

MSMG 6460: SEMINAR IN CONSUMER RESEARCH

COURSE SNAPSHOT*

Dr. Jodie Whelan
Thursdays from 4:00pm to 7:00pm

This course is devoted to the theories, methodologies, and implications of consumer research. Students will learn how theories and research methods can be used to study consumer phenomena and provide novel consumer insights. Topics are selected to expose you to some of the most important areas of consumer research. The goal is to ignite ideas, engage in meaningful discussion, and to look for *theory in action*—how concepts from consumer research theories manifest in actual consumer behavior or marketing practices

Although the course is designed for marketing students and taught by a marketing professor, it offers valuable insights for anyone interested in behavioural research across a variety of disciplines.

**The complete syllabus will be circulated to enrolled students prior to the first class.*

Objectives

The main objective of this course is to expose students to advanced theories in consumer research and the various methods and tools used to study consumer behaviour. Readings and class discussion will focus on understanding, critiquing, and extending theory; identifying appropriate conditions and contexts for applying different research methods; and formulating novel research questions, hypotheses, and designs. By taking this course, students will:

- develop a strong foundation for critical thinking and creativity in the area of consumer research;
- be exposed to different theoretical and substantive areas of consumer research;
- learn about the different methodologies and analytic approaches employed in consumer research, as well as the considerations and trade-offs made in selecting a research design;
- practice “bridging the gap” from academic research to real-world applications; and
- develop an appreciation for how consumer research can inform marketing practice.

As this is a seminar-based course, classroom discussions will take the form of the Socratic Method. Each week the group will discuss and critically debate the topics and studies of the session. *There will be no lectures.* Students must come to class prepared to talk about the assigned readings and to share (and defend) their observations, insights, and critiques. *A high level of student preparation and participation enhances learning for everyone.*

Course Materials

In lieu of a textbook, this course has a reading list consisting of articles from academic journals. *Read the articles in the order they are listed, as some articles may build on preceding articles.* I may also assign additional (or substitute) readings, so please check eClass regularly.

Evaluation

Evaluation Element	Weight
Participation	20
Class moderation	20
Thought papers	20
Term paper and presentation	40
TOTAL	100

Tentative Schedule

Week	Date	Topic(s)	Notes
1	Jan. 9	Course overview What is consumer research?	Zoom
2	Jan. 16	"Classics" of behavioral science and the evolution of consumer research	
3	Jan. 23	We are what we consume: The meaning of brands and possessions	
4	Jan. 30	Automatic influences	
5	Feb. 6	Mental accounting, heuristics, and biases	
6	Feb. 13	Brands, products, and time as status signals?	
	<i>Feb. 20</i>	<i>Reading week</i>	
7	Feb. 27	All the feels: The effects of affect, mood, and emotions on consumer behavior	
8	Mar. 6	Social, group, and interpersonal influence	
9	Mar. 13	Culture and consumption	
10	Mar. 20	Old problems, new methods	
11	Mar. 27	Contemporary topics	
12	Apr. 3	Group presentations	