

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

BA 4726 / 5726 – UNDERSTANDING CONSUMPTION IN CONTEXT

Course Schedule

Mondays and Wednesdays 14:40 – 16:00

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<b>Course Web Page:</b>	Link to ODTUClass Course Page

**Course Description:**

This module seeks to develop an interdisciplinary, theoretically informed understanding through an active piece of primary research into consumer behaviour, consumer identities, and consumer experience. Consumer behaviour can be broadly defined as the processes through which groups and/or individuals, acquire, consume, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, identities, and/or experiences. Consumption is defined as the process through which we materialize values and meanings and resolve paradoxes and contradictions in everyday life (Miller 1987). In this course, we aim to understand how consumers utilize consumption as a social process in their everyday lives. Various qualitative research methods are thought and conducted by students. Understanding consumer behaviour through consumer research is also of primary importance for those students who may wish to pursue careers in marketing, advertising, or market research.

**Course Student Learning Objectives: (CSLO)**

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

**Course Specific Skills:**

1. recognise the importance of consumer research for the implementation of the marketing concept
2. demonstrate an understanding of the interdisciplinary foundations (psychology, sociology, and anthropology) that underpin consumer research
3. demonstrate knowledge and skills of planning, designing, implementing, analysing, and reporting consumer research
4. implement tools for original research, problem solving, and critical thinking

**Discipline Specific Skills:**

5. differentiate, apply, analyse, and reflect on theories, concepts, and interpretive research methods commonly used in exploring and understanding consumers
6. demonstrate broad knowledge of literature and concepts in consumer research and related fields
7. understand interactions of consumer behaviour and marketing

**Personal and Key Skills:**

8. participate in group interaction, including leadership and discussion opportunities
9. develop communication skills, including negotiation, argumentation, and presentation
10. develop critical reading and writing skills
11. experience motivation and support for undertaking original research that can be directly related to one's ability to provide novel insights and problem solving in interviews, at work and in community

**Learning and Teaching Methods:**

Sessions consist of a mixture of formal lectures, in-class discussions, group work, presentation sessions, directed private study, research tutorial sessions, and case studies.

**Required Reading:**

Textbook:

Moisander, Johanna and Anu Valtonen (2006), *Qualitative Marketing Research*, London: Sage.  
Belk, Russell, Eileen Fischer and Rob Kozinets (2013) *Qualitative Consumer and Marketing Research*, Sage: London. [HF5415.2 .B453 2013](#)

You can have access to the required articles at odtuclass.

<b>Assessment and Grading:</b>				
<b>Form of Assessment</b>	<b>% Contribution</b>	<b>Size of the assessment</b>	<b>CSLOs covered by this assessment</b>	<b>Feedback Method</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	10			
<b>Individual Exam (30% each)</b>	30	An hour long written exam	1-8, 10-11	Written and Oral (in class)
<b>Group Assignment: Progress Presentation</b>	10	15 mins	1-11	Written feedback
<b>Group Assignment: Written presentation of the term project</b>	30	3000 words (-/+ 5%)	1-11	Oral feedback
<b>Individual Data Collection Portfolio:</b> Data collected in the form of text or visual form and preliminary data analysis conducted by each member of the group will be submitted.	20	Secondary Data on Context and Phenomenon 2 interview scripts Participant observation field note Netnography data Projective technique data Preliminary individual data analysis	1-11	Written Feedback

<b>Course Policies:</b>
<p><b>STUDENT DISABILITIES:</b> 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 <u><a href="#">Disability Support Office</a></u> (<u><a href="#">Engelsiz ODTÜ Birimi</a></u>, <u><a href="#">ODTÜ Kütüphanesi</a></u>, <u><a href="#">Solmaz İzdemir Salonu</a></u>, Tel: 210.7196; <u><a href="mailto:engelsiz@metu.edu.tr">engelsiz@metu.edu.tr</a></u>) 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.</p> <p><b>ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>CHEATING:</b> 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.</p>

**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.

Past observations showed that the METU classroom experience is improved when the following are true:

**Students arrive on time.** Timely arrival ensures that classes are able to start and finish at the scheduled times. Timely arrival shows respect for both fellow students and faculty and it helps to create a better learning environment by reducing avoidable distractions.

**Students are fully prepared for each class.** Much of the learning in this course takes place during classroom discussions. When students are not prepared, they cannot contribute to the learning process. This affects not only the individual but also the classmates who count on them.

**Students respect the views and opinions of their colleagues.** Disagreement and debate are encouraged; however, intolerance for the views of others is unacceptable.

**Laptops, phones and wireless devices are turned off.**

**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 and essay type make-up examination during the final period and it will be counted towards whichever exam(s) you are missing.**

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES!** <http://oidb.metu.edu.tr/en/academic-rules-and-regulations>

**NOTE THE IMPORTANT DATES ON THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR!** <http://oidb.metu.edu.tr/en/academic-calendar>

The instructor assumes that students who attend the next class have understood and accepted to agree with all the requirements and rules of this course.

**Notes:**

- Usage of cell phones is strictly prohibited during class. Please be courteous to your classmates and me and make sure that your phones are on silent mode before the class begins.
- Please arrive on time and do not enter the classroom if I already have closed the classroom doors. If you have to leave early, please inform me in advance.
- Please turn in the homework assignments on time and note that no late assignments (no matter how late) will be accepted.
- You are encouraged to drop by my office during office hours for questions, concerns, or, suggestions. Outside the office hours, please make an appointment with me via e-mail. For quick questions that you may have, note that e-mailing is a very effective means of communicating with me.

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

Tentative Course Schedule				
Month	Day	Topic	Reading/ Assignment	CSLO
February	19	<b>Introduction</b>		
February	21	<b>Qualitative Research</b>	Chapter 2 –Moisander and Valtonen Recommended: Introduction and Chapter 1 – Belk et al (2013) <i>Qualitative Consumer and Marketing Research</i> , London: Sage.	
February	26	<b>Ethnography</b>	Arnould Eric J. and Melanie Wallendorf (1994), "Market-Oriented Ethnography: Interpretation Building and Marketing Strategy Formulation," <i>Journal of Marketing Research</i> , XXXI, 484-504.	1-8,9
February	28	<b>Ethnography</b>	Jayasinghe, L., & Ritson, M. (2013). Everyday advertising context: An ethnography of advertising response in the family living room. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , 40(1), 104-121.	1-8,9

March	04	<b>Interview</b> <b>Individual Submission -1: Observation</b>	McCracken, Grant (1988), <i>The Long Interview</i> , London: Sage. Chapter 4 – Moisander and Valtonen Arsel, Zeynep (2017) “ Asking Questions with Reflexive Focus: A Tutorial on Designing and Conducting Interviews” <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> 44 (4), 939-948	1-8,9
March	06	<b>Interview</b>	Üstüner, T., & Holt, D. B. (2010). Toward a theory of status consumption in less industrialized countries. <i>Journal of consumer research</i> , 37(1), 37-56.	1-8,9
March	11	<b>Netnography</b>	Chapter 5 – Belk et al (2013) <i>Qualitative Consumer and Marketing Research</i> , London: Sage.	1-8,9
March	13	<b>Netnography</b> <b>Individual Submission-2: Interview</b>	Scaraboto, Diane, and Eileen Fischer. "Frustrated fatshionistas: an institutional theory perspective on consumer quests for greater choice in mainstream markets." <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> 39, no. 6 (2013): 1234-1257.	1-8,9
March	18	<b>Focus Groups</b>	Morgan, D. L. (1996). <i>Focus groups as qualitative research</i> (Vol. 16). Sage publications.	1-8,9
March	20	<b>Focus Groups</b> <b>Individual Submission 3 – Secondary Data and Netnography</b>	Zhou, Nan and Russell W. Belk (2004) “Chinese Consumer Readings of	1-8,9

			Global and Local Advertising Appeals” <i>Journal of Advertising</i> , 33 (Fall), 53-76.	
March	25	<b>Visual Analysis</b>	Chapter 5 – Moisander and Valtonen	
March	27	<b>Visual Analysis</b>	Dion, D., Sabri, O., & Guillard, V. (2014). Home sweet messy home: managing symbolic pollution. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , 41(3), 565-589.	
April	01	<b>Group Project Tutorial</b>		1-8,9
April	03	<b>Midterm I</b>		1-8,9
April	8	<b>Projective Techniques</b>	Belk, Russell W., Guliz Ger, and Soren Askegaard (1997), “Consumer Desire in Three Cultures: Results from Projective Research”, <i>Advances in Consumer Research</i> , 24, 24-28.	1-8,9
April	10	Eid-ül Fitr - Holiday		
April	15	<b>Projective Techniques</b>	Nguyen, Thuc-Doan T., and Russell W. Belk (2013) "Harmonization processes and relational meanings in constructing asian weddings." <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> 40 (3): 518-538	1-8,9
April	17	<b>Trustworthiness and Ethics</b> <b>Individual Submission: Projective Techniques</b>	Wallendorf, M., & Belk, R. W. (1989). Assessing trustworthiness in naturalistic consumer research. <i>Interpretive</i>	

			<i>consumer research, 1989, 69-84.</i> Chapter 8 – Moisander and Valtonen	
April	22	<b>Example Research</b>	Arsel, Zeynep and Jonathan Bean (2012) “Taste regimes and market-mediated practice” <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> 39 (5), 899-917	
April	24	<b>Data Analysis</b>	Chapter 7 - Moisander and Valtonen	1-8,9
April	29	<b>Data Analysis</b>	Chapter 9 - Moisander and Valtonen	1-8,9
May 1		Labor Day - Holiday		
May	06	<b>Example Research</b>	Deniz Demircioğlu	1-8,9
May	08	<b>Writing-Up</b>		1-8,9
May	13	<b>NO CLASS</b>		1-8,9
May	15	<b>Project Tutorial</b> <b>Individual Submission-5: Visual and Textual Analysis</b>		1-8,9
May	20	<b>Example Research</b>	E. Karababa	1-11
May	22	<b>Project Tutorial</b>		
May	27	<b>Presentations</b>		1-11
May	29	Written Projects due		

### **Midterm Exam (30% of the final mark)**

Students will take a midterm exam which will assess the knowledge developed during the semester on qualitative research methods techniques. The exam will be in the short essay format and will last an hour.

### **Group Project (30% of the final mark)**

Groups will conduct a primary qualitative research project. They will submit the final Project of 3000 words written.

### **Individual Data Collection Portfolio as part of the Group Project (30 % of the final mark)**

Data collected in the form of text or visual form and preliminary data analysis conducted by each member of the group will be submitted.

### **Group Project Presentation (10% of the final mark)**

15 min. Group presentation (will be scheduled to the end of semester)

### **Assessment Criteria for Essays**

The criteria for the assessment of the in-class, midterm and group project essays are listed below. After writing your essays, please read them carefully to see if the criteria are fulfilled.

	<b>Criterion A</b>	<b>Criterion B</b>	<b>Criterion C</b>	<b>Criterion D</b>	<b>Criterion E</b>
<b>Mark</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING AND FAMILIARITY WITH THE SUBJECT:</b>	<b>BREADTH OF READING</b>	<b>OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENT. INCLUDES THE ABILITY TO LINK THE ELEMENTS</b>	<b>INDEPENDENCE OF THOUGHT AND CRITICAL EVALUATION</b>	<b>PRESENTATION, INCLUDING FLUENCY OF WRITING, GRAMMAR AND SPELLING</b>
<b>1</b>	Subject matter treated as set of discrete bits of knowledge	Little or no reading evident,	Little clear structure or argument evident.	Uncritical and unreflective work, relying mostly on undigested sources.	The quality of written expression undermines the ability of the work to communicate ideas.
<b>2</b>	Evidence of knowledge, but only basic connections made between items	Limited use made of Reading	Argument patchy, inconsistent, or proceeding with conjecture and opinion rather than evidence.	Critical evaluation limited to expressions of opinion, using mainly second-hand ideas	While the written style generally gets the content across, with occasional errors that limits effective communication.
<b>3</b>	Subject matter adequately understood, with some connections made	Effective use made of the reading and arguments reasonably supported	The essay mainly supported by evidence but let down by some unsound inferences or unsubstantiated assertions	Evidence of occasional independent and critical thought, limited by either inconsistent reasoning or an over-reliance on the text	The quality of the writing communicates effectively, with occasional minor lapses
<b>4</b>	Familiarity with subject demonstrated, including complex connections between elements	Recommended reading used, supported with clear examples and supported arguments	A clear and generally structured argument - most of argument is supported with links to literature	Critical evaluation and independent thought are the norm, but there are occasional inconsistencies.	Error-free and clear, the writing generally does justice to the content, with few or minor errors
<b>5</b>	Ability to contextualize subject within wider frameworks and critically explore connections, demonstrating depth of understanding of relevant theoretical frameworks.	Evidence of extensive reading beyond the recommended texts, including critical evaluation of sources and skillful synthesis of sources to make coherent points.	The argument is pursued clearly and in a balanced and authoritative manner very well supported by evidence and informed judgement. The thread of the argument is obvious throughout.	Contains some novel/ original ideas, the work shows excellent critical evaluation of sources and ideas. There is clear demonstration of the author's own considered, well reasoned, and unbiased judgment	The writing style is clear, concise, fluent and readable, significantly enhancing the overall quality of the submission.
<b>Mark</b>					
<b>GRADE</b>	<b>0%</b>				