

BA 4714- Consumer Behavior

Course Schedule

Tues and Thurs 10:35-12:10, In-person

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Office Hours:	Mondays 13:10-14:25, or by appointment
Course Web Page:	Link to ODTUClass Course Page

Course Description:

This course introduces you to the study of the behavior of people as consumers. In this course, we understand consumer behavior broadly as concerned with how individuals and groups select, purchase, use, and dispose of products, services, ideas, and experiences to satisfy needs and desires. These activities are shaped by a range of psychological and sociological factors.

Understanding of consumer behavior is essential for business managers (to develop, assess and implement effective marketing strategies), policy makers (to encourage responsible consumption of public goods), and consumers themselves (to make better decisions in acquiring and using goods).

Business managers are concerned with why consumers choose one brand over another (e.g., Apple vs. Samsung) or when consumers may replace or dispose of products (e.g., when they trade-in an old car for a new one). Firms must “know” customers before they can develop appropriate marketing strategies to gain a competitive advantage. **Public policy makers** must also have an understanding of how consumers and society are likely to be impacted by business products and practices, as well as how society impacts business. For example, policy makers may be concerned with persuasion attempts aimed at particular groups to encourage acquisition (e.g., sales efforts directed toward children), with public consumption of products that pose health threats (e.g., cigarettes), and with public disposition of goods (e.g., environmental concerns of disposing computers). **Consumers** will also make better decisions in acquiring, using, and disposing of products when they understand their own behavior. This can increase their satisfaction with their experiences as a consumer, or may lead them to react by becoming consumer activists and boycotting a particular product, demanding regulatory sanctions against particular business practices, or spreading negative word-of-mouth. I hope that in taking this course you will become a more thoughtful and empowered future marketing manager, policy maker, citizen, and consumer.

The key objectives are to provide you with current knowledge of theory and practice in consumer behavior, equip you with analytic tools that can be used to investigate consumer behavior, and develop your abilities to apply consumer behavior concepts in designing, evaluating, and implementing marketing strategies.

Course Student Learning Objectives: (CSLO)

On successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

Course Specific Skills:

1. identify and explain the psychological and sociological theoretical underpinnings that contribute to and shape the behavior of people as consumers;
2. analyze the complexities of internal and external influences on consumers’ behavior and connect them to strategic implications for marketers;

3. assess and apply the principles of consumer segmentation, positioning, and targeting for effective marketing management;
4. critically and ethically evaluate market offerings and campaigns as relating to consumers;
5. investigate a consumer-related social issue and create a strategic initiative to address that issue to benefit society;

Personal Skills:

6. strengthen oral and written communication skills;
7. work with a team to conduct research and analyze data;
8. improve critical thinking and ability to compare competing theories;
9. develop as a thoughtful and empowered consumer and citizen.

Learning and Teaching Methods:

Sessions consist of a mixture of formal lectures, in-class discussions, directed private and group study, and in-class case studies. Emphasis is placed on the creation of an interactive and participatory learning environment.

Required Reading:

Textbook: *Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having, and Being*, Michael R. Solomon, Eleventh Global Edition
[Journal of Marketing Special Issue: Better Marketing for a Better World](#)

Suggested Reading:

Business media sources such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* to see the application of the weekly course topics.
 Academic sources such as *Journal of Marketing* and the *Journal of Consumer Research* to expand your understanding of the course material.

Assessment and Grading:

Form of Assessment	% Contribution	Size of the assessment	CSLOs covered by this assessment	Feedback Method
Participation	15	During in-class discussions	1-9	Oral (in class)
Presentation	10	One 10 minute presentation	1-9	Oral (in class)
Midterm Exam	20	1-1.5 hrs. long multiple choice and/or short answer exam	1-4,6,8,9	Written
Final Exam	30	1-2 hrs. long multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay exams	1-4,6,8,9	Written
Group Project & Presentations	25	Written report submission, 10-15 minute presentation	1-9	Written

Participation

In order to get the most out of this class you need to attend class and meaningfully participate. I suggest that you think of our class sessions as regularly scheduled meetings you would have at a place of employment: you show up on time and are ready to participate.

- Attendance will be taken in each class and will count towards your participation grade.
- Please email me as soon as possible if you have a health concern so that I understand your situation.
- If you have multiple absences without notifying me it will significantly lower your participation grade in the class.

Class participation will be evaluated according to the following categories:

- Outstanding Contributor: Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation and original thinking. Ideas integrate relevant themes and are nearly always important. Comments spark deeper discussions. Attends all classes and through consistency and enthusiasm makes the class better for all.
- Good Contributor: Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation and involved thinking. Ideas are usually important, provide good insights, and sometimes offer a fruitful direction for the class. Comments are relevant. Attends almost all classes and is engaged in discussion.
- Adequate Contributor: Contributions in class reflect hasty preparation. Grasps the important ideas, but seldom goes beyond these. Comments are infrequent but relevant. Attends most classes and is not a distraction to other students.
- Unsatisfactory Contributor: Contributions in class reflect poor preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive and disconnected from the flow of the class. Contributions are confusing and distract from discussion. Misses many classes and/or distracts other students.
- Non-participant: Consistently misses class or attends and is tuned out. Hence, there is not adequate basis for evaluation.

Class Presentation

There are exciting developments in the field of marketing recognizing the importance of consumer behavior in achieving a better world. This year the *Journal of Marketing* released a Special Issue "Better Marketing for a Better World." Most of the articles are based on consumer research.

<https://www.ama.org/journal-of-marketing-special-issue-better-marketing-for-a-better-world/>

We will discuss one of these articles each Thursdays in class. Each student will be responsible for presenting one of the articles and helping lead the class in a discussion of how it connects to consumer behavior.

Midterm Exam:

The Midterm Exam covers the first six topics and is worth 20% of the final grade. It lasts 1-1.5 hours and consists of multiple choice and / or short answer essay questions. It will be held on **2 December 2021** during the normal class hours.

Final Exam:

The Final exam is a comprehensive exam worth 30% of the final grade. It lasts 1-2 hours and consists of multiple choice, short answer, and/or long essay questions. It will be held during the final exam time announced by the department.

Group Project:

The group project and final presentation compose 25% of the final grade. In this group project you will prepare a consumer/market analysis and a set of recommendations based on your analysis. While the course

material can be applied in different ways, this project will be focused on influencing consumer behavior on a social issue. Kotler and Zaltman (1971) introduced the term “social marketing” as the use of marketing skills to help develop current social action efforts into more effectively designed and communicated programs that will elicit desired audience response. For an introduction to social marketing, read Fox and Kotler (1980), “The marketing of social causes: The first 10 years” in *Journal of Marketing*.

Imagine that our class is a consulting firm that specializes in consumer behavior research. We have been hired by the local or national government to collect and analyze consumer data on behaviors that impact the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Your customer is expecting specific recommendations on how to influence behavior in this area.

This project will be completed by a group of **three to four students** of your choosing. I can help match people into groups. The purpose of the project is to bring you face-to-face with consumers and make your own discoveries as you apply what you have learned.

Each student and group will collect and analyze actual consumer data to evaluate consumer behavior in this area. Based on your research, you will develop a thorough list of recommendations on how to support the achievement of the UN SDGs.

Project Presentations: Each group will present their project at the end of the semester. Presentations will be scheduled for the week of January 20th. A question/ discussion session will follow each presentation. All teammates are expected to speak in a smooth and well-organized presentation. More details will be provided on the expectations.

Peer Evaluations: At the completion of the project, you will evaluate the performance of your teammates. You will receive a “group” grade; however, your individual grade may vary depending on the peer evaluations. It is critical that every teammate make a large contribution.

Policy on late submissions: A print copy of your project is **due at the beginning of class on Thursday, 13 January 2022**. I expect you to work consistently throughout the semester and turn it in on time. Late projects will be penalized with a 3% deduction for the same day delivery, and an additional 5% for each day after.

Additional Course Notes:

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Attend every class prepared to participate.
- Work ahead on the term project. Set early deadlines as a team so that you can make sure everyone is on track.
- Let me know if you have questions or challenges well before deadlines and the end of the course.

GET TO KNOW YOUR PROFESSOR

You have the opportunity to sign up for an optional lunch with your professor on Thursdays after class. This is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. If interested, you should sign up with a group of two to three students for one of the Thursdays during the semester. Please let me know ahead of time if you will be unable to keep your time. I value the opportunity to get to know students personally in a more informal environment outside of the classroom.

Course Policies:

STUDENT DISABILITIES: Any student, who, because of a disabling condition, may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements, should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Students should present the appropriate documentation from the university's Disability Support Office (Engelsiz ODTÜ Birimi, ODTÜ Kütüphanesi, Solmaz İzdemir Salonu, Tel: 210.7196; engelsiz@metu.edu.tr) verifying their disability, and outlining the special arrangements required. Please note that no accommodations will be provided to the disabled students prior to the completion of this approved University process.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: The Department of Business Administration has no tolerance for acts of academic dishonesty. Such acts damage the reputation of METU, the department and the BA/MBA/MS degree and demean the honest efforts of the majority of the students. The minimum penalty for an act of academic dishonesty will be a zero for that assignment or exam.

CHEATING: All university, faculty/institute, and department principles on academic honesty will be strictly enforced. The usual consequence for academic dishonesty is failure of the course and referral of the case to the Dean of the Faculty/Institute for additional disciplinary action. Examinations are individual and are to be completed without outside assistance of any sort. Persons observed cheating during examinations will receive a failing grade in the course. Homework assignments are individual, unless otherwise specified by the instructor, and are to be completed without outside assistance of any sort, as well. Persons observed cheating in their homework assignments will receive a score of zero for the portion of the semester grade that is allocated to such assignments.

PLAGIARISM: The instructor assumes that students will do their own work. By placing their names on assignments (individual or team), students are affirming that the contents are their original work. Any previous work available from files or past students, as well as materials available on the internet may be used only as a suggestive model. Violation of this provision will be considered as unethical behavior, subject to disciplinary action. If you have any doubt about the use of a specific material, see the instructor ahead of time. Any material used from outside sources should be referenced appropriately.

METU HONOR CODE

Every member of METU community adopts the following honor code as one of the core principles of academic life and strives to develop an academic environment where continuous adherence to this code is promoted.

"The members of the METU community are reliable, responsible and honorable people who embrace only the success and recognition they deserve, and act with integrity in their use, evaluation and presentation of facts, data and documents."

CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment which is conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have an opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from using laptop computers and cellular phones, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in classroom shall result, minimally, in a request to leave class.

STUDENT EXCUSES: In case you cannot attend one of the examinations, if and only if you can present an official (dean's or president's office approved) **excuse** or **METU Medical Center certified Health Report**, you will be eligible to take a make-up examination. There will be **one single, comprehensive make-up examination during the final period and it will be counted towards whichever exam(s) you are missing.**

The following table gives the tentative schedule for the semester. The lectures will stress the most important and/or most difficult material. The students are expected to read the chapters before they are covered in class.

Month	Day	Topic	Reading/ Assignment	CSLO
October	19	Syllabus and Course Introduction		1-4
October	21	Introduction	Ch 1	1-4
October	26	Decision Making	Ch 2	1-4
October	28	No Class		
November	2	Cultural Influences	Ch 3	1-4
November	4			
November	9	Sex Roles and Subcultures	Ch 10	1-4
November	11			
November	16	Well-Being	Ch 4	1-4
November	18		Group Project Interim Report	
November	23	Perception	Ch 5	1-4
November	25			1-4
November	30	Review		1-4
December	2	Midterm Exam		1-4,6,8,9
December	7	Learning and Memory	Ch 6	1-4
December	9			
December	14	The Self	Ch 7	1-4
December	16		Transcripts & Primary Research Findings	
December	21	Attitudes and Persuasion	Ch 8	1-4
December	23			
December	28	Group and Situational Effects	Ch 9	1-4
December	30			
January	4	Social Class and Lifestyles	Ch 11	1-4
January	6			
January	11	Networked Consumer Behavior	Ch 12	1-4
January	13		Submission of Final Projects	1-9
January	18	Course Review		1-9
January	20	Project Presentations		1-9