

## Consumer Insights

### Course Outline

#### Instructor

#### Brief Description

Anticipating consumer response is at the heart of marketing strategy. Consumer theory provides a broad framework for effectively designing marketing research that speaks to strategy, as well as identifying key consumer insights in data interpretation. This course examines contemporary theories and research concerning common forms of consumer behaviour, and uses these concepts to provide practical insights into all aspects of the marketing mix. The topics relate to many different elements of the consumer behaviour process, including: perception, motivation, memory, self-concept, attitude, social and social media influences, group influences, culture, subcultures, and consumer culture. Measurement, testing, and interpretation of consumer responses are emphasized throughout.

#### Course Learning Outcomes

The purpose of this course is to teach students to analyze, evaluate and problem-solve marketing issues in accordance with sound consumer behaviour principles and ethical concerns. A secondary goal is to help students develop the necessary project-based group working skills essential to both effective marketing strategy and business management.

More specifically, the goals are to:

1. Introduce students to the broad field of consumer behaviour.
2. Help students understand key consumer theories, relevant research methods, related problem-solving strategies and marketing practices.
3. Develop the ability to research and analyze consumer behaviour related to marketing problems; use qualitative ethnographic methods to collect, analyze, present, and defend analyses on the basis of evidence and consumer behaviour principles.

#### Deliverables at a Glance

Course grading is based on a mixture of individual and group work, oral and written presentations, and 'real world' projects. There are no exams. In the table below, the impact of each task on your final grade for the course is indicated in the “% weight” column.

Assignment/Task	% Weight	Total %	Author
Class Participation	10	10	Individual
Real World Example Presentation	15	25	Individual
Data Collection & Transcription	25	50	Individual
Netnography, Observation, & Auto-ethnography	20	70	Group
Project: Presentation, Report	25	100	Group
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>	

For details, see “Project Description and Evaluations” below.

### Course Material

*Required reading* for this course includes the following textbook:

1. Solomon, White, & Dahl (2016, 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Edition), *Consumer Behaviour: Buying, Having, and Being*, Pearson Education Canada. ISBN: 9780134352671 (<http://www.bookstore.yorku.ca/> and elsewhere)

**Note:** A Canvas data base will be created. It contains general information for Schulich students and information and materials specific to this course. Check it frequently. A set of PowerPoints for each class will be posted on this site each week shortly before the relevant class.

Finally, an older version of the text will be made available in the Bronfman Business Library.

### Student Preparation for Class and Class Participation: Expectations

#### **(a) Preparation**

Students should read the required materials assigned for each week prior to the class and come prepared to critically evaluate, discuss, and apply them.

#### **(b) Participation (10% of final grade)**

Student participation adds tremendously to the dynamic of the classroom and ultimately to what students take away from the course. For this reason, students are strongly encouraged to actively engage in classroom discussions. General class attendance and intelligent participation will make up the main part of the participation grade. Students are also encouraged to bring or email relevant marketing examples, news or issues seen in the media for class discussion. Such efforts will be rewarded with participation credit. Quality of participation in classroom exercises will also be considered. Timely arrival to class; polite attention to other students who are speaking, lectures and student presentations; and obvious distraction with matters outside the classroom (e.g., completion of other work, messaging, viewing unrelated online content, etc.) will also be factored in. It is obvious when you are not paying attention. Professional business conduct is expected at all times and in all interactions with other students and the instructor.

## Graded Oral and Written Material

### **(a) Real World Example Presentation—INDIVIDUAL DELIVERABLE 1 (15% of final grade)**

A key objective for this course is to learn to apply consumer behaviour theory to real world scenarios. As such, you will be required to do one presentation during the semester where you present a real world example that relates to the class topic we are discussing at the time. This presentation is quite informal and should last no more than 5 minutes (strict time limit). For the presentation, you are required to find any real world example of the topic we are discussing in class that day. This can be a newspaper article, blog posting, advertisement, magazine article, personal experience, TED Talk, etc. You can bring to class any example you like, but it must relate to the topic being discussed at the time. During your presentation, you should:

1. Present your real world example.
2. Describe, in detail and CRITICALLY, how this relates to the topic of the class. Do NOT attempt to present textbook concepts in class; assume that the class is already familiar with them and that they will be covered by the instructor
3. Discuss the marketing implications of the example, incorporating your insights from point 2 above.
4. Hand-in via e-mail a brief (2-page maximum) summary of your presentation.

**Reserve a date ahead of time via e-mail to the instructor.** A short example follows:

**For example**, according to an article in *Real Simple* magazine, 39% of people who receive gifts they don't like "hide them out of sight." You could take this real-world example and discuss how it relates to gift giving, holiday rituals, and sacred and profane objects (topics we will discuss in the culture section of the course). Next, you should discuss what this means for marketers from a practical perspective: should companies emphasize this point to encourage the sale of gift cards? Should firms like eBay use this point in their marketing to encourage people to sell (instead of store) their unwanted gifts? Is there a new product or service (e.g., QR codes on the outside of store-wrapped gifts so the content can be viewed without unwrapping; making them suitable for regifting, as in Japan)? Etc. You should think critically and creatively about what's happening in the example. Superficial analyses will not suffice.

### **(b) Class Project (50% of final grade)**

We will be working on a class project involving **consumer use of mobile technologies**. Working in the groups or 4 or 5 determined at the beginning of the term, at the end of the term your group will be expected to prepare a 15-minute final presentation (executive summary) with a full written report (20-30 pages typed, double-spaced, using 12-point font) **or** a 10-minute video (no written report in this case; the video is the report and showing it is the presentation).  
qualitative marketing research project.

## Evaluation of Written Assignments/Projects

You are being evaluated relative to others in the class. This is true for both group and individual projects. Criteria for Real World Example presentations include effectiveness of presentation, strength of analysis, and clarity of written summary. **Do not go over time (5 minutes) in presentation or over pages (2) allowed on your summary or your grade will be harmed** (time answering class questions at the end of your presentation does not count). Transcripts for interviews must be verbatim; you are not judged on informant helpfulness, but rather on the questions you ask and probes you use to get the best data possible (these should be included in the transcripts). **Group deliverable 1** has a variety of components and criteria will be discussed in class.

**All material to hand-in is only accepted by e-mail to the instructor on the day due.**

### Calculation of Course Grade

- There are no exams in this course.
- Please note that I do not accept late assignments. If your assignment is late, you will receive a score of zero on that evaluation item.
- *Grades* at Schulich are based on a 9-value index system. The top grade is A+ (9) and the minimum passing grade is C- (1). To keep final grades comparable across courses, elective courses are expected to have a mean grade between 5.2 and 6.2
- Each assignment receives a letter grade; final grades are computed by transforming the grade to the following numeric equivalents: A+=9, A=8, A-=7, B+=6, B=5, B-=5, C+=3, C=2, C-=1, less than C-=0.

Final grades are calculated by multiplying each grade by the proportion of the grade it comprises (.10, .15, .20, .25) and adding. Weighted average grades are then rounded so that 6.50 =B+ and 6.49 =B, for example.

### General Academic Policies: Academic Honesty, Accommodations and Exams

*Academic honesty* is fundamental to the integrity of university education and degree programs, and applies in every course offered at Schulich. Students should familiarize themselves with York University's policy on academic honesty, which may be found on the Schulich website:

<http://schulich.yorku.ca/current-students/academic-honesty/>

*Accommodations.* For accommodations sought due to exam conflicts, religious reasons, unavoidable absences or disabilities, please refer to the Student Handbook or contact Student Services.

For counseling & disability services, contact Student Services or see <http://www.yorku.ca/cds/>.

### Summary of Classes, Activities and Deliverables

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT/Reading
Week 1 Jan 13	Intro to Consumer Research Research Methods; Give examples of research methods I have used in India & China where many students are from; discuss non-colonialism in China (except for hateful foreign concessions in treaty port cities) versus India	SWD Ch 1 Form groups
Week 2 Jan 20	Research Methods Group Research Project Give examples from research in outback Australia and US powwow versus rendezvous raising issues of land rights and (non)settlements in AU, NZ, US, & CA	Group Research Project on Canvas Self-assignment to project groups; <b>Report Group Members via email</b>
Week 3 Jan 27	Perception Discuss cultural differences in perception, including closeness, touching	SWD Ch 2 <b>Report Group Focus via email</b>

Week 4 Feb 3	Learning & Memory Discuss types of systems; imposition of colonial language; appropriation and replacement of place names	SWD Ch 3, <b>Group Netnography, Observation, &amp; Auto-ethnography Presentations and Reports Due</b>
Week 5 Feb 10	Motivation Here I talk about post-communist countries just after communism and a phenomenon I call “Leaping Luxuries” because people sometimes sacrifice “necessities” to afford “luxuries.” I spent a year in Romania at that time and observed it there. OK, communism wasn’t really colonialism, but some of the effects were similar.	SWD Ch 4
Week 6 Feb 17	Self, Personality, and Values Sense of self and consumption of the new middle class in Zimbabwe is something I bring up here based on work I did for a year in Zimbabwe about the turn of the millennium. There were certain patterns that emulated the former colonialists and others that did not and I put it to the class to answer why these patterns.	SWD Ch 5, 6
	Reading Week (No Class)	
Week 7 Mar 2	Attitudes and Attitude Change I don’t like this chapter much. Maybe it’s because attitudes and attitude change models exemplify a linear rational way of looking at the world—another colonial legacy	SWD Ch 7, 8, <b>Individual Depth Interview Transcriptions Due; obtain signed informed consent documents for all interviews</b>
Week 8 Mar 9	Individual Choice, Buying, and Disposal I discussion of materialism and owning versus sharing comes in here—something that distinguishes formerly nomadic Aboriginal Australians from non-indigenous invaders, but causes problems in Aboriginal outback communities caught between Aboriginal and European norms	SWD Ch 9, 10
Week 9 Mar 16	Group Influence and Social Media Here I bring in the beer study in independent US vs interdependent Hong Kong (standing out vs. fitting in)	SWD Ch 11
Week 10 Mar 23	Income, Social Class, Family Structure, and Subcultures This is the place to discuss welfare programs versus universal basic income, the shame of reservations and reserves, and systematic structural inequality.	SWD Ch 12, 13
Week 11 Mar 30	Cultures and Cultural Creation and Diffusion This is finally the place to discuss immigration, acculturation, residential schools, forced placement, the stolen generation, the Canadian	SWD Ch 14, 15

	myths of non-slavery & the underground railroad.	
Week 12 Apr 6	Group Project Presentations	<b>Group Presentations</b> <b>Group Final Project Reports Due</b>

**Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule as needed**