CONSUMER BEHAVIOR COURSE – Brief overview
The schedule will be available in September

Dr. Anne-Laure Sellier
Tisch 8-11
Phone: (212) 998-0553
Fax: (212) 995-4855
asellier@stern.nyu.edu

Office Hours: flexible, call for appointment
Teaching assistant: TBA

Optional Readings:

I highly recommend you go through the readings below. However, please note we will never refer to the Solomon book in class. I will merely indicate what chapters are relevant for each class, and you can use the book as a tool to better grasp some of the concepts we will discuss in class.

2. Additional journal articles, exercises, and recent news from the popular business press will be provided throughout the semester. The journal articles will provide you with a deeper insight into selected topics and methods of consumer behavior research. The business news articles, cases, and exercises will give you the opportunity to apply the conceptual framework to current real-world marketing problems. The readings and assignments will be handed out in class and/or posted on the Blackboard.
3. Most cases assigned for the class are in the course pack, and some will be posted on Blackboard, as we will enjoy freshly baked cases from the London Business School and the industry.

Overview:
Consumer behavior is one of the most interesting and important aspects of marketing management. Virtually all decisions involved in developing an effective marketing mix for a product or service rely on thorough knowledge of the consumers who comprise the target market. Understanding the behavior of the consumer can help marketers anticipate reactions to changes in the marketing mix, or determine whether new products are likely to be adopted. Consumer behavior is also closely related to marketing research. A practical understanding of the consumer can aid in the selection of an appropriate research methodology, question design and selection, as well as in interpreting consumer responses to such questions. In this course we will directly examine the available theory and research concerning the behavior of the consumer in order to understand its most basic principles.

The majority of the course will focus on the consumer as an information processor of one sort or another. We will examine the motivational and perceptual factors upon which buyer behavior is built, as well as look at more complex processes such as persuasion, attitude judgment, and decision-making. In practical terms, we will address the following questions: What kinds of marketing stimuli do consumers notice? How can we get them to notice our marketing messages? What motivates consumers? What do consumers value? What elements can we include in our marketing mix to motivate consumers to learn more about our product or to buy it? What kinds of information are consumers good at remembering? How can we aid consumer memory for our brand name and product features? What makes consumers evaluate products as good or bad, and how can we persuade them that our product is good? How can we get consumers to choose our product over competitors? What features do consumers care about, and how does this influence their decision? What are the main things that determine whether consumers are
satisfied with a product or not?

The goals of this class are:

• to acquire a framework for analyzing consumer behavior problems
• to learn how consumer behavior can be affected by different marketing strategies
• to show how behavioral evidence can be used to evaluate alternative marketing strategies
• to learn about and use consumer behavior theories in marketing and social psychology

The course is structured as followed: we will discuss a case; it will be followed by a lecture related to the case. Note that we discuss the case for 1h30 / 2 hrs, so you are expected to be thoroughly prepared for class discussion.

Course prerequisites: a solid understanding of your Core Marketing course

Course Grades:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written assignments (2)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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N.B. on class participation: Attending all sessions is obviously crucial. It will also give you the opportunity to actively participate in class discussions and obtain a high class participation grade. Note, however, that your mere presence is not sufficient to earn points for class participation. What matters is the quantity and, especially, the quality of your contributions to class discussions.

Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of the relevant class. They are to be prepared in groups of 4 or 5 students. Students are expected to choose who they want to work with. All groups should be formed before the third week of class.

Length: 3 pages (single spaced), plus any appendices, graphs, etc.

The assignments involve a case analysis. Groups will write a brief paper examining the buyer behavior issues involved in two case readings assigned for the class, and describe the implications these principles have for the strategy they propose in the case. Each case will have associated questions with it that will help you structure your answer. Each assignment is due at the beginning of the class where the case will be discussed.

Final exam

The final exam will be a three-hour case-study, closed book, involving questions related to consumer behavior. It will take place during the last week of the course. We will finalize the exam date during our first class. Please make sure that you will not have any other work / interview-related commitment that day.
Course Website

This website has many useful things on it, including continuously updated information on assignments, readings, course schedule, etc. Also, we will use it as a platform to discuss consumer behavior issues covered in the press during the semester. Please check Blackboard regularly.

Class Notes

I will hand out hard copies of the slides after the case discussion in every session. In addition, the PowerPoint slides for each class will be available for downloading from the website as of right after class. Note, however, that these slides only present an outline of the class discussion. You will need to take notes to fully capture the material discussed in class.

Additional Literature

You can find additional relevant literature (e.g., for your team project) using the Bobst Business Databases (http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/database/d_bus.htm), as well as links on the class website.

Class Policy

- Be prepared: Make sure that you have read the readings assigned for each class. This will help you to better understand the material discussed in class and to actively participate in class discussions.

- Attend regularly: Regular attendance will provide you with more opportunities to contribute to class and thus increase your participation grade. Please note that you are responsible for knowing any changes or assignments announced in class.

- Arrive on time: Late-comers are very disturbing. Systematic tardiness will have a negative impact on your participation grade.

- Respect assignment deadlines: Late assignments will not be accepted without a prior agreement.

- Be honest: Cheating and plagiarism will result in a grade of “F” for the assignment/test for all parties involved.