



Syllabus

Course: Consumer Behavior

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Term: Spring 2026

Professor: Chuck McLeester
Mobile Phone: (856) 534-7795
E-mail: chuck.mcleester@rutgers.edu

Meetings: T/Th 11:10 am to 12:30 pm
Honors College & Cooper Classroom Building CS109
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course will explore the various factors that affect consumer behavior and decision-making. How consumers think, feel, consume media, and evaluate choices are key to successful marketing. Working in groups, you will conduct a primary qualitative research study to explore the psychological factors, motivations, attitudes and behaviors that consumers exhibit with regard to a specific product or service. You will report your results in a presentation at the scheduled final for the course. In addition, you will apply the key concepts of the course in a series of short writing assignments based on articles drawn from business and consumer media as well as your personal experiences as consumers. The goal is to help you understand how to uncover insights about consumers that illuminate marketing decisions.

Learning Goals/Objectives

- Understand the evolution of the marketing concept and the consumer decision-making process.
- Explore market segmentation, the criteria for selecting target markets, behavioral targeting, and positioning to differentiate offerings from competitors.
- Comprehend the psychological factors that affect consumer behavior: consumer motivation; consumer perception; how the way we view the world around us affects our shopping patterns; and how past experiences, attitudes and behavior affect purchase decisions.
- Know the key elements of the communication process and how to overcome barriers to effective communications.
- Examine consumers in their social and cultural settings: family, values, rituals, and customs.
- Know the importance of researching and analyzing consumers' behavior in order to target them effectively; conduct primary consumer research that applies the course concepts to a specific product or service brand.

School of Business-Camden Program Learning Goals

- Apply the basic functions and measurement of marketing
- Analyze, interpret and solve business problems using quantitative approaches
- Learn to work well in teams and relate interpersonally with others
- Demonstrate strong written language skills
- Identify ethical issues related to the marketing of products and services

Course Materials

Textbook – *Consumer Behavior 12th Edition*, Schiffman, Wisenblit

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-473482-8

Additional Resources to be provided by the instructor

Note: Some of the course concepts are complex, and understanding the intricacies of these concepts will be important for developing a successful group project and enhancing your individual written assignments. The textbook will be a valuable resource for understanding these concepts. (Hardcover ISBN ISBN-13: 978-0132544368; Loose leaf ISBN-13: 978-0133354652).

Communication

Canvas

The syllabus, resources (articles and examples), PowerPoint slides, announcements, guides, etc. will be posted on Canvas. To access this system, go to <http://canvas.rutgers.edu> log in, and click on the course on the dashboard.

Rutgers email - USE YOUR RUTGERS EMAIL ADDRESS

All communications to students will be done using the Rutgers email address provided to you. Please forward your Rutgers email to your personal email if necessary. **Not checking your Rutgers email is not an excuse for missing any communications.**

Policy Statements

Disability Services/Accommodations

The University is committed to supporting the learning of all students and faculty will provide accommodations as indicated in a Letter of Accommodation issued by the Office of Disability Services (ODS). If you have already registered with ODS and have your letter of accommodations, please share this with me early in the course. If you have or think you have a disability (learning, sensory, physical, chronic health, mental health or attentional), please contact <https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>.

Accommodations will be provided only for students with a letter of accommodation from ODS. Their services are free and confidential. Letters only provide information about the accommodation, not about the disability or diagnosis.

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity policy can be found at <https://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/processes/academic-integrity> Students are responsible for understanding the principles of academic integrity and abiding by them in all aspects of their work at the University. Students are also encouraged to help educate fellow students about academic integrity and to bring all alleged violations of academic integrity they encounter to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

Academic Integrity means that you (the student) must:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others,
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work,
- make sure that all work submitted as your own in a course activity is your own and not from someone else
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately
- treat all other students fairly with no encouragement of academic dishonesty

Adherence to these principles is necessary in order to ensure that:

- everyone is given proper credit for his or her ideas, words, results, and other scholarly accomplishments
- all student work is fairly evaluated, and no student has an inappropriate advantage over others
- the academic and ethical development of all students is fostered
- the reputation of the University for integrity is maintained and enhanced.

Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students

Artificial Intelligence Use

Acceptable Use of AI

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas
- Fine tuning your research questions
- Finding information on your topic
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
- Checking grammar and style

Unacceptable Use of AI

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty. Any assignment that is found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways based on guidelines in this syllabus, will be subject to report of a violation of Academic Integrity and thus the appropriate adjudication. When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for clarification.

Assessments

Written Assignments Ten individual written assignments will be distributed. They are due the following week and make up 50% of your grade. These assignments are designed to make you think about the course concepts and apply them to real life business situations reported in the trade and general media. All Assignments must be submitted on Canvas as Word documents or PDFs, not as email or Google links.

Attendance

Attendance counts for 15% of your grade. A sign-in sheet will be passed around in each class. Be sure to sign it. If you don't sign in, you weren't there.

Group Project

Working in groups of 4-5, you will conduct a primary qualitative research project to explore consumers' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors regarding a specific product or service. This project is worth 30% of your grade and you will present your results as a group on the final exam date.

Peer Evaluation

Each member of a project group will assign a grade to every other member of the group based on that member's participation in and contribution to the group project. The scores will be averaged and will account for up to 60 points, or 6% of your grade. If all the members in the group assign a low score to a particular member, that person's group project grades will be prorated accordingly.

Class Participation

You are expected to (1) attend class regularly and arrive on time, (2) listen attentively in class, and (3) contribute often to class discussions. Your in-class comments should be thoughtful and should reflect your careful reading of the assigned course material. Regular participation in class can help your semester grade if you are on the cusp between two grades.

Incompletes and Problems

If you find that you are having trouble completing course work or need further explanation of class topics, please schedule an appointment with me immediately. If you need this class for graduation, you should be sure that your performance is up to standard throughout the course. It is too late to wait until the last week of classes to ask for help. I'm available to meet throughout the entire semester if you need help. "Incompletes" will only be given through prior consultation, under extreme circumstances. Incomplete grades must be made up prior to the start of the next semester.

GRADING

Individual Written Assignments	500
Attendance	150
Peer Evaluation	50
Group Project	300
Total	1000

Grade Ranges

- A 90-100 pts
- B+ 85-89.9 pts
- B 80-84.9 pts
- C+ 75-79.9 pts
- C 70-74.9 pts
- D 60-69.9 pts
- F under 60 pts

Course Schedule
Consumer Behavior
Spring 2026

Week	Date	Instruction	Activities	Readings/Assignments
1	1/20/2026	Consumer Behavior and Technology	Course Overview Ask questions Introduce yourself Get to know other students	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 1 <i>Consumer Behavior and Technology</i>
	1/22/2026	Consumer Behavior and Technology (cont'd)	Lecture/Discussion	
2	1/27/2026	Consumer Motivation and Personality	Lecture/Discussion	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 3 <i>Consumer Motivation and Personality</i> Individual Assignment 1 distributed – Data sharing
	1/29/2026	Consumer Motivation and Personality (cont'd)	Lecture/Discussion (cont'd) Class Activity	
3	2/3/2026	Consumer Perception and Positioning	Lecture/Discussion	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 4 <i>Consumer Perception and Positioning</i> Individual Assignment 2 distributed Individual Assignment 1 due
	2/5/2026	Consumer Perception and Positioning (cont'd)	Lecture/Discussion (cont'd) Class Activity	Watch Superbowl and discuss your favorite commercial
4	2/10/2026	Consumer Research	Lecture/Discussion Form project groups	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 16 <i>Consumer Research</i> Group Assignment Overview distributed
	2/12/2026	Group project meetings	Meet in groups with instructor	Research Gen Z and product categories Individual Assignment 2 due
5	2/17/2026	Market Segmentation and Real Time bidding	Lecture/Discussion	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 2 <i>Market Segmentation and Real Time Bidding</i> Individual Assignment 3 distributed – Programmatic Advertising
	2/19/2026	Market Segmentation and Real Time bidding (cont'd)	Lecture/Discussion (cont'd) Class Activity	Group Assignment Part 1 due Group Assignment Part 2 distributed

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Week	Date	Instruction	Activities	Readings/Assignments
6	2/24/2026	Consumer Learning	Lecture/Discussion	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 5 <i>Consumer Learning</i> Individual Assignment 3 due
	2/26/2026	Consumer Learning (cont'd)	Feedback on Group Assignment Part 1	Group Assignment Part 2 due
7	3/3/2026	Persuading Consumers	Lecture/Discussion (cont'd) Class Activity	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 7 <i>Persuading Consumers</i> Individual Assignment 4 distributed
	3/5/2026	Persuading Consumers (cont'd)	Lecture/Discussion	
8	3/10/2026	The Family and Its Social Standing	Review Group Assignment Part 2 discussion guide with Professor	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 10 <i>The Family and Its Social Standing</i> Group Assignment Part 3 distributed Individual Assignment 4 due
	3/12/2026	The Family and Its Social Standing cont'd		Revision to Group Assignment Part 2 due
Spring Break				
9	3/24/2026	Cultural Values and Consumer Behavior	Lecture/Discussion Feedback	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 11 <i>Cultural Values and Consumer Behavior</i>
	3/26/2026	Cultural Values and Consumer Behavior (cont'd)	Lecture/Discussion (cont'd) Group meetings	Group Assignment Part 3 distributed
10	3/31/2026	Subcultures and Consumer Behavior	Lecture/Discussion Group meetings	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 12 <i>Cultural Values and Consumer Behavior</i>
	4/2/2026	Subcultures and Consumer Behavior	Lecture/Discussion (cont'd) Class Activity	Continue conducting qualitative research

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11	4/7/2026	Reference Groups and Communities, Opinion Leaders and Word-of-Mouth	Lecture/Discussion Group meetings	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 9: <i>Reference Groups and Communities, Opinion Leaders and Word-of-Mouth</i> Individual Assignment 5 distributed Continue conducting qualitative research
	4/9/2026	Reference Groups and Communities, Opinion Leaders and Word-of-Mouth (cont'd)	Lecture/Discussion (cont'd) Class Activity	Continue conducting qualitative research
12	4/14/2026	Consumer Attitude Formation and Change	Lecture/Discussion Group meetings	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 6 <i>Consumer Attitude Formation and Change</i> Individual Assignment 5 due – Social Media influence Group Assignment Part 3 draft due
	4/16/2026	Persuading Consumers	Lecture/Discussion Group meetings	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 7 <i>Persuading Consumers</i> Feedback on Group Assignment Part 3
13	4/21/2026	From Print and Broadcast to Social Media and Mobile	Lecture/Discussion Group meetings	Reading: Schiffman Chapter 8 <i>From Print and Broadcast to Social Media and Mobile</i>
	4/23/2026	From Print and Broadcast to Social Media and Mobile (cont'd)	Lecture/Discussion Group meetings	Group Assignment Part 3 Final due
14	4/28/2026	Presentation rehearsals		
	4/30/2026	Presentation rehearsals		
	TBD	Final	Presentation of Group Assignment	Final Presentation