COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is structured around the consumer's "Path to Purchase," that is, the key steps in the consumer's purchasing decision process. The emphasis is on the touchpoints between the marketer and consumer in influencing the consumer's purchase decision. A key focal point in this regard is how these touchpoints have been affected by the digital revolution in (1) increasing consumer information and choice and (2) providing marketers increased opportunity to influence consumers, particularly through viral marketing strategies. Key objectives in the course are to

1. To provide an understanding of how consumers make decisions on the path to purchase
2. To consider psychological and sociological concepts that provide an understanding of the consumer's path to purchase
3. To link behavioral concepts to marketing strategy to better understand how to influence consumers on their path to purchase
4. To recognize how the consumer's path to purchase has changed due to the digital revolution.

COURSE MATERIALS

Text: Henry Assael. Consumer Behavior: A Strategic Approach, Houghton Mifflin, 2004. The text is free and chapters appear in NYU Classes under lessons. Although dated, the text provides basic consumer behavior principles and will serve as a reference book for the course. There will be no exam questions from the text that are not covered in lectures and power points.

To be picked up from the marketing department: 8th floor Tisch: A packet of two items:
(Please initial the sign-in sheet when picking up these items.)

1. Power Point Slides: Provides a complete copy of all the power point slides that will be used in class in the course.
2. Data Segmentation systems: The material in this packet will be used to help define target segments for your course project.

NOTE: Please turn in the information form on the last page of this syllabus by Session 3, Feb. 4.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Project (50% of grade)

The major assignment in the course is a team project that asks you to identify a marketing opportunity, describe the target group, determine consumer reactions to this opportunity, and develop strategic recommendations on this basis.

You will be asked to form teams of about 5 students by session 4, Feb. 5. There will be a comprehensive project review on that date, including a review of the Simmons One View data base to be used in describing your target. Simmons is a syndicated service that provides data on profiles of user groups by product category. The project and access to the Simmons data is described in full in the resource section of NYU classes.

The project will require:
- A two-page proposal to be submitted session 6, Feb. 12. The specs for the proposal are in Appendix B of this syllabus.
- An interim report to be submitted session 13, March 12.
- A final report due session 26, May 5.
  ■ Specs for the interim report and final report are in the project guide on NYU classes.
- Two presentations:
  ■ The first presentation will be ten minutes long and will be based on the interim report. The presentation will be sessions 16 & 17 – March 31 and April 2.
  ■ The second presentation will be twenty minutes long and will be based on the final report. It will be on sessions 24-26, April 30, May 5 & 7
- I will be meeting with each team at least once after the after submitting the interim report.

The grade distribution for the project assignments is:
- Proposal: Not graded
- Interim report: 10%
- Final report: 25%
- Interim presentation: 5%
- Final presentation: 10%

Final Exam (30%)
The exam will be based on the lectures and power point slides and will be composed of essay questions. Text material can enhance your answers, but questions will be based solely on material covered in class. A review session will be held the last day of classes, May 12.

Class Participation (20%)
Class participation is based on the following:
- Contribution to In-Class discussions
- Contribution to the Course Project
- Attendance & Promptness: You are expected to attend all class sessions and to arrive on time for every session.
CLASS POLICY

1. Class Conduct and Class Courtesy

A. **Attend regularly.** The only exception is excused absences, which are allowed in cases of serious illness, family emergency, or religious observances. If you know you will be unable to attend, please e-mail the TA and indicate the reason for the absence.

B. **Arrive on time.** Attendance and lateness are recorded.

C. No in-class chatter please.

D. **Try to avoid going in and out of class while it is in session**

E. Please inform me if you have to leave class early

F. **Turn off all electronic devices** prior to the start of class including laptops and cell phones.

2. Conform to dates for Exams

The only basis for taking a make-up exam is for a certified medical reason.

3. **Be an Equal and Active participant in the group project:**

If there are issues of unequal participation that you cannot resolve by the time of your first interim report, bring it to my attention so I can work with the group to find a resolution. You will be asked to complete a peer evaluation form to evaluate the contribution of each of your group members at the conclusion of the course project. If there is consensus by the group that a member did not contribute a fair share of work to the project, I will consider this feedback in assigning a course project grade for that individual.

4. **Check your e-mail regarding the course:** An e-mail will be sent regarding each class.

5. **Grading:**

Although there is no official Stern curve, the following will serve as guidelines in grading:

- A No more than 35% of students
- B Approximately 50% of students
- C or less No more than 15% of students

6. **Respect the Stern Honor code:**

All students are expected to follow the Stern Code of Conduct: [http://www.stern.nyu.edu/OSA/student.html](http://www.stern.nyu.edu/OSA/student.html)
GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to content, the course project will be graded on writing quality.

- **It is essential in business writing to be clear, direct, and persuasive.** Carefully proofread all assignments before submitting.

- **Use headings** to organize your thinking and help orient the reader.

- **The project must have a cover page** (not included in the page limit) that includes (1) name of team members (2) the date submitted, (3) the title of the assignment. (4) e-mail addresses of group members. **Assignments will not be accepted without a cover page.**

- Assignments must be printed **in 12-point font and double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides.**

- Whenever you refer to information from an outside source, **provide the source** of this information. A page of endnotes may be in addition to the page limits on exhibits.

- Please **number your pages** (except the cover page).

- Adhere to these guidelines for your **project proposal, interim reports, and final report.**

**CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS**

- Feb, 5: Form teams for group project
- Feb. 12: Submit project proposal
- March 12: Interim project report
- March 31 & April 2: Interim presentations
- April 30, May 5 & 7: Final presentations
- May 5: Final report
- To be Announced: Final exam
# COURSE OUTLINE

NOTE: Readings & assignments for every class session are listed under the Lessons section of *NYU Classes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>The Path to Purchase</td>
<td>Text: Chpt. 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reading #1 &amp; 2 (See Appendix C for list of readings)</td>
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<td>2&amp;3</td>
<td>1/29 &amp;</td>
<td>I. TYPES OF DECISIONS ON THE PATH TO PURCHASE</td>
<td>A Typology of Consumer Decisions</td>
<td>Information form due 2/3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/3</td>
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<td>- Text, Chapter 2</td>
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<td>- Readings #3-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Project review &amp; review of Simmons One View data base</td>
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<td>Form project teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>2/10 &amp;</td>
<td>Understanding &amp; Increasing Consumer Involvement</td>
<td>- Chapter 4</td>
<td>Project proposal due 2/12</td>
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<td>2/17</td>
<td>President’s day Holiday</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Creating Consumer Engagement &amp; Advocacy</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>Brand Loyalty Vs. Inertia</td>
<td>Chpt. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>Guest Lecturer: Ken Zasky, Pres. Big Fuel</td>
<td>“Creating Consumer Engagement Through Viral Marketing”</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>II. THE PATH TO PURCHASE</td>
<td>Consumer Perceptions</td>
<td>Chpt. 6; Reading #6</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Guest Lecturer: Derek Swanson, VP, Nielsen</td>
<td>“Consumer Empowerment in the Digital Age”</td>
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<td>12 &amp; 13</td>
<td>3/10 &amp;</td>
<td>Information Search &amp; Sources</td>
<td>Chpt. 7; Reading #7</td>
<td>Interim report due 3/12</td>
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<td>3/17-3/23</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>3/24</td>
<td>Attitudes &amp; Post-Purchase Evaluation</td>
<td>Chpt. 8; Reading #8-9</td>
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<td>3/26</td>
<td><strong>Guest Lecturer:</strong> Christian Kugel, Director Digital Media AOL</td>
<td>“The Role of Mobile in the Path to Purchase”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/31 &amp; 4/2</td>
<td><strong>Interim Presentations</strong></td>
<td>Submit copy of slides</td>
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<td>4/7</td>
<td><strong>Guest Lecturer:</strong> Adam Alter, Ass’t Prof, Stern</td>
<td>“The Role of Cognitive Fluency on the Path to Purchase”</td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> #10</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/9 &amp; 4/14</td>
<td>III. CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS</td>
<td>Chpt. 12, pp. 347-357; Readings #11-13</td>
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<td>4/16</td>
<td>Psychographics</td>
<td>Chpt. 10; Reading #14</td>
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<td>4/21</td>
<td>IV. GROUP INFLUENCES</td>
<td>Chpt. 16; Readings 15-16</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/23</td>
<td><strong>Guest Lecturer:</strong> Laura Kennedy, Analyst, Social Media, Kantar Research</td>
<td>“The Role of Social Networks on the Path to Purchase”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/28</td>
<td><strong>Guest Lecturer:</strong> Ed Keller, CEO, Keller-Fay</td>
<td>“The Role of Word-of-Mouth on the Path to Purchase”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/30, 5/5, 5/7</td>
<td>Final Presentations</td>
<td>Final Report due 5/5; Submit coy of slides on day you present</td>
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<td>5/12</td>
<td>Review Session for Final Exam</td>
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<td>TBA</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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APPENDIX A
SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR COURSE PROJECT

The following topics are *suggestions only* and are designed to illustrate the types of topics that would be viable candidates for the course project. You are free to pick any topic of interest as long as it identifies an area of potential opportunity that consumers can respond to. Please note that the topic can be on
- a new product or service or revitalizing an existing one
- an extension of a product line
- a new retail store
- an entrepreneurial idea that you would like to pursue
- targeting a new segment of the market for an existing product

Consider the following:

**Leveraging a company’s offerings to areas outside its current scope** – e.g.
- Sony Music introducing a line of vinyl record with retro music
- Victoria’s Secret introducing a line of cosmetic products.
- Axe cosmetics introducing a line of men’s casual clothing

**Introducing new product line extensions in existing areas of competence**
- Pepsi or Coke introducing a calcium-fortified soft drink
- L’Oreal introducing an organic skin care line

**Targeting untapped consumer segments**
- Anheuser Busch targeting beer to women
- Targeting videogames to women

**Introducing a new retail outlet**
- Pop Up stores for Target

**Developing new technologies or media**

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APPENDIX B
SPECIFICATION FOR PROJECT PROPOSAL

*(Title page and maximum of two pages)*

Briefly define
- your area of opportunity and why it represents opportunity
- why it was chosen.

Then provide a preliminary assessment of
- the consumer needs and benefits you are focusing on
- key strategic issues associated with your area of opportunity
- the nature of the target market for your area of opportunity
APPENDIX C

LIST OF READINGS IN NYU CLASSES


5. “Coca Cola and Brand Love,” IMC Student Blog, June 1 2013


11. “McDonald’s Has a Millenial Problem,” AdAge.com, March 25, 2013


APPENDIX D

INFORMATION FORM

Consumer Behavior

Prof Henry Assael

Your Name: ____________________________

Major(s): ____________________________

Check One:      __________Stern student
                  ________ Non-Stern student, School___________________

Expected Graduation Date______________

1)  Please read the following statement and indicate your agreement by signing below. (Before signing, make sure to read the syllabus thoroughly).

   “I have read the syllabus thoroughly. I understand and agree to the requirements associated with this course.”

______________________________ _________________
Signature                     Date

2)  What is your recent work experience?

3)  Tell me something else about yourself that is important to you and/or makes you unique (your interests, hobbies, background, talents etc.) Use back of this sheet if needed.

4)  How does this course fit in with your career goals?
    [PLEASE USE BACK IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE]