

York University  
**CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: 3210 A**  
Summer 2020

**Course Instructor:**  
Prof. Pallavi Sodhi  
[psodhi@yorku.ca](mailto:psodhi@yorku.ca)

**Online Class**  
Mondays, Wednesdays  
4-7pm

*Due to COVID-19, this course has been modified for online learning.*

*While this does allow for flexibility in when exactly you consume the content and how you structure your learning, **you are expected to follow the schedule, meet all deadlines, and actively participate throughout the duration of the course.***

***Ultimately, the best way to succeed in this course is to follow the schedule and participate frequently and consistently!***

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Consumer behavior is all about understanding why people buy things and how products, services and consumption activities contribute to shaping people's social experiences. Consumers as the "shopping audience" are critical to shaping marketing strategy. We have to understand why people behave as they do, so we can identify their needs, and then satisfy them. This behaviour is important to marketers, policy makers, academia, and consumers alike.

Marketers can develop an effective marketing mix if they are more knowledgeable about their target consumers. Only once they understand how consumers behave, can they predict how they will react to marketing—be it advertising, new product development, sales approaches, or the management of customer relationships.

Policy makers benefit from consumer behavior research because it serves as a crucial insight into initiating change. Policy makers often try to change unhealthy consumption behaviors, like smoking, binge eating, and gambling. A better understanding of the reasons behind such behavior may help stem or prevent such behavior from occurring.

For academia, the study of consumer behaviour provides new insights into understanding the motivations behind buying and using products and services, the processes involved, and the consequences of decision-making, which they can then impart as learning to corporates and budding marketers.

Most importantly, the study of consumer behavior is important for each one of us as consumers. How possessions influence the way we feel about ourselves and each other, especially in this world of social media and the digital age is mind-boggling. Consciously or sub-consciously, we are embroiled in consumer activities, whether exposed to advertising, or when shopping in stores, when wearing a specific brand of clothes, or choosing a preferred mode of communication. When we, as consumers dig deeper to studying this complex consumer behavior, we gain a wealth of knowledge about why we behave the way we do.

### **REQUIRED COURSE TEXT / READINGS:**

Solomon, M., White, K., & Dahl, D. (2016). *Consumer Behaviour: Buying, Having, and Being*, 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian ed. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

The textbook will be supplemented by articles, magazine and electronic readings, marketing updates, and case study material which will be posted online as the course progresses.

### **WEIGHTING OF COURSE:**

Moodle postings: announcements, slides, supplementary readings, assignments, and other discussion material will be posted as the course progresses.

<b>Evaluation Element</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Participation (Online forums)	<b>10</b>
Individual Quiz/Assignments/Show and tell/Creative Marketing Investigation	<b>15</b>
Group project (written report & presentation)	<b>45</b>
Part 1	5
Part 2	5
Part 3	5
Part 4 (Final Cumulative)	15
Presentation	15
Final Exam	<b>30</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the fundamental theories of consumer behavior
- Appreciate how having (or not having) things affects our lives and how our possessions influence the way we feel about ourselves and each other
- Develop consumer insights to help formulate marketing strategy from real-world marketing cases

### **FORMAT & DELIVERY OF THE COURSE**

The course will be delivered as a combination of live online and recorded lectures. Recordings of online lectures will be uploaded on Moodle after the class.

### **VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION, QUIZZES & CREATIVE MARKETING INVESTIGATIVE EXERCISES (25%)**

Students are encouraged to be regular in reviewing lecture notes posted on Moodle and demonstrate their knowledge in online forums, quizzes/assignments of current trends or developments in the marketing world that hold relevance to consumer behavior. The virtual format of this class is such that learning would be a function of the quality of well-researched answers provided in online forums as well as individual assignments and quizzes. Each week, relevant questions will also be raised from different topics and chapters taught, and students/groups will upload their answers and if necessary, present their answers in online forums/rooms.

Participation grade will be based on my perception of your performance on the above requirements in the online forums. The evaluation would be subjective hence you will have to live with my judgment on this.

## ONLINE FINAL EXAM (30%)

### ***Final Examination (30%)***

The final examination will be online, worth 30% of your final grade; and will be cumulative, covering all chapters covered in the course. The exam will assess your understanding of the course material through questions based on the course material and would involve application of the material taught in the course.

Deferred Exams will be held as per guidelines outlined in the Appendix under Deferred Exam Policy.

## GROUP PROJECT: (45%) Report Submission divided into 4 parts (totalling 30%) and Live Presentation (15%)

All students must complete a major group project due at the end of the semester. This project will provide you with the opportunity to:

- Examine a real-world consumer behavior issue and/or problem
- Apply some of the theoretical concepts and knowledge you have acquired in the course
- Design, conduct, and analyze your own primary consumer research
- Apply secondary research to find insights pertinent to your case
- Combine your analytical and creative skills to suggest a potential marketing solution

The group project is an important aspect of this course as it allows you to demonstrate what you have learned in a creative way. To do this, your group will need to identify a marketing issue in which consumer behavior plays a critical role. The issue must have real-world implications. The issue can be specific to a certain product or company (e.g., how will consumers react to the Mouldy Burger King ad?) or be a more general consumer behavior topic (e.g., how will old consumer behaviour change and new consumer behaviours be created after COVID 19? In this case, you will need to pick any one industry to research, which will have an impact post COVID-19).

The group project will be divided into 3 parts (Mini Assignments), PRIOR to Final Submission, and each part will be graded. This will prevent last-minute scrambling to complete the report.

Students, in teams, will select a real-world marketing issue in which consumer behaviour plays a critical role. This may be a challenge facing a company that you are familiar with, or a company that has been in the news and/or captivated your interest. If the latter, you can acquire information by researching potential sources, the news, business publications, and/or other media outlets. Always remember, the YorkU Libraries have a wealth of information to help you as well. A word of advice: The more specific you articulate the consumer problem, the better and more insightful your analysis and hence your proposed solutions will be. You will need to submit a project proposal with a group contract and get my approval to proceed on the topic before actually commencing on your project. This will help ensure that there is no duplication of topics.

In brief, your task is to **(a) diagnose a key consumer-behaviour related issue** and **(b) develop recommendations and suggestions** for addressing the problem. To diagnose the key issue(s), you will be expected to conduct a literature review (i.e., examine published material to understand what has already been said<sup>1</sup>), and to **conduct your own primary online research**.

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<sup>1</sup>Potential sources include (but are not limited to) books, magazines (e.g., *Business Week*, *The Economist*, *Wired*), academic journals (e.g., *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing*,

**TENTATIVE LECTURE SCHEDULE:** The following is a general tentative outline of the course content. The actual dates and sequence of topics covered in specific sessions may vary somewhat depending on the progress of the class.

<b>CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR COURSE OUTLINE: TENTATIVE SCHEDULE</b>		
<b>Course Instructor: Professor Pallavi Sodhi</b> <a href="mailto:psodhi@yorku.ca">psodhi@yorku.ca</a>		
<b>WEEK/SESSION</b>	<b>TOPIC(S)</b>	<b>TEXT</b>
Week1 May 11 May 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Course overview.</li> <li>- Introduction to Consumer Behaviour</li> <li>- Perception</li> <li>- Learning and Memory</li> <li>- Group Project Structure &amp; Briefing</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 1</p> <p>Chapter 2</p> <p>Chapter 3</p>
<b>Group Project Part 1 due by 11:59 pm on Sunday, May 17</b>		
Week 2 May 18 May 20	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Victoria Day</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Motivation and Affect</li> <li>- The Self</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 4</p> <p>Chapter 5</p>
<b>Chapters 3, 4, 5 Individual Quiz/Show and Tell due by 11:59pm on Sunday, May 24</b>		
Week 3 May 25 May 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personality, Lifestyles and Values</li> <li>- Attitudes/ Attitude Change and Communications</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 6</p> <p>Chapters 7, 8</p>
<b>Group Project Part 2 due by 11:59 on Sunday, May 31</b>		
<b>Chapters 6, 7, 8 Individual Quiz/Show and Tell due by 11:59pm on Sunday, May 31</b>		
Week 4 June 1 June 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual decision making</li> <li>- Buying and Disposing</li> <li>- Group Influence and Social Media</li> </ul>	<p>Chapters 9</p> <p>Chapter 10</p> <p>Chapter 11</p>
<b>Group Project Part 3 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, June 7</b>		
<b>Chapters 9, 10, 11 Quiz/Show and Tell due by 11:59pm on Sunday, June 7</b>		
Week 5 June 8 June 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Income, Social Class, and Family Structure</li> <li>- Subcultures</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 12</p> <p>Chapter 13</p>
<b>Chapters 12 and 13 Individual Quiz/Show and Tell due by 11:59pm on Sunday, June 14</b>		

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*Journal of Consumer Psychology*), news outlets, and corporate communications (e.g., financial reports, online information kits).

Week 6 June 15	- Cultural Influences on Consumer Behaviour	Chapter 14
June 17	- The Creation and Diffusion of Culture - Briefing for Virtual Presentations	Chapter 15
<b>Submission of Cumulative Group Project Report (Parts 1+ 2 + 3 + 4) by 11:59pm on Sunday, June 21</b>		
Week 7 June 22	Virtual LIVE Group Presentations	All groups are required to attend online LIVE presentations. Groups will be awarded marks for participation as well as presentation. Online Peer Evaluations to be submitted prior to presentations.
Date TBC	FINAL EXAM	<b>During Exam Period</b>

## APPENDIX

### Other Course Policies

#### ***Email Etiquette***

Please use your yorku.ca email address, and list the course code and section in the subject line (e.g., ADMS3210 A). I will do my best to respond to your emails within one business day.

#### ***Late Work***

Late work will not be accepted, unless the student has provided me with a valid excuse *prior to the due date*, and I have offered an extension.

#### ***Schedule Changes***

If there are any changes in the class schedule, I will try to give you as much notice as possible. Please regularly check Moodle/course websites for any class announcements.

### Relevant University Regulations

#### ***Deferred Standing***

Deferred Exams: Deferred standing may be granted to students who are unable to write their final examination at the scheduled time or to submit their outstanding course work on the last day of classes. Details can be found at <http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/deferred-standing>

***As communicated to the University community on March 13, 2020, Senate Executive has agreed to waive until further notice the requirement for students to submit an Attending Physician's Statement in support of a request for deferred standing or petitions***

**DSA Form:** [http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/deferred\\_standing\\_agreement.pdf](http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/deferred_standing_agreement.pdf)

In order to apply for deferred standing, students must register at <https://sas-app.laps.yorku.ca/>. Followed by handing in a completed DSA form and supporting documentation directly to the main office of the School of Administrative Studies via email ([apsas@yorku.ca](mailto:apsas@yorku.ca)) providing your ticket number and attaching the DSA form. The DSA must be submitted no later than five (5) business days from the date of the exam. These requests will be considered on their merit and decisions will be made available by logging into the above-mentioned link. No individualized communication will be sent by the School to the students (no letter or e-mails). Students with approved DSA will be able to write their deferred examination during the School's deferred examination period. No further extensions of deferred exams shall be granted. The format and covered content of the deferred examination may be different from that of the originally scheduled examination. The deferred exam may be closed book, cumulative and comprehensive and may include all subjects/topics of the textbook whether they have been covered in class or not.

#### ***Academic Honesty***

The Policy on Academic Honesty is an affirmation and clarification for members of the University of the general obligation to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. As a clear sense of academic honesty and responsibility is fundamental to good scholarship, the policy recognizes the general responsibility of all faculty members to foster acceptable standards of academic conduct and of the student to be mindful of and abide by such standards. Suspected breaches of academic honesty will be investigated and charges shall be laid if reasonable and probable grounds exist.

Students should review the York Academic Honesty policy for themselves at: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>

Students might also wish to review the interactive online tutorial for students on academic integrity at: [http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic\\_integrity/](http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/)

Students must be aware of their rights and responsibilities, for more detail please visit: <http://www.yorku.ca/laps/students/rights.html>

### ***Reappraisals***

Students may, with sufficient academic grounds, request that a final grade in a course be reappraised (which may mean the review of specific pieces of tangible work). Non-academic grounds are not relevant for grade reappraisals; in such cases, students are advised to petition to their home Faculty. Students are normally expected to first contact the course director to discuss the grade received and to request that their tangible work be reviewed. Tangible work may include written, graphic, digitized, modeled, video recording or audio recording formats, but not oral work. Students need to be aware that a request for a grade reappraisal may result in the original grade being raised, lowered or confirmed. For reappraisal procedures and information, please visit the Office of the Registrar site at:

<http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/grades/reappraisal/index.htm>

### ***Religious Accommodation***

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. For more information on religious accommodation, please visit <https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>

### ***Course Withdrawal***

Last date to add a course without permission of instructor

Last day to drop the course without receiving a grade is June 8, 2020

If you withdraw between June 9 and the end of classes June 22, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as "W".

### ***Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities***

The nature and extent of accommodations shall be consistent with and supportive of the integrity of the curriculum and of the academic standards of programs or courses. Provided that students have given sufficient notice about their accommodation needs, instructors shall take reasonable steps to accommodate these needs in a manner consistent with the guidelines established hereunder. For more information please visit the Disabilities Services website at <http://www.yorku.ca/dshub/>

York's disabilities offices and the Registrar's Office work in partnership to support alternate exam and test accommodation services for students with disabilities at the Keele campus. For more information on alternate exams and tests please visit <http://www.yorku.ca/altexams/>

Please alert the Course Director as soon as possible should you require special accommodation.