DEI 624: Understanding the Consumer Universe: Market Research in Digital Media
University of Waterloo
Masters in Digital Experience Innovation
Winter Term 2013 | Thursdays, 5-8 PM

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

Knowledge of consumer behaviour can lead to business success and is a vital goal of marketing and a core component of business anthropology. Using research to understand current and potential customers in terms of their buying behaviour is fundamentally important. As such, it is the focus of this course. You will be exposed to various aspects of consumer behaviour by examining a number of areas in the context of issues/questions/decisions relevant to marketing practitioners.

This course builds on the basics of exploratory and conclusive research for understanding consumer behaviour. Qualitative methods of market ethnography can be used to recognize business opportunity through interviews, focus groups, and personal observation. Quantitative methods of market survey may be used to measure the potential of business opportunity through sampling with consumer polls, questionnaires, and combined research strategies. This basic understanding of market research will be used to gain insights into consumer behaviour and how consumer needs and behaviours can influence marketing and business decisions. Where appropriate analytics will be used.

The primary objectives of this course are:
1. relate some essential theoretical concepts to consumer behaviour in day to day life;
2. understand business reasons for understanding consumer behaviour;
3. understand how micro (for example, personality) and macro factors (for example, culture) influence consumer thinking and behaviour;
4. understand the issues associated with facilitating consumer decision-making in different contexts; and
5. apply research methods and consumer behaviour theory to practical marketing problems.

Required Textbook

Consumer Behaviour: Buying, Having and Being, Fifth Canadian edition, Prentice Hall
Michael Solomon, Judy Zaichkowsky, and Rosemary Polegato (2011)

Recommended Reading

The Handbook of Online and Social Media Research: Tools and Techniques for Market Researchers
(We will be using this book as a resource. The first three chapters of this book are available at no charge at
http://books.google.ca/books/about/The_Handbook_of_Online_and_Social_Media.html?id=MSj2xBDkaA8C)

Links to and/or digital copies of additional required readings and/or documents will be provided online via **LEARN**.

Course Evaluation/Grading Scheme
      20% Class Contribution
      20% Real World Application
      20% Digital Brand Audit
      40% Group Major Project

Readings, Assignments & Deliverables: Students will be responsible for all of the work assigned, as noted under Topics to be Covered, Chapter Readings, and Additional Assignments on the Course Schedule on the last page.

Class Contribution: 20%
Effective marketing management requires excellent communication skills. This course will provide you with the opportunity to practice and improve these skills. Your level of preparation for class will directly impact on your class contribution mark, since quality of contribution, rather than quantity, will be recognized and rewarded. Students should come to class well prepared. This includes reading assigned chapters before class, answering assigned questions, exercises and cases, and being willing to participate in class discussions. Quality contribution includes presenting a point of view, providing examples from outside reading or experience, drawing conclusions, or asking insightful questions. Simply coming to class will not achieve class contribution marks, as this is NOT an attendance mark.

Real World Application Report: 20%
Each week we will discuss an aspect of consumer behaviour, drawing from the textbook. One requirement for this course is to identify a current example of a topic and write a report about it. For example, you may discuss how theory from the chapters on perception, motivation, learning and memory were evident in consumer response to the local food movement, the Green Living Show in Toronto, or the recent announcement of Apple's iPad Mini. Special focus should be given to digital aspects involved in the topic, e.g. how Apple's website and social media were used in the launch of the iPad Mini. This assignment must be submitted in Word document format to the LEARN dropbox by 5 pm on the due date listed under the "Additional Assignments" column of the Course Schedule.

Your report should be 6-8 pages, double-spaced. The content must be based on and relate to a variety of theories presented in Chapters 1-5 and show the impact (or non-impact) of the digital realm. You should show how your example demonstrates a real-life application of the theoretical concepts studied. You may critique the example from a managerial and/or theoretical perspective, or point out ways the marketer could have used conceptual knowledge to make a better decision. Examples chosen should be interesting, relevant, and conceptually insightful.

Digital Brand Audit: 20%
Monitor a brand of your choice on twitter over a period of 30 days. Keep track of sentiment and actual tweets which you will analyze and turn into insights based on consumer behaviour theory. Document these insights in an infographic. This assignment must be submitted to the LEARN dropbox by 5 pm on the due date listed under the "Additional Assignments" column of the Course Schedule.

Group Major Project: 40% <mark>Note: project will be revised to incorporate SEO tactics and track results using Google Analytics</mark>

Throughout the term, students will have many opportunities to work in groups. In addition to in-class group exercises and discussions, student groups will develop a group project during the course. Groups will be formed during the first class session. Students will be allowed to choose their own groups. Your group will identify a current business situation that has consumer behaviour implications in the digital realm. Based on the issue selected you will be required to write a report analysing the situation and identifying solutions and/or alternatives using consumer behaviour and digital concepts.

The objective of this project is to analyze actual, contemporary marketing decisions from a consumer behaviour perspective and demonstrate that you fully comprehend the applicability of the subject matter in the real world. To this end, you need to identify a current marketing decision, e.g. the launch of a new product, a services-based pricing strategy, a brand repositioning, etc.

Almost all marketing decisions have consumer behaviour implications, so identifying one should be relatively easy. When selecting a marketing situation to analyze, try and pick one that has some impact on the brand, the company and/or the market conditions. For example, a minor change in a package design may have consumer behaviour implications, however its impact and consequently your ability to analyse it in detail and demonstrate your understanding of consumer behaviour may be limited. So pick a situation with sufficient depth and width to enable a good discussion of consumer behaviour concepts. You may use primary information (i.e., talk to sales people, consumers of the product, conduct store visits, etc.) and secondary information (look at industry reports, company financial reports, etc.)

Your report should provide details about the marketing/consumer situation. The context at the firm level or broader market level may also be relevant. Discuss all the relevant issues and identify the key consumer behaviour topics they may relate to. This should be followed by your analysis of the situation. Your discussion should demonstrate that you understand the theoretical constructs relevant to your topic. Feel free to debate the relevance or applicability of a theory if your analysis warrants doing so.

Details of the format for the written report are as follows:
Report Specifications

Entire Report	12 pitch font (12 characters per inch) with 1-inch margins
Executive Summary	Maximum one page, double-spaced
Body	Maximum 12 pages, double-spaced
Appendices	Tables, figures, exhibits may also be included
	Double-spacing not required
References **(mandatory)**	Bibliography, double spacing not required
References **(mandatory)**	Footnotes/endnotes, double spacing not required

** ELECTRONIC DATABASES for external research are available from the Library main page under "Databases" and are excellent searchable sources of articles. Examples include: ABI/Inform, Business Source Complete, Emerald, Sage.

Other Notes
Please note that all assignments must be handed in via LEARN as Word documents.

A Bibliography and either Footnotes or Endnotes must be used for all assignments in which outside research is used.

Weekly Topic Schedule

DATE	TOPICS TO BE COVERED	CHAPTER READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Jan. 10	Course Intro Introduction to Consumer Behaviour Research Methods Primer	1 LEARN	
Jan. 17	Perception Ethnography & Netnography	2 LEARN	
Jan. 24	Learning and Memory Motivation and values (pp. 96-106) Quantitative Survey Research	3 4	
Jan. 31	The Self Personality and Lifestyle Qualitative Research	5 6	
Feb. 7	Attitudes Attitude Change	7 8	*Real World Application due*
Feb. 14	Trendspotting	LEARN	
Feb. 21	**READING WEEK** – no class		
Feb. 28	Group Influence Online and Social Media Research	11	
March 7	Age Subcultures Income & Social Class, plus articles on LEARN	14 13	
March 14	Consumer Involvement (pp. 106-114) Individual Decision-making	4 9	*Digital Brand Audit due*
March 21	Individual Decision-making	9	
March 28	Buying and Disposing	10	
April 4	Cultural Influences	16	***Major Project due***

NOTE ON AVOIDANCE OF ACADEMIC OFFENSES

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW): http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.