



Marketing 650
Consumer Behavior
Fall 2014
MW 12:45 – 2:00
Wehner 108

Course Description and Prerequisites

Marketing begins and ends with the consumer, from determining the consumers' wants and needs to providing customer satisfaction. Thus, a clear understanding of the principles and concepts of consumer behavior is critical to creating a successful marketing strategy.

This class examines how psychological and cultural processes influence how people buy, use, or experience products and services. By taking this class you should learn to analyze consumer behavior and be able to recommend marketing strategies based on theory and empirical evidence.

Prerequisite: Marketing 621 or an equivalent.

Learning Outcomes or Course Objectives

The course will help students:

- Gain a deeper understanding of how the consumer contributes to the success of a brand or firm
- Learn the concepts underlying and theories explaining consumer behavior
- Learn how to implement these theories and concepts into effective marketing strategies
- Develop an initial understanding of how to conduct consumer research
- Gain a better understanding of themselves as consumers
- Develop presentation skills and the ability to communicate your work to an audience

Instructor Information

Name	Caleb Warren
Email address*	cwarren@mays.tamu.edu
Office hours	Wednesdays from 3:00 to 4:00 or by appointment
Office location	220G

Teaching Asst.	J.J. Chen
Asst. Email	chenj@neo.tamu.edu

*The best way to contact me is via email. I check it regularly and will get back to you as soon as possible, most likely within 24 hours unless it is a weekend or holiday.

Course Conduct

This course should be exciting, challenging, and fun for everyone. In order to encourage this process there are certain rules about your conduct in the classroom:

- When you come to class be prepared to actively participate. The classroom is not the place to sleep, chat with friends, read the paper, do Sudoku puzzles, etc.
- Turn off your cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices when you enter the classroom. There will be no texting or other uses of electronic devices during class unless you request and receive special permission from me (see below).
- Be respectful when your classmates are speaking – let other people finish when they speak and carefully listen to what they have to say. You do not have to agree with everything others say, but you should respect their opinions.
- There will be a few controversial topics and examples discussed in class. My intention is not to offend anyone, but to encourage you to expand your thinking and consider ideas that might take you outside of your comfort zone. I also want to prepare you for working in a marketplace in which marketers (and consumers) often engage in morally debatable behaviors related to sex, drug consumption, and the like.

Policy for Electronic Devices

I recommend not using electronic devices in class. Research shows that students who use laptops and other electronic devices in class perform worse than students who take notes by hand: <https://www.winona.edu/psychology/media/friedlaptopfinal.pdf>. However, I understand that some students prefer and may benefit by taking notes on laptops or tablet computers. If you feel that you are one of these students, you may apply to use either a laptop or tablet computer in class by emailing me (cwarren@mays.tamu.edu) and requesting permission to use an electronic device during the class. In your email please include the specific device you would like to use and how you will use this device to enhance your learning. If you get approved to use a device in class, you should only use it for taking notes or other activities directly related to the lesson. Browsing the internet, checking Facebook, reading emails, playing games, or other unrelated activities is distracting both for you and your classmates. If I see you doing any of these activities, I will revoke permission to use the device.

Material and Required Readings

Required Reading

- Course Lesson Notes (available on e-campus)
- Articles, book chapters, and blogs listed in the lesson notes (links or full reference information provided)
- Holt, Douglas and Douglas Cameron (2010), *Cultural Strategy*, Oxford University Press: NY.

The course is intended to be an interactive experience. Therefore, instead of a conventional textbook, I provide you with an outline of notes for each lesson. The note outlines are incomplete. You will need to attend class and fill in parts of the notes based on what we discuss in class.

It is very important for you to print the notes and bring them to each class in order to best follow and document the discussion. In addition to outlining and overview the topics that we'll discuss in class, the lesson notes will direct you to additional articles, book chapters, blogs, and videos that you will need to view. I recommend skimming the lesson notes and reading (or viewing) the linked material before class. Reviewing the notes will give you get a sense of what you will need to record during the discussion. The notes and linked content will also give you an opportunity to think about the topics and related examples so that you can better contribute to the class discussion.

Recommended Reading

The lesson notes list original source material and recommended additional readings related to each lesson. I also suggest finding any additional consumer behavior textbook. If you have never taken a consumer behavior course, then you will greatly benefit from a basic Consumer Behavior textbook (you may be able to find an inexpensive, older version online). However, for this course, I plan to spend the bulk of our time discussing cutting edge perspectives related to consumer behavior and decision-making, and as such we will focus on applying concepts from our readings to various contexts throughout the semester. Therefore, this basic textbook is not necessary for you to be successful in the course, but it is a terrific supplement to course materials.

Grading

1. *Projects* **50%**

You will need to complete two group projects during the semester (each will be worth 25% of your total grade). You and your teammates will present each of the projects to your classmates.

The detailed project instructions are included at the end of the syllabus.

Before beginning the project, you will need to sign up for a team. There will be 12 teams each with three or four students. *You will have one week to register for a team* for the group projects. We will send you a link to a Google spreadsheet in which you can register by entering your name into any team in which there is an open slot.

At the end of the semester, you will have the opportunity to evaluate the contribution of each of your team members. If everyone on the team contributes equally, then all teammates will earn the average grade across the three projects. If, however, some teammates contributed more than others, I will adjust each student's individual grade for the project component to reflect his or her individual contribution.

2. *Final Exam* **30%**

You will need to take a final exam that will contribute 30% of your total grade. The exam will assess your understanding of the material discussed during the lectures, provided in the lesson notes, and documented in the assigned readings. The exam will include open-ended response questions that test your ability to apply the theoretical concepts discussed in class and the readings to problems you might face in your career as a marketer or policy maker or in your life as a consumer.

Only students with a University excused absence will be permitted to take a makeup exam. University excused absences include: participation in a University authorized activity, death or major illness in the student's immediate family, illness of a dependent family member, participation in legal proceedings that require the student's presence, religious holy days, confinement because of illness, or required participation in military duties. To be excused the student must notify me in writing (acknowledged e-mail message is acceptable) prior to the date of absence, and provide appropriate documentation for the absence. In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. accident or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence, including an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class. Failure to notify and/or document properly may result in an unexcused absence and a zero on the missed exam.

3. *Participation* **20%**

Twenty percent of your grade will be determined by your participation, both in person in the classroom and online outside the classroom. You can earn participation points through contributing to the discussion in the classroom, contributing to the class Facebook group page, and completing the feedback surveys for the group projects.

(a) I will evaluate your contribution to the in-class discussions based on the following criteria:

- Preparation – Do you come to class having read the assigned material? (Note that if you don't come to class at all, you can't contribute to the discussion.)
- Content understanding and integration -- Do you follow the flow of class discussion and build on others' ideas? When you do not understand something, do you ask questions? Are you an active participant in in-class group discussion?
- Creativity -- Do you generate your own insights and applications?
- Curiosity and interest -- What degree of curiosity, interest, and enthusiasm do you bring to the classroom?
- Supplemental activities -- Do you bring in examples from the "real world" that demonstrate concepts or are related to issues we are discussing in class?

(b) Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1460404030900590/>

The class Facebook group provides a place to interact with me and with your fellow students outside of the classroom. It is a place to read and to offer articles and examples related to the ideas discussed in the classroom. It is also a place to ask questions about the course and to respond to your classmates' questions.

(c) Feedback Surveys for Class Presentations

I expect you to actively engage in and evaluate the project presentations of your classmates. I also expect you to offer constructive feedback via online surveys that you will have the opportunity to complete after each class in which there are student presentations. Part of your participation grade will be determined by the quality of feedback that you offer your classmates. (Also, part of your presentation grade on project 2 will be determined by the evaluation of your classmates.)

Challenging Grades or Test Questions

If you feel that a grade you received or a question on an exam is incorrect you may submit a written challenge to your grade or exam question. Please include three things in your challenge: 1- why you believe the grade or question is incorrect, 2- what you would like me to do to fix the situation, and 3- any evidence (from the readings, class notes, etc.) that supports your argument. I will review all challenges and respond to them within a week of receiving them.

Scale

I will use the following scale, although I might scale everyone's grade at the end of the semester if the grades do not fit a reasonable distribution (e.g., if the highest average is in the 80s):

Average	Grade
90 - 100	A
80 – 89.9	B
70 – 79.9	C
60 – 69.9	D
< 60	F

Tentative Schedule (dates for the white cells may change; grey cells will not change)

Date	Topic	Deadlines
M 9/1	Lesson 1: Introduction	
W 9/3	Lesson 1: Introduction	
M 9/8	Lesson 2: Goals	Select group for projects
W 9/10	Lesson 3: Representation	
M 9/15	Lesson 4: Perception	
W 9/17	Lesson 5: Learning & Memory	
M 9/22	Lesson 5: Learning & Memory	
W 9/24	Project proposal presentations	Groups 1 - 6
M 9/29	Project proposal presentations	Groups 7 - 12
W 10/1	Lesson 6: Attitudes	
M 10/6	Lesson 7: Decision-making	
W 10/8	Lesson 7: Decision-making	
M 10/13	Lesson 8: Social Influence	
W 10/15	Lesson 8: Social Influence	
M 10/20	Project 1 presentations	Project 1 materials for groups 1 – 4
W 10/22	Project 1 presentations	Project 1 materials for groups 5 – 8
M 10/27	Project 1 presentations	Project 1 materials for groups 9 - 12
W 10/29	Lesson 9: Identity & Status	
M 11/3	Lesson 9: Identity & Status	
W 11/5	Lesson 10: Ideology & Myth	
M 11/10	Lesson 10: Ideology & Myth	
W 11/12	Lesson 11: Diffusion	
M 11/17	Guest speaker	
W 11/19	Makeup	
M 11/24	Project 2 presentations	Project 2 materials for groups 1 - 4
W 11/26	Course Review	
M 12/1	Project 2 presentations	Project 2 materials for groups 5 - 8
W 12/3	Project 2 presentations	Project 2 materials for groups 9 - 12

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>. *Please also see me within the first two weeks of class.*

Wehner Building Policy

We have beautiful and state-of-the-art classrooms in the Wehner Building. We want to maintain the high quality condition of these rooms for current and future students. Thus, please do NOT bring beverages, food, tobacco products or animals (unless approved) into the classroom. An exception is made for water: you may bring water into class as long as the container has a lid. Please respect these rules.

Academic Integrity

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, individuals immediately assume a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the Texas A&M University community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor system. *For additional information please visit: <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>*

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

Be especially careful not to plagiarize. The following is quoted from the TAMU library website: <http://library.tamu.edu/help/help-yourself/using-materials-services/online-tutorials/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-3.html>

According to the [Aggie Honor System Office](#), Plagiarism is "The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit." Plagiarism is just one form of academic misconduct; plagiarism and cheating are perhaps the most commonly practiced.

The most prevalent form of plagiarism occurs when a writer neglects to credit the author textual sources in a term paper or writing assignment. Plagiarism applies to written or electronic text found in books, journals, magazines, newspapers, web sites, etc. However, it also pertains to visual documents such as photographs, charts, graphs, drawings, statistics and material taken from lectures, interviews or television programs. In other words, it covers all created sources.

Less experienced writers may commit plagiarism as a result of an incomplete or poor knowledge of citation and documentation standards or because they are incorporating standards from one field or culture inappropriately into another. Inexperienced writers may also be unsure of the difference between direct quotation, paraphrasing, and summary. Poor notetaking habits may also lead to plagiarism. It is your responsibility as an author, and yours alone, to acknowledge and document your sources. In other words, if you use another person's ideas or words, you must tell the reader which words or ideas you borrowed, from whom, and where he or she might find the text you used.

Any time you use ideas or words that appear in a document written by someone else, you must formally reference that work (document), even if it is not something that has been published. Whether the ideas were written about by a recognized expert in your field, or by a person who is "unknown" (for example, another student whose paper is unpublished), you must cite any words or ideas that did not originate with you.

If you paraphrase (put into your own words) another person's ideas, you must still provide a reference citation. Be careful that your paraphrasing is not so close to the original that it would be better to simply use a direct quotation with quotation marks. (Leaving off quotation marks is a large error, even if you have made a parenthetical reference at the end of the sentence or passage; you could face a charge of plagiarism for such an omission.)

MKTG 650: Project Instructions

Assignment:

Identify an unmet goal for a specific segment of consumers (project 1) and then create a product, service, or brand that helps the segment of consumers more efficiently reach the goal (project 2).

Due Dates:

Proposal, Groups 1 – 6: Wednesday, 9/24

Proposal, Groups 7 – 12: Monday, 9/29

Presentation 1, Groups 1 – 4: Monday, 10/20

Presentation 1, Groups 5 – 8: Wednesday, 10/22

Presentation 1, Groups 9 – 12: Monday, 10/27

Presentation 2, Groups 1 – 4: Monday, 11/24

Presentation 2, Groups 5 – 8: Monday, 12/1

Presentation 2, Groups 9 – 12: Wednesday, 12/3

Overview:

Good marketing helps consumers reach their goals in a better or more efficient way. The purpose of this project is to get you to identify a goal that at least one group of consumers is having difficulty attaining. Identifying consumers' unmet goals requires a deep understanding of consumers, including their habits, behaviors, attitudes, values, and subcultural norms. Therefore, the first stage of the project (i.e., presentation 1) has two related parts: (1) conduct an in-depth analysis of a particular consumer segment, and (2) identify a goal that the segment is currently having trouble reaching. The second stage of the project (i.e., presentation 2) is to come up with a market offering (product, service, brand, etc.) that helps consumers better reach the goal you identified during the first stage.

Proposal Presentation

Begin either by identifying a segment of consumers that you find interesting. Alternatively, you could instead begin by thinking of a goal that you think consumers are struggling to reach and identifying a segment of consumers who may have a particularly difficult time reaching the goal. Once you've identified either a consumer segment or a goal, do some exploratory research by informally talking to consumers, going to relevant field sites (i.e., places where the consumers shop or play), and scanning the web. Examine social media and consumer reviews to see if you can find consumers who appear to be unsatisfied with what the market currently offers. Check secondary data and available information about market trends, as this might give you clues as to what consumers want.

Outline a proposal of the research methods you will use in order to learn more about your target consumer segment and their needs. Most likely, you will want to use one or more of the following research methods:

1. Listening Online
 - Develop a strategy for collecting data about consumers' online behavior. This could involve collecting and analyzing blogs, tweets, reviews, etc. It could involve content analyzing relevant websites or forums. It could involve any number of other strategies too – don't be afraid to be creative with how and where you collect data.
 - You will need to devise some strategy for how you plan to interpret and analyze the data.
2. Depth Interviews
 - Interview consumers about their desires and frustrations. Begin with a broad, grand tour question to get respondents talking and follow it up with floating prompts to encourage deeper discussion of ideas that might lead to insight. Think carefully about how to try to

elicit this information, as important unmet goals may not immediately come to respondents' minds or respondents may not want to reveal their struggles because of impression management concerns.

- Record the interviews. Often times the best insights come from revisiting the responses at a later time.
 - Prioritize quality of interviews over quantity. You will be able to get far more insight out of two or three hour interviews than 30 ten-minute interviews.
3. Online survey
- Design a survey using an online tool of your choice (I recommend Qualtrics). Make sure that the sample and the questions are appropriate for what you want to find out.
 - Remember that respondents may not be aware of their goals or many of the reasons underlying their behavior, so be cautious when generating survey questions and when interpreting results.
 - If you conduct a survey, I would like to see some quantitative results. What does the data indicate? Can you refute or confirm your initial assumptions? What did you learn about the respondents?
4. An experiment
- An experiment may be a bit ambitious for this project, but would be appropriate if you want to test a specific hypothesis (e.g., goal A is more important to consumers than goal B, or behavior A is helping/preventing consumers from reaching goal A.) An experiment may also be appropriate if you want to explore goals or processes that consumers may not be consciously aware of. If this is the case, however, you will likely need to use creative techniques in order to uncover this information.
 - Design and run an experiment to test your hypothesis. Think about the best way to design the experiment in order to create the most informative test.
 - Describe the quantitative results. Test to see if the experimental manipulations had their intended effects. Explain what you learned about the respondents.

You will have ten minutes in class to present your ideas. The purpose of the proposal is to present ideas about what you plan to do in order to get feedback to help you proceed. Therefore, you will not be graded for your work at this stage. However, it is in your best interest to carefully think about and outline what you would like to do. The more detailed and thoughtful your proposal, the better feedback you will be able to get from both your classmates and me.

Project 1: Consumer Analysis

The first project is similar to an opportunity analysis that you may have conducted in an entrepreneurship or marketing strategy class, but instead of thinking about the marketplace in terms of standard products and product categories, I want you to analyze the marketplace in terms of consumers' goals (or needs) and the means that they are currently using to try to reach their goals.

Once you've identified your target segment, use consumer research to conduct an in-depth analysis of this segment. (You should discuss and get feedback on the research methods during your proposal.)

Describe the target consumer segment in terms of their goals, patterns of behavior, attitudes, values, psychographics, and demographic characteristics. You may find that the target segment includes multiple sub-segments. If so, describe each sub-segment separately and explain both how they differ and how they are similar to one another.

Describe the goal that you've identified and where it fits in relation to consumers' behaviors, values, and related goals. Explain any superordinate goals that the goal facilitates and subordinate means of reaching the goal. Also document any complimentary goals that consumers may have.

Be sure to document why consumers are struggling to reach the goal. What are consumers currently doing to try to reach the goal? What resources are required for goal attainment? What alternative, competing goals often get in the way?

Create an end product to present your results. The end product should be an instructional guide on who the target consumers are, what they care about (i.e., their goals), what they do (i.e., their behaviors), and, importantly, what goal they are struggling to attain and why. Design the product to inform an audience who is completely unfamiliar with the consumer segment. Your end product could take a number of different forms, including an infographic, a slideshare presentation, a series of blogs, a website, a mini-book or magazine, or any other format that includes both visual and verbal information. Be sure to include detailed examples about the consumers in order to provide a rich sense of what the consumers are like and how/why they are struggling to reach the focal goal that you've identified. To keep the end product more interesting, you may want to omit details about your research method and analysis (you should discuss these in the presentation). In addition to being informative, the end product should be easy to understand, interesting, and entertaining.

You will have 15 to 20 minutes to present your project. You have some flexibility with the way you organize your presentation, but it should include the following elements:

- An overview of the unmet goal and consumers segment you've identified
- A description of the methods
- A brief overview of how you analyzed your data
- A presentation of your end product
- Explain the basis for your conclusions; provide evidence and link your answers to your research whenever possible

Submit the following: (by email to cwarren@mays.tamu.edu & chenj@neo.tamu.edu)

- Summary of research method and analysis
- Any relevant research materials (questionnaires, surveys, data, etc.)
- Your end product
- Any supplemental materials (e.g., presentation slides)
- Use the following naming convention for the files: Team#_Project1_FileName (e.g., Team1_Project1_InterviewQuestionnaire)

Grading Criteria

- Quality of method (40%)
 - Were the methods extensive enough to provide valuable insight?
 - Were the methods appropriate given the research goal?
 - Were the methods well executed?
- Analysis and Conclusions (15%)
 - Were the results analyzed well?
 - Did the method offer valuable insight?
- End product (30%)
 - Did the end product inform others about the consumer segment and its goals?
 - Was the end product polished and well executed?
 - Was the end product interesting and entertaining?
- Presentation (15%)
 - Was the presentation clear and easy to understand?
 - Were you able to engage and entertain the audience?

In addition to my feedback and grade, you will provide and receive evaluations and feedback from your classmates. I will consider your classmates' evaluations but in this project they will not directly influence the grade you receive. One exception to this is I will award one "people's choice award" to the group that receives the highest rating from the class evaluations. This group will automatically earn a 100% on the project regardless of the grade I give.

Project 2: Identify a Market Solution

Project Description:

Build on your previous project to identify a solution to an unmet need in the market. Outline a marketing plan for the solution and present it to the class. The marketing plan should briefly review the unmet need in the marketplace and the target segment struggling to attain this goal. Most of the presentation should focus on the solution (i.e., product, service, or brand that will help target consumers better reach their goal) and how you will reach consumers with your solution. Don't worry about manufacturing or operational constraints – I want to see whether you understand how to help and reach consumers, not whether you can come up with a brilliant engineering breakthrough. Submit via email a copy of your slides and any other materials you create to chenj@neo.tamu.edu and cwarren@mays.tamu.edu.

I recommend the following outline for your presentation, but you should feel free to try something else as long as you cover the important pieces:

- Introduction: do something that makes the audience experience your solution or personally understand the need that it addresses
- Goal and Target: briefly review the unmet need you previously identified and the target segment or segments
- The solution: Try to address the following questions...
 - How will your solution create value for consumers?
 - Will the solution fulfill needs by providing a better physical product? If so, what attributes differentiates your brand from others?
 - Will the solution fulfill needs by providing better service or experiential elements than others? If so, what are these elements?
 - Will the brand fulfill needs by providing consumers with a way to connect with others or to express their identities? If so, what identity will the solution express? How will it connect people?
 - What are the details of the solution?
 - What will others need to contribute to the solution?
 - To what extent does solution's value (image, the consumer experience using the brand, etc.) depend on consumer knowledge?
 - Are there complimentary products or services that are necessary in order for consumers to gain the maximum benefits provided by the solution?
 - What should the price be?
 - How will the solution be positioned relative to competitors?
- Reaching the target consumers: Try to address the following questions...
 - Where and how will consumers acquire and experience the solution?
 - How will consumers learn about your solution?
 - How will you persuade consumers to adopt your solution?
- Include prototypes, samples, images, and details wherever possible in order to best illustrate the solution and planned marketing strategy to your classmates and me. Detailed examples and prototypes provide far more information than abstract descriptions.

Grading Criteria

- Quality of marketing plan (50%)
 - Was the plan carefully thought out?
 - Did the plan contain good ideas?
 - Was the plan well executed? (compelling examples, prototypes, etc.)
- Presentation (25%)
 - Was the presentation rehearsed and well prepared?
 - Was the presentation clear and well organized?
 - Was the presentation interesting and engaging?
- Persuasiveness (25%)
 - Based on the relative overall assessment of your classmates – the teams with the highest ranking from classmates will receive the highest grade on this component and teams with the lowest ranking will receive the lowest grade on this component of the project.