

# Consumer Behavior (MKT/PSY 365)

## The College of New Jersey

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\*Note: email is the best way to contact me outside of class. I check and respond to email daily.

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## Course Resources

**TEXT** *Consumer Behavior: Buying* Michael Solomon Prentice Hall

The text is available at the Bookstore. Any edition or version of the text is fine. The text will serve as background reading.

**SOCS-site.** This site will have many useful things on it, including all class materials, as well as providing you with a place to post your research to get feedback from class mates as well as PDF samples of reading outside of the text.

The internet provides many interesting sites related to consumer behavior issues and marketing strategies. We will be visiting several throughout the semester, but see what you can find on your own.

**Library database.** The library databases will be used extensively as we read articles on current topics and research on key areas of consumer psychology and behavior. If you are not familiar with the library database system, please see me.

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## Course Description

This course is designed to present a comprehensive, systematic and practical framework for understanding people as consumers – the underlying subject matter of all marketing decisions. We will not only look at the why and how of consumer purchasing, but what happens prior to the purchase (e.g., how do consumers find alternatives) and after the purchase (e.g., how do consumers use and dispose of products). Throughout the semester we will draw upon the social sciences to evaluate the influence of psychological, sociological, ecological and technological factors that affect individual consumer behaviors and behavioral models, which predict behavior. We will use basic quantitative and qualitative methodologies for evaluating consumer behavior and developing appropriate marketing strategies.

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## Teaching and Learning Format

In this course we will all have fun discovering and learning about consumers. As you have been a consumer for years, I am sure you have lots to share and will be an active class participant and help create a dynamic learning environment. Throughout this course you will be developing both your content knowledge of consumer behavior theory, your analytical, critical thinking, writing, team and technology skills as well as reinforcing basic marketing strategy. I believe that learning is maximized when *you* find, synthesize and apply information, and thus, the course is comprised of several exercises and a semester-long research project.

You will be assigned to an exercise/ research group the third day of class. This is your group for the entire semester.

I will provide lectures related to the topics in the text that will be supported with slides. Most of the material in the lectures will be covered in the text, however, there will also be additional examples and theory presented. The slides will be available on the course website. It is imperative that you have done the reading prior to class so that our classroom time is maximized and we can spend time discussing more interesting questions rather than simply reiterating the text. You should be looking and listening to the news and relating stories and experiences to our discussions.

This is your class and you are responsible for your own learning. Many of the exercises will create a lively student-centered class in which we can explore various interesting topics from many perspectives. In order for you to get the most from this course, individual preparation outside of class and participation during class are of paramount importance. As we go through the semester, I will provide feedback for all students on individual and group progress and assist where necessary. If there are particular areas of interest to you (e.g., specific companies, industries or theories), please let me know as soon as possible so I can incorporate them into the course.

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## **Course Objectives and Learning Goals**

After successful completion of this course you should be able to do the following: (objectives are not necessarily in order of importance)

1. Be a more informed consumer.
2. Understand key psychology and consumer behavior theories and apply these theories to marketing communication and marketing strategy.
3. Discuss, in depth, the content area of your research as well as an academic style research process.
4. Evaluate published research in the field of consumer behavior and psychology.
5. Perform basic statistical calculations.
6. Write a contextually and grammatically sound research paper, including a comprehensive literature review, clear presentation of results and strong link to both theory and practice. Understand how to source other's work in an academic paper.
7. Make both formal multimedia presentations and informal oral presentations.
8. Serve as an active group and class participant.

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## **Student Responsibilities**

1. Complete all reading and assignments prior to attending class.
2. Be an active responsible group and class participant. This means taking initiative, completing all agreed upon tasks on time, coming to meetings on time and prepared, providing constructive feedback to the group, receiving and acting upon constructive feedback from the group.
3. Arrive at class on time with all necessary materials ready to learn.
4. If you must miss class, you are to email both myself and your group prior to class -- if this is not possible, you are to get in touch with your group as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to get any information or handouts you have missed.
5. If one of your group members has missed class, the group should email that person after class with group assignments.
6. Check the course web site at least once a week. Most exercises will be posted as we progress through the course.

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## **Instructor Responsibilities**

1. Begin and end classes on time.
2. Create and maintain a classroom environment that is conducive for all student's learning.
3. Facilitate class discussions, clarify and enhance student presentations.
4. Keep office hours.
5. Maintain the course web site.
6. Provide student assistance with all course materials.
7. Provide consistent and timely feedback on all assignments.

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## Student Evaluation and Grading Policies

<b>Test I</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Test II</b>	<b>25%</b>

The tests are designed to assess individual understanding of the basic theory presented in the text and lectures and how these theories relate to marketing communication and strategy. Tests will be multiple-choice format with short answer and are completed individually in a single class period. Tests will be graded on a normally distributed curve across both sections, so it is in your best interest to not discuss the material on the quiz until it has been returned.

### **Research Project** **25%**

As noted each student will be assigned to a class research team. Each team is responsible for conducting a research project throughout the semester. The projects are graded based upon the depth of understanding of the chosen topic; the quality of the research process - ability of the group to understand and complete a research project, not necessarily the outcome of the results; the quality of the writing -the ability of the group to present a contextually and grammatically sound logical presentation of their work in “academic” style writing; the quality of the oral multimedia presentation; and each individual’s contribution and ability to function within the parameters and roles defined by the group. The individual portion of the grade is predominately based upon a peer evaluation.

### **Group Exercises** **15%**

You will be required to complete 3 exercises throughout the semester. Guidelines will be posted on the course website for each exercise approximately two weeks prior to the due date. The exercises are often managerially oriented and provide a springboard for discussion as well as an opportunity to get feedback on your writing style. A written memo is required for all exercises. The memos should summarize your findings and overall learning from the exercise and integrate theory and application. The memos are not to exceed 2 pages of text. Memos will be given a score of 0 through 5 and will be graded in comparison to your peers. These exercises can be completed with your research group.

### **Class Participation and Preparation** **10%**

Although I will not formally take attendance, you cannot participate if you are not in class. If you miss more than 3 classes, you are in danger of significantly adversely affecting your grade. Remember that participation and preparation is not judged solely on airtime or minimum reading requirements, but on the quality of participation and level of preparation. I will also give a maximum of four unannounced graded quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes are largely from the scheduled text reading and are valued at 2 points each. Additionally, there are times when we will have cases/readings to prepare for discussion. Please see the college attendance policy at: [www.tcnj.edu/~recreg/policies/attendance.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~recreg/policies/attendance.html).

### **Extra Credit and Special Assistance**

There are no opportunities for extra credit – there are plenty of opportunities to manage your grade during the semester. If you require special assistance, it is your responsibility to see me so that the appropriate resources can be devoted to helping you be successful in this course. Please see: [www.tcnj.edu/~affirm/ada.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~affirm/ada.html).

### **Cheating/Plagiarism**

Cheating and plagiarism is not tolerated and will result in the grade of “F” for the course. Please see the college academic integrity policy at: [www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html).

### **Make-up Policy**

Generally, there are no opportunities for missed work. In the case of extreme documented emergencies, you should request a meeting to discuss your personal situation. It is your responsibility to notify me as soon as possible.

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## Student Research

This is a semester long project and should not be completed within the last two to three weeks of the semester. I am looking for a quality project with original ideas and data as well as a well-written paper. Previous projects from this class have been presented at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, the National Marketing and Public Policy Conference, and regional communication conferences. This project will require significant time commitment and organization, please plan accordingly.

You will be assigned to a research group by the third day of class and a topic within the first two weeks. This is your group for the entire semester - you may not get a divorce. You will need to learn to work together. A substantial portion of your grade rests on how well your group functions as well as the quality of the work your group turns in. If you need assistance managing your group, please see me.

I have many samples of research projects in my office that you are welcome to review at any point in the semester. This is an empirical research project and will require you to either collect data or analyze data that already exists. Typically we have used either survey monkey or qualtrics for data collection.

### **Report Guidelines** – All reports should adhere to the following guidelines

1. Reports must be typed in Times New Roman 12 type and have 1" margins.
2. Reports are not to exceed 20 pages of text – not including bibliography, tables or appendices.
3. Citations are to be noted within the body of the text as are tables which are less than ½ page. APA or MLA style sourcing can be used.
4. General format – this is fairly standard and section should be used as headers within the paper.
  - a. Cover page
  - b. Abstract – 150-200 words describing your work; 3 – 5 keywords should also be listed
  - c. Introduction – what you are researching and why it is managerially and theoretically important as well as what contribution you will make to furthering our understanding of the given topic
  - d. Literature review – to include *at least* 7 academic and 5 trade sources. This should tie your work to previous research, provide a theoretical background for the reader who is not familiar with your topic and set the stage for your hypotheses.
  - e. Research design – overview of study including study design/type; subject information; materials – including identification of dependent and independent variables, survey instrument, ...; procedure; and pretest information
  - f. Research results – this is a direct reporting of the research results
  - g. Discussion of results – theoretical, policy and other managerial implications of research
  - h. Conclusion – brief summary that brings topic to a broader perspective, as well as limitations of your study and areas for future research