I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course

Examines consumption behavior with emphasis on the psychological, sociological, cultural, economic, and environmental influences. Reviews importance of products to consumers. (3)

Interdisciplinary Nature of the Course

Buyer (consumer) behavior is that subset of human behavior that deals with the consumption process. Consumption is, of course, necessary for life, but in addition it also defines who we are. Our possessions are very important to us, in many ways, we are what we have. There are almost unlimited ways for us to spend our limited resources, and it is important to examine the consuming process and some of the influences upon it. Many disciplines are interested in various facets of human behavior and contribute concepts and knowledge which help us to better understand the consuming process. Section A of the course outline pulls from the fields of anthropology, economics, marketing, psychology, social psychology, and sociology. Section B includes material from the fields of psychology, marketing, and communications. Section C pulls primarily from psychology and marketing. Section D utilizes ideas from sociology, and social psychology, economics, and marketing. Section E is primarily anthropology, sociology, and marketing based. The course attempts to integrate knowledge about consumer behavior from these various disciplines.

The course falls under the behavioral systems category as it pulls together ideas and knowledge from many disciplines to help the student better understand consumer behavior. The course also includes considerable coverage of social systems in the sense that such topics as culture, subculture, social class, reference groups, and opinion leaders are discussed in terms of their influence upon consumption decisions.

II. Prerequisites:

Completion of lower level university studies requirements in social systems or behavioral systems.

III. Purposes or Objectives of the Course:

A. To help the students better understand the important role that consumption activities play in their lives and the lives of others. (objs. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9)

B. To acquaint students with the current thinking regarding how environmental influences and individual determinants affect consumption behavior and decision-making. (objs. 2, 3, 6, 8, & 9)

C. To provide students with an understanding of the interrelationships that exist among the social, cultural, and psychological influences and the specific affects they have upon buyer behavior. (objs. 2, 4, 5, 6, & 7)

D. To provide students with information regarding consumption behavior that should make them a better decision maker both individually and as a citizen of world. (objs. 4, 5, 6, & 9)

E. To assist students in more fully understanding the buyers decision making process and to think critically about their own buying decisions. (objs. 2, 6, & 9)
IV. Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course the students will be able to:

A. explain the interrelationships that exist among the social, cultural and psychological influences and the specific impacts they have upon buyer behavior. (objs. 2, 5, & 6)

B. apply concepts about consumption behavior to making informed, intelligent value decisions. (obj. 9)

C. identify the buyers’ decision making process and illustrate how it relates to one’s own buying decisions. (obj. 2)

V. HCB Assurance of Learning (BSBA)

All faculty members in the Department of Management and Marketing are committed to upholding certain learning objectives for their students in accordance with AACSB accreditation standards. As such, the courses students take in this department seek to meet at least one or more of the following objectives as part of the BSBA degree:

A. Proficiency in written and oral communications

B. Demonstrated effective use of technology

C. Demonstrated awareness and understanding of other cultures

D. Demonstrated knowledge of the fundamentals of business disciplines

E. Demonstrated critical thinking skills involving business and ethics

VI. Expectations of Students

A. Active, informed participation in class discussions.

B. Timely completion of all assignments and exams.

C. Demonstration of critical thinking skills and integration of knowledge in class assignments.

VII. Course Content or Outline

A. Introduction (objs. 1, 2, 4, & 6) 5 hours
   1. Basic concepts and models in buyer behavior
      a. Defining buyer behavior
      b. Why study buyer behavior
      c. Buyer behavior as a field of study
      d. Buyer behavior from the sellers vs. buyers view
      e. Types of buyer behavior research
      f. Buyer behavior models - The development of early theories
         1. Ideas from the field of economics
         2. Ideas from the field of psychology
         3. Ideas from the field of sociology and social psychology
         4. Ideas from the field of marketing
      g. Video on ethnographic research methods
B. The Consumer as an Individual (objs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, & 9) 10 hours

1. Perception
   a. The perceptual process
   b. Sensory systems
   c. Sensory thresholds
   d. Subliminal persuasion
   e. Perceptual selection
   f. Interpretation: Assigning meaning to stimuli

2. Motivation and Involvement
   a. The motivation process
   b. Motivational strength
   c. Motivational direction
   d. Hidden motives
   e. Needs and wants: Do marketers manipulate consumers?

3. Learning
   a. What is learning?
   b. How do we learn?
   c. How marketers use learning principles
   d. The role of memory in learning

4. Attitudes
   a. The components of attitudes
   b. Forming attitudes
   c. Multi-attribute attitude models
   d. Using attitudes to predict behavior

5. Attitude Change and Persuasive Communications
   a. Changing attitudes through communication
   b. The communication model
   c. The source
   d. The message
   e. Changing attitudes by changing attitude components

C. The Consumer as a Decision Maker 9 hours

1. Individual Decision Making
   a. Consumers as problem solvers
   b. Problem recognition
   c. Information search
   d. Evaluation of alternatives
   e. Choice and outcomes

2. Demographics and Household Decision Making
   a. Joint decision making
   b. Defining the modern family
   c. The family in the marketplace
   d. Family decision making roles
   e. Children learning to become consumers
   f. Children in the marketplace

3. Personality, Self-concept, and Sex Roles
   a. Perspectives on the self
   b. Consumptive and self-concept
   c. Sex roles
   d. Body image
4. Product Acquisition and Disposition
   a. The shopping experience
   b. Situational influences and buyer behavior
   c. Buyer satisfaction
   d. Environmental issues and the consumption and disposition of products

D. The Consumer as a Group Member (objs. 4, 6, & 9) 9 hours
   1. Group Influence and Opinion Leadership
      a. Reference groups
      b. Conformity
      c. Word-of-mouth communication
      d. Opinion leadership

   2. Social Class, Economic Influences, and Lifestyles
      a. Consumer spending and economic behavior
      b. Social class
      c. Social class and consumption differences
      d. Lifestyles and consumption choices

3. Subcultures
   a. Subcultures
   b. Ethnic and religious subcultures
      1. African-Americans
      2. Hispanic-Americans
      3. Asian Americans
      4. Native Americans
      5. Euro-Americans
      6. Religion and consumption
   c. Age subcultures
      1. The teen market
      2. Baby boomers
      3. The elderly consumer
   d. Geographic subcultures

E. The Consumer and Culture (objs. 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, & 9) 9 hours
   1. The Creation and Diffusion of Consumer Culture
      a. Culture and consumption
      b. Understanding culture
      c. Myths and culture
      d. Identifying cultural values
      e. Culture and the world market
      f. Cultural homogenization
      g. The diffusion of innovators
      h. Design and product development
         1. The role of design
         2. Industrial Design Excellence Awards
      i. Fashion, fads, and classics

   2. Consumer Behavior and Cultural Processes: Energizing Issues
      a. Consumers and the future
      b. Search and profane consumption
      c. Rituals and consumption
      d. The dark side of consumer behavior
         1. Addictive consumption
2. Consumed consumers
3. Illegal activities
4. Ethical issues
   e. Blurred boundaries: marketing, popular culture and reality

F. Group Presentations (objs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, & 9) 3 hours

VII. Textbooks and/or Other Required Materials or Equipment

Primary:


VIII. Categories of Student Evaluations

1. Periodic Exams
2. Exercises
3. Term Project
4. Quizzes
5. Final Exam

IX. Justification for Inclusion in the University Studies Program:

Objective 1. Demonstrate the ability to locate and gather information.

Emphasis: Considerable

Course Content: Section A of the course outline devotes considerable attention to this objective.

Teaching Strategies: The instructor will help the student identify resources from which material for the exercises and course projects can be gathered (e.g., Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing and Public Policy, Business Week, Wall Street Journal, Consumer Reports, etc.) The class will also be taken to the library and exposed to some of the indexes and data bases such as Business Periodicals Index, Social Science Index, Psychological Abstracts, Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications, ABI/INFORM, and PSYCLIT. There will be some coverage of research methods, including both secondary and primary data collection procedures. A video covering ethnographic research methods will also be used.

Student Assignments: Some assignments listed under section VIII above, especially the group research project, will require students to locate, gather, analyze, and present information.

Student Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of the information they have gathered and how well it is presented. Given the nature of the course, the research paper should utilize both business and non-business resources. The diversity of resources which students use is to some degree a measure of their ability to locate and gather information and will be considered in grading the research project. For the group project, the team will be graded on both the written part and the oral presentation. Team members will be asked to evaluate each other in terms of their contribution and this could result in adjustments to some individual's grades.

Objective 2. Demonstrate capabilities for critical thinking reasoning and analyzing.

Emphasis: Significant

Course Content: The major focus of this course is on the consumers' decision making process and the many influences upon that process. Since students are consumers, the content of the course addresses an important area of student decision making. The course will attempt to help students more fully appreciate
the role that consumption and possessions have in our lives, more fully understand the consumer decision making process and its many influences, and to analyze and evaluate (reason critically about) their own consumer behavior in relation to that of others.

Teaching Strategies: Lectures will outline the consumer decision making process (course outline C1 and C2) and the influences upon it (throughout course) in order to help students better understand and evaluate their own decision making. Article reports will be used to introduce various consumer issues. Issues will be discussed and students may be questioned by the instructor or other students and be expected to support their reasoning. Exercises and a group project will also be used.

Student Assignments: Students will be expected to make an oral report on an article related to some consumer issue. They will be expected to analyze issues, reason intuitively, and to support their reasoning when questioned. Students will also be required to complete several exercises. One of them requires students to select ads that they believe are attempting to change attitudes by working on either the affective, behavioral, or cognitive components of the attitude--this will require analysis and evaluation and should contribute to critical thinking. Another exercise will require students to write a paper analyzing their own decision making process and some of the influences on it for an important buying decision they made in the past. Students will be required to evaluate that decision making process. The group research project will require students to do research on a consumer-related law and to critically evaluate the benefits of the law.

Student Evaluations: When grading the article presentations, exercises and group project one of the areas that will attempt to be evaluated is the extent to which the students' demonstrate critical thinking, reasoning and analyzing.

Objective 3. Demonstrate effective communication skills.

Emphasis: Significant

Course Content; Several important aspects of the communications process are covered in sections B1 and B5 of the course outline. The role of information in attitude formation toward specific products is also covered.

Teaching Strategies: The principal teaching strategies to be employed to achieve this objective are lecture/discussion, emphasis on student presentations in class, questioning of students in class about the material under discussion and the guidance of the student regarding class assignments in written and/or oral form.

Student Assignments: Students will be required to make an individual oral presentation and to be a part of a group oral presentation. They will also be required to do five individual written exercises and a group written report.

Student Evaluation: In regard to this objective, students will be evaluated on the mechanics of their presentations (grammar, spelling, etc.), the organization and clarity of their presentation, and the general overall effectiveness of their presentations.

Objection 4. Demonstrate an understanding of human experiences and the ability to relate them to the present.

Emphasis: Considerable

Course Content: To understand contemporary buyer behavior necessitates some examination of the past forces which have led us to the current situation. Some of the earlier thought regarding buyer behavior (course outline A1f) as well as some of the factors leading to current values (E1d) and to buyer-related legislation (group projects) will be discussed.
Teaching Strategies: The primary teaching strategy will be lecture/discussion, supplemented by oral and written reports.

Student Assignments: In addition to the regular lecture and readings providing a historical perspective, the group research project will require students to do research on a consumer-related law and make an oral report to the class. In their report they will be asked to discuss the historical situation that led to the passage of the law and discuss how the law is solving the consumer issue today.

Student Evaluation: The oral reports will be evaluated for accuracy and understanding of the factors leading to the passage of specific pieces of legislation. There will also be some exam and/or quiz questions covering historical issues.

Objective 5. Demonstrate an understanding of various cultures and their interrelationships.

Emphasis: Considerable

Course Content: The value structure of the American consumer will be discussed and selected comparisons made with the values of consumers in other nations. The affect of value differences on buying behavior will be illustrated. The interrelationships of various cultures in regard to the consumption of goods and services (a world economy) will also be briefly discussed as will increasing cultural homogenization (E1f).

Teaching Strategies: Lecture/discussion will be the primary teaching strategy. International examples will be interspersed throughout the course. International students and American students who have traveled internationally make excellent resource persons for class discussions. Guest speakers from other cultures may also be used when available.

Student Assignments: Each chapter in the text has a short reading called "multicultural dimensions." Students will be assigned these readings and be expected to be prepared to discuss selected ones.

Student Evaluations: The evaluation of students regarding this objective will be through the regular exams and quizzes. In addition to questions covering the topics mentioned under course content above, specific questions covering selected "multicultural dimensions," mentioned under student assignments will also be included.

Objective 6. Demonstrate the ability to integrate the breadth and diversity of knowledge and experience.

Emphasis: Significant

Course Content: The interdisciplinary nature of the course, pulling heavily from the various social sciences, lends itself very well to this objective. Historical and current thought as it relates to buyer behavior will be integrated from fields such as psychology, sociology, social psychology, anthropology, communications, economics and marketing. Section A of the course outline pulls from the fields of anthropology, economics, marketing, psychology, social psychology, and sociology. Section B pulls from psychology, marketing, and communications. Section C is primarily psychology and marketing based. Section D pulls largely from sociology, social psychology, economics, and marketing. Section E pulls primarily from anthropology, sociology and marketing. The course attempts to help the student integrate knowledge about consumer behavior from these various disciplines.

Teaching Strategies: A variety of teaching strategies, such as lecture/discussion, case examples, videos, and article discussions, will all be used to accomplish this objective.

Student Assignments: The assigned text does a good job of presenting information and ideas from many different disciplines and of helping the student see how this material fits together. Some of the assigned articles also present information from the viewpoint of different disciplines and students will need to integrate these various points of view. In the group project concerning a consumer law, students will be
expected to present some of the pros and cons of the law, and thus integrate various knowledge and viewpoints.

Student Evaluation: Students will be told on the group research project that they should locate material on the topic from different disciplines (i.e., journals from different fields) and that this will be considered in the evaluation process. Integration will also be covered by some exam questions and included as a factor in evaluating article presentations and some of the exercises through inclusion on a grading form.

**Objective 7.** Demonstrate the ability to make informed, intelligent value decisions.

**Emphasis:** Some

**Course Content:** In the course outline (E1d), values of our culture (e.g., individualism and change) and examples from other cultures (e.g., the group valued in Japan and tradition in England) will be discussed in relation to buyer behavior.

**Teaching Strategies:** The major teaching strategies to be used in achieving this objective are lecture, class discussion, and a values exercise.

**Student Assignments:** Students will be expected to examine their own values and compare them to our values as a nation and with those of other cultures. Students will also be required to complete an article and/or a values exercise.

**Objective 8.** Demonstrate the ability to make informed, sensitive, aesthetic responses

**Emphasis:** Some

**Course Content:** Some content of the course lends itself to discussions of aesthetic issues. Maslow's ideas about aesthetic needs (covered in B2 of course outline) and the role of design in product development and in our buying decisions (E1) are examples. The role of fashions will also be discussed and is covered in section E1 of the course outline.

**Teaching Strategies:** Lecture/discussion will be the primary means of achieving this objective. The Industrial Design Excellence Awards will be used as an aid to the discussion on product design.

**Objective 9.** Demonstrate the ability to function responsibly in ones natural, social, and political environment.

**Emphasis:** Considerable

**Course Content:** It was suggested by President Kennedy that consumers have certain basic rights (e.g., right to choose freely, right to be informed, right to be heard, and right to be safe). Along with these rights go certain responsibilities (e.g., to choose wisely, to keep informed, to speak up, and to use products safely). The impact of consumption on the environment and the impact on others is also discussed. This course examines consumer decision making and some of the responsibilities that go with it. Sections C4 and E2 deal most directly with this objective.

**Teaching Strategies:** Lecture, class discussion, and articles will be employed in achieving this objective. Students will be asked questions such as "What would you do in this situation?" Articles from current periodicals such as the *Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week* will be used for examples of responsible and irresponsible consumption.

**Student Assignments:** Class discussions and other assignments will allow students to react to current consumer issues and suggest responsible solutions for these issues. The group research report on a consumer law will give students the opportunity to review the need for the law and what consumer
problems it tries to help solve. It will help the students better understand the political and social environments and what government is trying to do to help with consumer issues.

X. Identification of Background or Expertise for Teaching the Course.

This course is designed to be taught by an instructor with formal training in both the theoretical and applied consumer behavior field. Ideally the instructor assigned to this course should have graduate training in the field of marketing with an emphasis in consumer behavior, and supporting study in such fields as psychology, social psychology, sociology, or economics.

XI. Class Size: Optimal class size, given the number of in-class presentations and emphasis on class discussion and participation, is 25 students.