss the future use or limitations of the practice. For instance, you might explain how your company implements promotional programs, conducts consumer research, or manages the sales force. I realize that each possible topic may not fit this outline but this gives you an idea of what I'm looking for.

As you know, educational seminars are designed to be informative and stimulate discussion. I suggest that you use visual aids (Powerpoints, handouts, demonstrations, video, web sites, etc.) to emphasize key points. On the other hand, you should make sure that you connect with the audience. Lastly, you should be cognizant of your time. Leave a couple of minutes for questions.

The marketing seminar counts 20% of your final grade. Your grade will be based on four criteria: (1) organization and appearance; (2) degree of creativity (making topic interesting); (3) quality of research on topic; and (4) ability to handle class questions. I don't expect anything spectacular, but that you demonstrate a good knowledge of the topic and present it in an interesting, creative manner.

RESEARCH PROJECT

The purpose of this project is for you to work with 2-3 classmates and conduct an empirical study of a consumer behavior topic. The group can focus on consumer behavior topics related to company branding, positioning, cultural influences, attitudes, shopping behavior, perceptions of advertising, or any other relevant issues. The project counts 20% of your course grade.

This is a group assignment and all team members are expected to actively participate in and thoroughly understand all aspects of the project. Teams will evaluate individual members of the group based on each one’s contribution. The evaluations should fairly represent the contribution of each team member. The project grade will be lowered for any member who by consensus did not contribute equitably to the project.

Here are the major phases in the research study:

**Topic Selection**
In selecting your topic, there are no restrictions other than that it relates to the consumption of goods and services. The emphasis could be from the firm’s point of view such as brand perceptions, advertising strategies, retail signage, etc. Alternatively, consumer issues such as attitudes toward green marketing, effect of layout in print ads, purchasing role for family members, content analysis of portrayal of the family in print ads, use of DVR in ad avoidance, or hidden motivations in consuming products are examples of appropriate topics. The most important considerations should be the mutual enthusiasm among team members for the topic and the feasibility of the project given our time constraint.

Your team must submit a one-page project proposal detailing your topic choice. Once I have approved the project proposal, your team can proceed.

Background literature review

Your group should conduct a thorough literature review on your selected topic. In the literature review, you should summarize the conceptual and/or theoretical foundations of your study and how it affects the relevant consumer group and industry. It’s important that you explain the importance of your study and how it relates to the real world. Popular consumer behavior periodicals and journals include: ProQuest, PsycARTICLES, ABI-Inform, Lexis-Nexis, Ad*Access, Mediamark Research, Journal of Consumer Research, www.acrwebsite.org, and Business Source Premier. Many of these sources can access via the Thomas Jefferson Library online search. A research session can be scheduled with a librarian to help you investigate your topic, but be sure to put in a good initial effort.

Research Plan

The first and most difficult step in the consumer research process is to accurately define the objectives of the research. Is it to examine consumer attitudes about the experience of online shopping? The effectiveness of fear appeals in healthcare advertising? Is it to segment the market for HD television sets? Whatever the research objective, it is imperative to have explicit research questions or hypotheses to guide the study.

After the research objectives have been clearly identified and sufficient background research conducted, the research design comes next. Since one of the requirements of this assignment is to conduct an empirical study (i.e., deriving the results from data collection via observation or experimentation), there are many design options. Depending on the research questions and considering the limitations of time and money, there are several approaches that should be considered. Among these include: online (or convenience) surveys, depth interviews, direct observations, focus groups, previously collected secondary data, content analysis, and class experiments. I would strongly recommend that you obtain a marketing research textbook that provides a thorough explanation of the implementation of each data collection techniques and its relative strengths and weaknesses. I also encourage your team to consult me when design questions arise.

My assumption is that MBA students have some experience with the research process and a basic understanding of descriptive and bivariate statistics (e.g., chi-square, correlations, t-tests). As your team selects a research topic, I recommend that you consider the time required to collect the research data, the sophistication of the data analysis, and the time need to write up the final report. For instance, a small convenience sample or insightful depth interviews on an interesting, novel consumer topic is quite acceptable.

Final Report
The final report is due on the last day of regular class. The report should be limited to 15-pages (double-spaced, excluding tables and appendices) and utilize the MLA research style. Here are the major parts of the report.

- Introduction – context and justification for study
- Research objectives
- Background research
- Research Plan
- Results
- Conclusions
- Appendix/Bibliography

Each group is required to make a brief 15-20 minute presentation. The presentation does not have to follow the organization of your report. Creative presentations are encouraged.

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<th>READING ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Intro to Consumer Behavior (Chap 1)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>Culture (Chap 2 &amp; 3)</td>
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<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Demographics (Chap 4)</td>
<td>RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE</td>
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<td>SEMINAR ON DEMOGRAPHICS AND CULTURE (CHAP 2-4)</td>
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<td>SEMINAR ON CONSUMER GROUP DYNAMICS (CHAP 5-7)</td>
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<td>Learning (Chap 9)</td>
<td>SEMINAR ON INFORMATION PROCESSING (CHAP 8-9)</td>
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<td>RESEARCH PLANS DUE</td>
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<td>Mar 16</td>
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<td>Mar 30</td>
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<td>May 11</td>
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