

University of Florida
MAR3503: Consumer Behavior
Section 0111
Fall 2017

Professor: Yanping Tu

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Class hours and classroom: Mondays and Wednesdays 9:35am – 11:30am, HVNR 220

Office hours: Wednesdays 3-4pm, or by appointment

Email is great! Please begin your subject line with MAR3503.

Course Overview

Contemporary approaches to business emphasize the importance of adopting a **consumer focus**. Marketing, in particular, begins and ends with the consumer—from identifying and creating consumer needs, shaping consumer attitudes, influencing consumer choices, to increasing consumer well-being. This course is designed to inform managers, analysts, consultants, and advisors of the patterns of consumers' behaviors and the underlying mental processes, with an emphasis on leveraging these insights to develop **evidence-based** marketing solutions that **change consumer behavior**.

Specifically, I aim to help you think differently (and better) about how consumers form attitudes and make decisions, drawing on insights from **behavioral sciences (e.g., psychology, marketing, behavioral decision theories, economics)**. I also aim to prepare you to **conduct consumer research** (e.g., test the effectiveness of a new marketing promotion in your organization) and **evaluate the credibility of consumer research** conducted by others (e.g., do the data collected by the market research firm really support the recommendations they make?), with a focus on the **experimental approach**. Last but not the least, in addition to “covering materials,” a higher-level goal of mine is to help you become more observant in work and life, and **think more critically, creatively and independently**.

This course consists of both theoretical and practical aspects. Together we will (1) learn theories and empirical findings on consumer behavior, and (2) apply these insights. Equally as important, because we are all consumers ourselves, constantly influenced by marketing information (not only from marketers, but also from the media and almost everybody around us), this course will also help you **gain a deeper understanding of yourself as a target of influence** and form new perspectives of looking at your own decisions and behaviors. Finally, although this course has an empirical focus on marketing, the theories taught can be applied to other domains, such as management, policy making, etc. We will discuss examples in these other important areas too.

Course Topics

1. Introduction
2. Nudge: Be a Choice Architect
3. Decoding Consumer Decision and Attitude
4. Building a Customer Insights Engine
5. Marketing in the Social World
6. Money Decisions and Pricing
7. Rethinking Loyalty and Loyalty Programs
8. Enhancing Customer Experiences

Course Format

This course combines lectures, discussions, debates, and in-class exercises. It is highly participatory and interactive. Be ready to share your thoughts in each class! Independent, creative, and critical thinking are highly valued.

Course Materials

- Course Packet: A course packet containing most (~85%) **slides** and all the **readings** will be available at Target Copy (1412 W. University Ave., 352-376-3826) before the course starts. Some slides are intentionally left incomplete for you to fill out yourself in class.
- Required Text: **Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness** (by Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein)

* You do not need to study the slides or read the assigned articles prior to class. All the readings are after-class.

Performance Evaluation

Attendance	5 points
Contribution to discussions	5 points
Three online surveys (*results will be used in later lectures)	3 points
Two reflection papers	10 points
Midterm (*closed book)	30 points
Final exam (*closed book)	30 points
Group project (*5 people per group)	28 points
Total possible points	111 points

* Throughout this semester, you will have a few opportunities to earn extra credits by completing some additional, short assignments.

* The overall course grade will be determined using a curve reflecting the University of Florida guidelines.

Attendance (5 points)

Regular and punctual class attendance is required. Throughout the semester, I will randomly take attendance via your written submissions to in-class exercises. Missing one class means a deduction of 0.5 points.

Contribution to Discussions (5 points)

This class is application-oriented and very interactive. I will try my best to help you connect the course concepts to real world phenomena and marketing practices. Meanwhile, I expect you to actively think about the implications of these concepts too, and contribute to discussion, which is a crucial way for you to benefit from this course. You will be graded on the quality (not quantity!) of your contributions, which is determined by the extent to which your comments are relevant, constructive, and insightful.

Three Online Surveys (3 points = 1 point * 3)

In each online survey, you will answer some questions related to the course content. Aggregated results from your class will be used in later lectures. Please bring your laptop to class on those days.

Two Reflection Papers (10 points = 5 points * 2)

Two short 500-word (max) reflection papers provide you with opportunities to demonstrate that you have grasped the concepts and gained new perspectives to think about consumer behavior, marketing strategy, and marketplace anomalies. These papers can also help you improve your analytical thinking skills because they require you to organize thoughts and express them in a clear and logical way.

Reflection paper 1 should be related to concepts in topics 1-3.

Reflection paper 2 should be related to concepts in topics 5-6.

Each paper should include the following parts:

- 1) Identify ONE consumer/marketplace phenomenon related to the course content
- 2) Explain your “old” view of the phenomenon [optional]
- 3) Explain your “new” view of the phenomenon based on concepts covered in class

Tips for writing good reflection papers:

- 1) Discuss your personal observation, analysis and opinions. Do NOT repeat (or simply copy) contents from slides. Do NOT use examples from slides or discussed in class.
- 2) Try to identify phenomena in important real-life (not hypothetical!) domains (e.g., smart devices, apps, movies/TVs, fashion/beauty, sports, video games, and practices in your company). Feel free to use citations for your example.
- 3) Because each phenomenon is likely multi-determined, please try to analyze it from multiple angles, connecting it to multiple concepts taught in class.

Grading scale:

- Most papers will receive 4.5.
- A few exceptionally good papers will receive 5.
- A few below-expectation papers will receive 4, 3.5, or 3.

Midterm (30 points) and Final (30 points)

Both exams are closed-book. They will draw mainly from lectures and readings, and consist of a mixture of multiple-choice questions, true/false questions, and short answer questions. More information will be given in class prior to the exam to help you prepare.

Your responses to the multiple-choice questions and true/false questions will be recorded on Scantron, so please bring a #2 pencil with you on the exam days.

Midterm and Final are non-cumulative. Midterm tests topics 1-4. Final tests topics 5-8.

Group Project: A Business Solution Plan (28 points)

The ultimate goal of this course is to prepare you to (1) generate **actionable strategies to change consumer behavior** (e.g., purchase, participation in loyalty programs, referrals/word of mouth, responses to consumer surveys, attendance to events, etc.) and (2) evaluate the effectiveness of your solutions based on **empirical evidence**. Thus, I ask your group to assume the role of a consulting firm, which has been hired to improve **a measurable marketing outcome (which is related to a specific consumer behavior)** in a particular business/organization of interest (e.g., a local coffee shop or diner, a student organization, your or your friends' business). Please develop **three specific actions**, based on **concepts covered in topics 1-6 (and related materials you learned outside class)**, and **test the effectiveness of one action**.

Your business solution plan should be **no more than 10 double-spaced pages, not including cover page and references/appendix (Times New Roman; font size 12; 3000-word max)**. It should include the following parts:

- 1) Background information of the business/organization (be brief)
- 2) ONE specific, clearly defined, and measurable behavior that you plan to change
- 3) THREE specific actions, based on **concepts covered in topics 1-6 (and related materials you learned outside class)**, to change the target behavior. Please explain the rationale of your proposed actions and include the materials you plan to use (e.g., a new menu design, a message to consumers)
- 4) Empirical test and results of the effectiveness of ONE of your proposed actions.

The ideal group size is 5. Make sure that you choose people with whom you will be able to work efficiently and amicably. Please form groups by September 8 and sign up on Canvas.

On October 11, your group will present your preliminary plan. Please describe the business/organization you are “consulting for,” the **measurable marketing outcome (which is related to a specific consumer behavior)** you plan to change, and **one or two possible action(s)**. Your cohort (and I) will give you feedback to help you improve. This presentation will not be evaluated. Each group has 6 minutes for presentation and 4 minutes for Q&A and discussion.

On November 13 and 15, your group will present the business solution plan. Each group has 12 minutes for presentation and 3 minutes for Q&A. This presentation will be evaluated by your peers who will assume the role of a manager of the business/organization that you are “consulting” for.

- Presentation (8 points; peer review)
- Paper (20 points)

More information will be given in class.

Class Policies

Attendance

Regular and punctual class attendance is required.

Name Tent

Please use your name tent in each class session (even if you think everyone knows your name). If you forget to bring your name tent to class, create a temporary one to use that day. **Your name tent will help me remember your contributions to class discussions and thus is important for your participation score.**

No Laptop/Mobile Device Policy

I do my best to create a supportive learning environment, but I won't succeed without your active attention and engagement. Thus, the use of laptops and mobile devices is not allowed during class (unless you are instructed to work on online assignments).

Late Assignments and Make-ups

No late or make-up assignments will be accepted. If you fail to turn in an assignment by the due date, you should assume that you will not be given an opportunity to make it up or turn it in late.

Re-grading

If you believe an error has been made in grading your assignments, you may request a re-grade. Write a brief e-mail to me explaining why you think there may be an error. All re-grade requests must occur within 7 calendar days after grades have been posted. I reserve the right to re-grade the entire content of any re-submitted assignment(s). Your grade may go up or down and the new grade will be final.

Honor Code

Students are required to adhere to the standards of conduct in the University of Florida Honor Code. Be sure to sign the following Honor Code Pledge on every assignment: "I pledge my honor that I have not violated the University of Florida Honor Code during this assignment: _____"

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Help with Coping

The UF Counseling and Wellness Center is a free resource for any student who could use help managing stress or coping with life. The center, at 3190 Radio Road on campus, is open for appointments and emergency walk-ins from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make an appointment or receive after-hours assistance, call 352-392-1575.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

A Final Note

Most of this syllabus is necessarily formal, but the class sessions need not be. The class should be engaging and interesting for everyone. In addition to being important to marketing, this course consists of many topics to which we all, as consumers, can relate. I encourage everyone to bring up relevant examples and to ask questions at any point.

Tentative Teaching Plan

Week	Date	Day	Topic
1	Aug. 21	M	Introduction
	Aug. 23	W	Nudge: Be a Choice Architect (1) ❖ Online survey 1 (in class)
2	Aug. 28	M	Nudge: Be a Choice Architect (2)
	Aug. 30	W	Decoding Consumer Decision and Attitude (1)
3	Sep. 4	M	***No class (Holiday)***
	Sep. 6	W	Decoding Consumer Decision and Attitude (2) ❖ Online survey 2 (in class)
4	Sep. 11	M	Decoding Consumer Decision and Attitude (3) ❖ Reflection paper 1 (due Sep. 16, 11:55PM EST)
	Sep. 13	W	Building a Customer Insights Engine (1)
5	Sep. 18	M	Building a Customer Insights Engine (2)
	Sep. 20	W	Building a Customer Insights Engine (3)
6	Sep. 25	M	Midterm review
	Sep. 27	W	***No class (Career Showcase)***
7	Oct. 2	M	Midterm exam (in class)
	Oct. 4	W	Marketing in a Social World (1) ❖ Online survey 3 (in class)
8	Oct. 9	M	Group meeting (no class): work on group project
	Oct. 11	W	Presentation: group project plan
9	Oct. 16	M	Marketing in a Social World (2)
	Oct. 18	W	Money Decisions and Pricing (1)
10	Oct. 23	M	Money Decisions and Pricing (2)
	Oct. 25	W	Money Decisions and Pricing (3) ❖ Reflection paper 2 (due Oct. 30, 11:55PM EST)
11	Oct. 30	M	Group meeting (no class): work on group project
	Nov. 1	W	Rethinking Loyalty and Loyalty Programs
12	Nov. 6	M	Enhancing Customer Experiences (1)
	Nov. 8	W	Group meeting (no class): work on group project
13	Nov. 13	M	Presentation: group project (1)
	Nov. 15	W	Presentation: group project (2)
14	Nov. 20	M	Group meeting (no class): Finalize group project paper
	Nov. 22	W	***No class (Holiday)***
15	Nov. 27	M	Enhancing Customer Experiences (2) ❖ Group paper (due Nov. 27, 11:55PM EST)
	Nov. 29	W	Final exam review
16	Dec. 4	M	Final exam

After-class readings

1. Introduction

- Nudge: Introduction
- Article: Redesign Lunch Line

2. Nudge: Be a Choice Architect

- Nudge: Chapter 16 (A dozen nudges)
- Nudge: Chapter 5 (Choice architecture)
- Nudge: Chapter 4 (When do we need a nudge)
- Nudge: Chapter 17 (Objections)
- Article: Nudge Your Customers Toward Better Choices

3. Decoding Consumer Decision and Attitude

- Nudge: Chapter 1 (Biases and blunders)

4. Building a Customer Insights Engine

- Article: A Refresher on Randomized Controlled Experiments
- Article: How to Design (and Analyze) a Business Experiment
- Article: Run Field Experiments to Make Sense of Your Big Data
- Article: Your Company Is Full of Good Experiments (You Just Have to Recognize Them)

5. Marketing in the Social World

- Nudge: Chapter 3 (Following the Herd)
- Article: 98% of HBR Readers Love This Article
- Article: Harnessing the Science of Persuasion

6. Money Decisions and Pricing

- Nudge: Chapter 2 (Resisting Temptation p49-52)
- Nudge: Chapter 7 (Naïve Investing)
- Nudge: Chapter 8 (Credit Markets)

7. Rethinking Loyalty and Loyalty Programs

None.

8. Enhancing Customer Experiences

None.