COURSE OUTLINE - Consumer Behaviour – BUS 312 – 001 Winter 2020

Class Time: TTh from 2:30pm to 3:45pm in ED 621
Instructor: Magda Cismaru, Ph.D., Professor of Marketing, Conexus Research Scholar in Financial Wellbeing
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Office Hours: TTh after class and by appointment
Prerequisites: Bus 210

1. Course Description and Objectives:

Marketing begins and ends with the consumer – from determining consumer needs to providing consumer satisfaction. Thus, a clear understanding of consumers is critical in successfully managing the marketing function. This course is a survey of noteworthy contributions of the behavioural sciences to the understanding and prediction of consumer behaviour.

The study of consumer behaviour is intended to acquaint you with both what it means to be a consumer in a market-orientated society and what, as a marketer, you need to know to understand the role of meeting the consumer’s needs and wants in the development of marketing strategy. Accordingly, you will be asked to:

1. Learn key terms, definitions, and concepts used in the field.
2. Identify and discuss the major ideas and processes that characterize the consumer.
3. Practice critical thinking in consumer behaviour by working on cases and experiential exercises.
4. Become familiar with some marketing tools used to measure and characterize consumer behaviour.
5. Complete a project that demonstrates both your working knowledge and analytical skills in assessing the consumer behaviour process.
6. Engage in your own consumer behaviour with an increased self-consciousness of the forces at work, both internally and externally, whenever you make a decision, being it to purchase a product or choose a service, or change your behavior.

My goals are for you to learn and understand these concepts and, more importantly, to develop your intellectual ability to apply them in analyzing marketing situations and developing appropriate marketing strategies. Rather than merely memorizing these concepts and theories, we will focus on creatively using these ideas (a) to understand people’s behaviours and (b) to develop and evaluate self-strategies and marketing strategies intended to influence those behaviours.

2. Recommended Textbook and Required Casebook:
Print ISBN-10 0-13-602716-4. *Please bring the casebook with you for class.*

3. Course Details:
The textbook and the PowerPoint slides available online on University of Regina courses provide the bulk of the material you need to study. The course will be a combination of lectures, discussions, case studies, and in-class exercises. Lectures will be designed to emphasize the main points of the chapter. Discussions and experiential exercises are scheduled every class. All students are encouraged to actively participate in class discussions by asking and answering questions and by offering ideas and suggestions. Several sessions are dedicated for project work.

4. Grading Policy:
Your course performance will be evaluated as follows:

- Class Contribution 10%
- Midterm exam – Chapters 1-8 25%
- Consumer Behavior Project 30%
- Final exam – Chapters 9-15 35%

Grades
- Requests for grade changes will be considered only if the instructor made a procedural or administrative error. No changes of the weights will be considered.
- “Extra credit” work available is the Faculty of Business Administration Participant Pool that provides students with the opportunity to participate in research and to earn research credits that they can allocate toward eligible business classes, including the CB class (to a maximum of 2% per eligible class). For more information about our participant pool please visit the faculty website.
- Grades will be posted on UR Courses only. For your security, grades cannot be provided by phone or email.

Class Contribution
Class contribution may be assessed based on providing answers and participating in discussions in class, being a volunteer to assess class contribution, making a short presentation to the colleagues or a little test (Kahoot), attendance, but also being disciplined and respectful to me and your colleagues.

Exams
- Please come 5 minutes early and bring a picture ID with you.
- Both exams have two sections: a closed book one (multiple-choice questions, short answer questions) and one with cases (that have the background information provided, therefore can be considered open book).
- The midterm exam is comprised of 50 multiple-choice questions (10% of course grade), one short answer question (5% of course grade) and one case (10% of course grade). The final exam is comprised of 50 multiple-choice questions (10% of course grade), one short answer question (5% of course grade) and two or three cases (20% of course grade).
• Sample questions for the exams are posted on UR Courses. All cases are from the casebook. They may be slightly modified and/or an additional questions/discussions may be required.

Missed Exams
• An excused absence for a test or midterm exam may be granted to students on the basis of illness, accident, or other extreme and legitimate circumstances beyond their control. Supporting documentation is required and must be submitted before an excused absence is approved. If a doctor’s note is presented, the note has to specify that the student was unable to take the test on the scheduled date due to illness. An appointment card is not considered valid documentation.
• If a student is granted an excused absence for an examination he/she will have the weight assigned to that examination added to the weight for the final exam.
• Extensions on writing the final exam may be granted to students under the same circumstances mentioned above. The authority to approve deferrals of final examinations rests with the Associate Dean Undergraduate in the student’s Faculty. Supporting documentation is required and must be submitted before a deferral is approved. To be granted a deferred final exam a student has to be in good standing (passing marks) in the class.

Consumer Behavior Project
Choose to do a Consumer Behavior Challenge Project OR a Decision Making Process Project

Option 1 - Consumer Behavior Challenge Project
• The project is to get you to think more deeply about the psychology of consumer behavior. This project has several goals including encouraging you to understand the influences behind your behaviors, helping you to gain a more in-depth understanding of the concepts and theories presented this semester by applying them to your own behavior, and helping you understand how you can use this information to improve your chances of success and how this information is used by organizations in their marketing strategies.
• The project involves the following steps.
  Step 1: Identify an area of your consumer behavior that you might like to change (i.e., saving money, becoming more active, eating healthier, restricting social media usage).
  Step 2: Design your personal challenge including the specific behavior that you’d like to change. If possible, measure your behavior before the change, for one week, to have a starting point. Try to work on your challenge for at least 6 weeks.
  Step 3: Begin the Challenge by keeping a daily or weekly journal or log while conducting your challenge. Try to be as detailed as possible. For example, if you want to lower your sugar intake, check the labels of the food you are consuming to have an estimated amount of daily or weekly intake. Identify what strategies of change have worked for you and what have not. Make changes, so you can make progress from a week to another. Explain your efforts.
  Step 4: Critically analyze your behavior (s) in terms of barriers but also successes and the results of your challenge. Refer to what we have discussed in class or what you have found from your own research and factors posited by the Transtheoretical Model of Change to understand the change better and increase your success. Make sure you highlight terms from
the course in your final submission. Based on your experience, provide some recommendations for organizations that might help people like you change their behaviors. State what can be done to facilitate things that will help the person who wants to change behavior and remove obstacles that hinder behavior change.

- Try to structure your project around your reflection of the barriers and successes towards changing your behavior, linking with course concepts, as well as what strategies you have thought of and the reasoning behind them. The suggested structure can be found below:
  1. Introduction – describe here the behavior you would like to change and why. Talk about your starting point, how was the process of planning the challenge and what were your expectations before starting – for example, did you do any research on strategies for your plan? Did you think it was going to be easier than it actually was?
  2. Plan the change: here, describe the change in specific terms, main goals, specific goals and how you intend to achieve them. Include rules and exceptions to your challenge. Remember, goals need to be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic and in a Timeframe;
  3. Summary of journal and experiences: state the main difficulties faced each week and how you worked around them, as well as the main successes, and what, in your opinion, were the triggers for the positive outcome. You can include graphs or tables of your progress, how many times you were able to achieve your goal and so on. Remember, the process is more important than the outcome, so take time to understand your behaviors, attitudes and actions.
  4. Analysis: Reflect on your challenge, link course concepts (and highlight them) to the processes faced by you during the six weeks you attempted the challenge. Make recommendations to other people that might want to try this challenge, and to organizations that might be interested in this specific behavior change.
  5. Attach your full journal or log as an appendix at the end.

- Grading will be based on three main criteria:
  1) Your ability to effectively communicate the role the concepts learned in the study of consumer behavior play in your life.
  2) The sufficiency with which you think critically about the experience.
  3) The clarity and effectiveness of your communication.

You may work individually or in teams of two students. If you choose to work in teams, one will be a “helper” to assist with the change. The “helper” should assist, understand and analyze the “person that takes the challenge” by asking questions, providing suggestions, and jointly working with the “challenger” in identifying barriers and strategies that work, explaining consumer behavior, linking class material with real life, and providing suggestions to “the challenger” and organizations.

Option 2 - Decision Making Process Project
- Objective: to describe, understand, and analyze the consumer decision making process involved in the purchase of a high value and high involvement item with the purpose of applying the theoretical notions learned in class and providing specific and useful marketing recommendations.
Overview: one person, the “consumer”, actually goes through the process of purchasing (without finally purchasing) the item. Choose the person in your team who really cares about the product. The other student in the team acts as “researcher”, making notes of the consumer’s behavior and the marketing environment, describing and understanding the whole process. These notes should be detailed and should cover all the stages of the problem-solving process (i.e., problem recognition, search for relevant information, evaluation of alternatives, choice decision, purchase, and post-purchase use and re-evaluation). Based on these notes, both students analyze the decision-making process.

Instructions:
- Form your team of 2 students by Jan.21. You choose based on your schedules and preferences. If you don’t know anybody, tell me.
- Assign the role of “consumer” and “researcher”. The consumer should really care about the product and be motivated to make an elaborate search and an informed decision. The biggest mistake students can make is to have an uninvolved consumer who does not care about the product and the decision. The only difference between the consumer and the researcher is the role they play in the field activity. Past that point, every portion of the project document should be generated together.

Field notes (very important since the whole project is based on them):
- The consumer initiates the shopping process. The researcher follows the consumer through the process by making notes of consumer’s actions, thoughts, feelings and the interactions he/she has with the environment. All significant events in the shopping process and the marketing environment surrounding the decision should be described in detail. When the researcher is unsure what the consumer is thinking or feeling, simply ask the consumer and document the question and the response. The researcher also needs to inquire about reasons for making a particular decision, for choosing a particular website, brand, or store. The consumer stops when he/she has arrived at a final decision and imagines purchase and post-purchase evaluation.

Problem Solving Process:
Identify the following elements based on the field notes:
- Problem Recognition
- Search for Relevant Information (consider perceived risks)
- Evaluation of Alternatives (make sure that when evaluating the alternatives, the consumer has in mind his most important attributes)
- Choice Decisions (identify the decision rule used)
- Purchase (imaginary)
- Preparation (imaginary) – if applicable
- Post-purchase Use and Re-evaluations (imaginary)

Make a maximum two page table (single spaced, font 12) to show the problem solving process.

Sample start of the Problem Solving Table

Problem recognition:
Sara’s brother is getting married this summer, so Sara decided to buy a new dress for this special occasion. She wants a comfortable dress to wear all day long, price less than $300, full-length
with an A-line style. She wants the dress to be comfortable because …..She set a budget of $300 because ……..She prefers a full-length with an A-line style because…….

**Search for Relevant Information:**
Sara started searching for “Regina woman store” on line using www.google.ca. She has used Google in the past and liked it because she could found the information she needed. The first site listed was www.madameyes.com and she clicked on it. Sara did not like the results because fashion was for young girls and she considers herself a mature woman. She got frustrated and started searching for “Regina shopping centers”. She found ten locations as follows: ……….. She decided to shop at the Cornwall Shopping Centre because she has shopped there before and knows the stores. …………………………….

- Discussion and Marketing Implications:
Using the consumers’ experience as a basis and your table, provide suggestions for the marketer. State what can be done to facilitate things that will help the consumer and remove obstacles that hinder the consumer. Please refer to the Decision Making Process, perceived risks, decision rules, etc. (from Chapters 9-10), the ABC Model of Attitudes and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (from Chapters 7-8), but also the multi attributes models, the 4P’s, needs, self, social influence, demographics and anything we have discussed in class or not that can be used to help the marketer perform better.

Page length suggestions (single spaced, font 12):
- Title Page 1 page
- Field Notes No restriction (5-10 pages)
- Problem-solving process 2 pages (maximum)
- Marketing implications 3-5 pages or more

Bring your Consumer Behavior Challenge Project OR a Decision Making Process Project on Jan. 30 and March 10 in class to show it to me and discuss it with me. Please do not e-mail me your projects as attachments in advance of the due date and ask for general feedback. Instead, ask for specific questions that can be quickly and easily responded to in a return e-mail or come to my office for more extensive issues.

Print your project and submit it by March 26, at the beginning of the class. Late submissions are not accepted and will receive a grade of zero (0%) unless approved in advance and /or proper documentation is provided. Electronic submissions will only be accepted as requested by the professor or under exceptional circumstances (e.g., medical emergencies, extreme weather conditions).

**5. Other General Information:**

**UR Courses**
Class notes, grades, messages, discussion boards, etc will be on UR Courses. I recommend that you check UR Courses at least before every class.

**Class Attendance**
Students are expected to attend classes. If you miss classes, please understand that you are responsible for all course materials and announcements discussed in that class. Some of the exam or tests questions will be based on examples given in class, cases and experiential exercises or other material that is not available in the textbook. Make sure to exchange contact information with a fellow student who can take notes for you if you are absent.

Class Policies
- Come to class a few minutes before the class starts. Students coming or leaving during the sessions disturb their colleagues and the instructor. I can understand occasional circumstances where you may be late or need to leave, as long as they are not a habit and are discussed with me in advance.
- As a courtesy to your fellow students and your instructor, please turn off your smart phones or other electronic devices before classes begin and put them in your backpack. Recording of any kind or taking pictures in class is not allowed. Laptops are allowed as long as they are used for class only.
- Name tags are mandatory. In this way we can know our names faster and have a more enjoyable experience. They also help with discipline.
- Please refrain from unacceptable behaviour such as talking (unless it is to make a direct class contribution), reading the newspaper, sleeping, or working on unrelated material. 
- Students are expected to abide by the regulations of the University of Regina. Students are referred to the University Calendar for information on appeals, withdrawal dates, plagiarism, cheating and misconduct (academic and non-academic). Be sure that you read and understand these regulations (some important information is provided in the Academic Integrity Handout file available on UR courses).

Student Accessibility
If there is any student in this course who may have a need for special accommodation, please come and discuss this with me and also contact the Centre for Student Accessibility at 306-585-4631 or accessibility@uregina.ca.

Other Specifications
If necessary, I will change aspects of the information in this syllabus. If I do, I will notify you in class and on UR Courses. Please read the syllabus carefully and note the grading system and attendance policy. I will assume that every student who remains enrolled in my course after the syllabus has been distributed has fully understood the class rules.

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