

# Consumer Behavior Insights

## Course Syllabus

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## Course Information

### Course Description

In the Consumer Behavior Insights course, students explore the processes that consumers use to make decisions. Understanding of consumer segments is developed and applied to create communication strategies.

Through coursework, students demonstrate an understanding of various topics including how market intelligence is collected, market segmentation, the impact of various cultural influences on behavior, elements of persuasive communication and development of consumer-oriented strategies.

Cultural norms influence receptivity to marketing communication messages. In-depth consumer knowledge of a sub-cultural segment is learned and applied as students conduct market research. Based on analysis, students develop communication objectives, positioning statements and strategies for consumer communication.

The role of mass media is examined in two distinct areas. Mass media influence cultural values by reinforcing norms for consumer needs and wants. Mass media are also important means for communication of targeted advertising messages.

Students are placed in decision-making roles through exercises and case analyses. Strategic skills are developed through assessment of effective means for communication with consumers based on consumer insights.

### Course Learning Goals

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Explain cultural influences and the ways in which culture impacts social norms.
- Develop strategies for effective intercultural advertising messages for members of different cultural and sub-cultural segments.
- Describe how mass media both influence cultural norms and are effective means for communicating targeted advertising messages.
- Identify how consumer behavior insights can be gained and develop strategies for consumer communication based on these insights.

## Course Resources

To buy your books, go to <http://www.mbsdirect.net> .

Hint: type DePaul for name of the school.

[Click here for help buying your books](#)

## Required Text Book

Schiffman, L. and Kanuk L. (2010). *Consumer Behavior Tenth Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

## Course Competences

In this course, you will develop the following competences:

Competence	Competence Statement
H-1-A	Understands and can apply the principles of effective intercultural communication.
H-2-G	Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media on society.
A-2-X	Can develop an original creative design of an advertisement based on cultural/sub-cultural characteristics of the target audience and business influences.
F-X	Can evaluate influences on consumer behavior and create strategies for consumer communication.

## Relationship of this course to the competence statements

In this course, students will develop skills and knowledge in the development of consumer behavior, which will result in demonstrated competence abilities in the H-1-A, H-2-G and F-X competences. The evaluation of how culture is developed and the impacts that various variables have in this process, including mass media, will lay the foundation for consumer behavior understanding. Based on development of consumer behavior insights through research, strategies for communication are developed. Various exercises and examples enhance learning along with application of analysis frameworks. Students registered for the A2X competence will develop an original advertising design based on consumer behavior insights and a communication strategy.

## Assessment Criteria for each Competence

- Your completion of all required written assignments and your Discussion Forum participation will meet your requirements for each competence.
- Note that certain assignments are designated based on the competence for which a student is registered.
- Refer to the assessment criteria for written assignments, including the research analysis as well as the criteria for Discussion Forum participation below.

## Course Structure

This course consists of 11 modules. The time to complete each module/unit is one week. The assignments apply to all competencies except as noted.

**To view the course schedule, click on the Schedule link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.**

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## **Assessment**

### **Assessment of Learning**

Student learning will be assessed based on participation in discussion forums, a research report, communication strategy analysis, case analyses, exercises, one collaborative analysis and a summary perspective statement.

Consumer Behavior Insights is a graded course. Your final grade will be based on performance and completion of the assignments that are required.

The learning outcomes for each module will be used to assess achievement of the competencies that you are fulfilling.

### **Assessment Criteria for Written Assignments**

Assessment of written assignments will be based on:

- The thoroughness with which questions are answered (including use of supporting facts/explanations, original ideas and use of resources)
- The clarity and organization with which information is presented including use of appropriate grammar
- The appropriate use of required format, as stated in an assignment's directions
- Timely submission, so that due dates are met

### **Assessment Criteria for Online Discussion Participation**

Your participation in online discussions will be based on the following:

- To maximize your participation grade, each question that is posed by the instructor should be addressed in an insightful manner.
- As appropriate, the expansion on ideas of others is evaluated as it enhances the learning experience.
- Congenial interaction is required to encourage the presentation of diverse ideas among students.
- Timely submission is necessary to facilitate discussion among all students.

### **Assessment Criteria for your Research Analysis**

How your Research Analysis will be evaluated:

Each student is to develop a 7-8 page research analysis in which you will evaluate the characteristics of a selected segment of the U.S. population. The analysis should be double-spaced and use a 10-12 point font with one-inch margins. A page limit is needed to provide a fair comparison among students and because concise presentation of information is an important aspect of business writing.

Your research paper will be evaluated based on the following factors:

- Quality/thoroughness of content
- Appropriate use of required format (analysis length, each section of analysis must be addressed)
- Appropriate grammar, punctuation, and word selection
- Clarity and organization of the paper including use of appropriate grammar, punctuation, word selection and logical transitions between ideas
- Timely submission so that all due dates are met
- APA format must be used for in-text references and your bibliography
- Documentation of references and source citation
- Presentation of marketing implications

## References

- Use at least six reliable sources.
- Use up-to-date references (preferably 1-3 years old, though not older than 1995.)
- Sources must be cited in your analysis in APA format.
- For online sources, authors should be cited, as available, and the date during which the reference was retrieved in a format consistent with APA format. A link should be provided that allows the instructor to review your research.
- Personal experiences may be used sparingly, however these are only to supplement use of six or more reliable sources and must be stated succinctly when relevant to the research being presented. Each section needs to have at least one reliable data source listed.
- References may include newspapers, magazines, reports, journals, website resources. The DePaul online library collection is extensive and accessible at: <http://www.lib.depaul.edu/eresource/journals.asp> You will need your Campus Connect userid and password to access these resources from off-campus locations.
- Use of interviews must be approved by the instructor and, if approved, must be consistent with the Protection of Human Subjects section in this guide. Interviews are not to be used to develop conclusions about the characteristics of a population segment for the purposes of this analysis. Published information from reliable sources is to be used in order to develop a profile that is representative of each segment.

## Research Paper Learning Objectives

The research analysis for this course is designed to develop insights into consumer characteristics and behaviors for a selected segment of the population. Development of such insights requires understanding of the factors that influence the consumer's needs, wants, values, behaviors and product selection processes.

The insights are needed to develop effective communication strategies. This understanding is also used by marketers to develop products that meet a consumer group's needs and wants.

Your analysis will apply to your chosen competency as follows:

### **H1-A Competency:**

Intercultural communication is developed through a strategy of improved cross-cultural understanding. The knowledge learned through your research will be applied to analysis of advertising communication targeting your chosen sub-cultural segment.

### **H-2-G Competency:**

Mass media usage habits are evaluated in the context of a variety of characteristics of a selected population segment. These characteristics provide perspective regarding the reasons for mass media use and the resulting impact that mass media has on this group. The ways in which media impact the segment's perceptions of societal norms and issues are evaluated.

**A-2-X Competency:**

Students will develop an original creative design of an advertisement. The creative process will be based on in-depth understanding of the consumer group that is targeted as well as business objectives.

**F-X Competency:**

Characteristics of consumer behavior are evaluated, which will be used for creation of strategies for communication to a selected consumer segment.

**Research Analysis Guidelines – Applies to All Competencies**

All students will evaluate your chosen consumer segment based on the following characteristics. Please note that students that are registered for the H1A competency must evaluate a sub-cultural segment as defined on pages 46-47 of our text. **The following format must be used for the analysis.** As explained above, this will be a 7-8 page analysis. The cover page and reference list don't count toward the page limit.

The selected consumer segment is to be evaluated to provide perspective about representative characteristics and how this segment is distinct from others. This analysis is not to evaluate the advertisement, which will be evaluated in the Communication Strategy Analysis, or the selected product.

**Research Analysis Format**

Note that all information needs to be cited in APA format. Please include the following headers so that a business writing format is used.

*Introduction*

- Description of objectives of analysis
- Statement of selected consumer segment for analysis

*Demographics/Characteristics*

- Description of demographic characteristics including age and percent of the population, growth rates, racial diversity, marital status, family composition/size (including presence of children), income, education, home ownership, geographic location (e.g. city vs. suburbs, concentration in certain parts of the U.S. or throughout the U.S.) Compare the above facts to the population overall or to another segment in order to provide perspective about how this group is unique.
- Acculturation, if appropriate
- Shared attitudes/psychographic characteristics
- Verbal traits if applicable (e.g. use of more than one language in the home, use of slang etc.)

This will be your longest section of the analysis.

*Work, Leisure and Saving*

- Work statistics (e.g. type of work, percentage employment full/part time)
- Expectations/beliefs about work ethic/achievement/success

- Leisure activities and role of leisure in lifestyle
- Saving habits (as available)

#### *Influences on Attitude Formation*

Describe how the following groups influence the selected segment with a paragraph description related to each. Use each of the following terms in your discussion:

- Normative reference groups (e.g. family, religious groups)
- Comparative reference groups (e.g. friends)
- Popular indirect reference groups (e.g. celebrities, sports heroes, political figures or members of another consumer segment)

#### *Media Usage*

- Mass media usage/selection/time spent (including TV, magazines, Internet and others, if appropriate.) Trends may be discussed as applicable. Comparisons to another segment or to the general population provide further perspective.
- Use of media for leisure
- Use of media for information including for shopping
- Perceptions of advertising in general (if available, discuss use of media related to a selected product category as well)

Keep in mind that this section presents research facts about media usage and not simply tactics for how to reach this group. This discussion needs to be specific to your chosen target and not a general discussion of media characteristics.

#### *Product Usage/Shopping Behavior*

- Product selection (e.g. selection of brand names, status symbols, importance of quality vs. price vs. style, peer influence). This doesn't need to focus on the product in the ad that you selected.
- Purchase Incentives (e.g. use of coupons, purchase on sale)
- Shopping behavior (e.g. types of products that this consumer group uses more than others in the general population, attitude toward shopping, frequency of shopping, brand loyalty)
- Status symbols (e.g. in product selection, fashion, use of luxury products)
- As available, discuss the segment's use/purchase/interest of the product category that you have selected for your communication strategy analysis (based on your ad selection.)

#### *Communication Strategies*

Based on your research analysis, describe two communication, promotion or product strategies that you believe marketers can use to reach this consumer segment in order to sell products. You can refer to the discussion of strategies as a reference in the Module 4 Additional Resources section.

These strategies should be specific to this segment (rather than applicable to all consumer groups) and based on your research findings.

#### *Summary*

- Discuss why an understanding of consumer characteristics is necessary to understand consumer behavior.
- Any other summary points

#### **Choosing a Sub-Cultural Consumer Segment**

Your sub-cultural segment will be a consumer group that has unique cultural characteristics within our society. Various sources (e.g. newspapers, websites, texts, etc.) will be used to fully evaluate one of the major sub-cultural segments that we address in this course. Please refer to Module 5 for a detailed explanation.

### Website Resources

The following websites discuss research paper writing in detail and are references in this document:

General Guides (Including Topic Selection and Structure):

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/>

<http://www.nutsandboltsguide.com>

APA Format/Bibliography:

<http://www.nutsandboltsguide.com/apa.html>

### Timeline For Research Paper

Week 1-4	Explore Research Paper Topics
Week 5	Submit Topic for Research Paper
Week 6	Submit Research Paper Reference List
Week 7	Submit 1st Draft of Research Analysis
Week 8	Work on Research Analysis
Week 9	Submit Final Research Analysis

### Course Grading Scale

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

### Percent distribution of assignments

Type of Graded Work	Percent of Grade
Research Analysis (*28% for FX only)	20%
Participation in Discussion Forums	18%
Advertising Strategy Analysis (*18% for FX only)	13%
Case Analyses (3x11%)	33%

*Culture (H1A) or Mass Media (H2G) Analysis or Advertising Creative Design Analysis (A2X) (Competency Specific) (Does not apply to FX only)	13%
Collaborative Case Analysis	2%
Trends Perspective Statement	.05%
Learning Reflection	.05%

\*Students registered for FX and one other competence (H1A, H2G, A2X) only submit the assignment for their other competence.

\*Students registered for only the FX competence need to submit one of the following three competence-specific assignments: Culture (H1A) or Media (H2G) in Mod 5 or Advertising Creative Design (A2X) in Mod 10.

\* Students registered for FX only will have 28% of their grade allotted to the Research Analysis and 18% to the Advertising Strategy analysis.

### **Online Participation Guidelines**

Each student is expected to make at minimum one contribution per discussion in the forum. To maximize your participation grade, address each question in each topic in an insightful manner that builds on the input of others. Your responses to both instructor questions and to other students' comments will enhance the learning experience for all students.

Your contributions to discussions should include a supporting statement(s). Draw from your text readings, magazines, work or any personal experiences, etc. to explain why you agree/disagree with another student or why you have the perspective that you have.

Text does not carry the tone and nuances of face-to-face conversations. Students read messages through their own perceptions, so misinterpretation is both easy and common. Congenial interaction in online conversations facilitates the learning process. Extra attention is needed in online dialogue for these reasons.

These discussions are a place for you to exchange ideas with the others in the class related to specific topics on a weekly basis.

In on-line courses, the student is an interactive learner with the instructor providing guidance and mentoring.

### **Electronic Submissions and Communications**

Assignments should be submitted electronically via Blackboard in the Assignments area of the course website as attachments or pasted into the body of the Assignment tool. Microsoft Word is the supported word processing software. Word revision tools will be used to correct student work. Zipped files should not be sent; zipped files will not be read. E-mail communications with the instructor are the preferred and primary format. Graded work will not be faxed to students.

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## **Policies**

## Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

## Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-7290 (phone) or 773-325-7296 (TTY); or call PLuS at 773-325-1677.

## Incomplete Grades

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected,

uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

## **Protection of Human Subjects**

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>.

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve "interactions" —interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s). As such, these activities qualify as "research" with "human subjects" and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning's Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no "harm"—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
  - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an "informed consent" document. For information on creating an "informed consent document" see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>.

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## **Course Expectations**

### **Time Management and Attendance**

SNL's online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least four times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

### **Your Instructor's Role**

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

### **Your Role as a Student**

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

### **Credits**

*This course was designed and produced by Halina Cowin and staff of SNL Online at DePaul University.*

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