

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Spring 2014

Discipline: Commerce

SEMS 3500-107: Consumer Behavior

Division: Upper

Faculty Name: Dr. Marye Tharp

Email: marye.tharp.sp14@semesteratsea.org

Pre-requisites: Introductory Marketing Course

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class is about the many influences on our purchasing decisions. Consumer behavior is a sub-set of “human behavior,” so we will draw from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, social psychology, and anthropology. Some of the topics that shed light on what people buy and why, are perception and the senses, learning, memory, motivation, emotions, attitudes, lifestyle, personality, values, groups, and culture. We will explore positive examples of consumer behavior such as green marketing (Toyota Prius, Chevrolet Volt), social marketing (e.g. reducing HIV transmission in Africa, Tom’s shoes), and consumer activism (Greenpeace International), as well as consumer misbehavior in the forms of consumer terrorism (farmers attacking McDonald’s stores due to its use of GMO’s), addictive consumption, consumed consumers (sex-trafficking and selling babies), compulsive consumption and other illegal activities such as consumer theft.

We will focus on voyage-relevant cases of consumer behavior in the Asian and African countries we will visit, as well as talk about the movement toward a global consumer culture in which billions of people are united by their consumption of common branded consumer products (McDonald’s, Louis Vuitton) entertainment figures (e.g. superstars, supermodels, pop stars, and sports legends), and leisure activities (travel, watching movies, surfing the Net). We will also learn about positive country of origin (COO) effects such as Chinese silks or American trucks, and negative Country of Origin effects such as African “blood diamonds” and how these can be changed.

By the end of this course you will have more insight into your own purchasing choices and influences. Throughout our voyage you will have the opportunity to observe your own consumption behaviors and to compare your influences with those of a wide range of culturally diverse people you encounter on and off our ship.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this class you should be able to:

1. Identify individual, group, and cultural influences on consumer choices.
2. Develop ethnographic research skills by collecting and analyzing qualitative data pertaining to consumer behavior.
3. Apply concepts learned in class to analyze buyer behavior in different settings/cultures and in marketing campaigns.
4. Hone presentation and written skills.
5. Relate individual/group decision-making approaches and stages used by consumers to marketing objectives.
6. Understand the strategic roles of segmentation and customer satisfaction.
7. Appreciate consumer diversity – including differences in consumption across our parts of the world.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

AUTHOR: Solomon, M.R.

TITLE: Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having and Being

PUBLISHER: Pearson Education, Inc.[publishing as Brady/ Prentice Hall/ Addison-Wesley.]

ISBN 13: 978-0-13-267209-2 ; **ISBN 10:** 0-13-267184-0

DATE/EDITION: 2013/10th Edition

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS:

Harvard Business School readings and cases. These materials can be purchased online. You will have to create a login at the Harvard site, and then you can purchase and download the cases/readings.

Harvard Business Cases/Readings:

- XYLYS: Exploring Consumer Perception about Premium Watches in the Indian Context (15 pgs.)
- Brand in the hand: A Cross-market Investigation of Consumer Acceptance of Mobile Marketing (China- 9 pgs.)
- The Globe: Cracking the Next Growth Market: Africa
- Danimal in South Africa: Innovation at the Bottom of the Pyramid (15 pgs.)
- The Saffola Journey, (Repositioning of one of India's Leading Cooking Oils) (12 pgs.)
- Himalya Herbal Toothpaste: Category & Brand Involvement in an Emerging Market (India)
- Louis Vuitton in Japan (20 pgs.)
- Increasing the ROI of Social Media Marketing- Hokey Pokey Ice Cream Creations-(India)-(7 pgs.)

GRADING WEIGHTS & LETTER GRADE EQUIVALENTS

Exams (3@ 10%)	30%	A	92.5-100	C	72.5-76.4
Field Lab Reflection Paper	20%	A-	89.5-92.4	C-	69.5-72.4
Participation & Quizzes	20%	B+	86.5-89.4	D+	66.5-69.4
International Ritual Consumption Project	10%	B	82.5-86.4	D	62.5-66.4
Country Profile/Ethnographic Project	10%	B-	79.5-82.4	D-	59.5-62.4
		C+	76.5-89.4	F	0-59.4

EXAMS: (30%)

Questions will be based on material covered in any aspect of class (e. g. reading assignments, class lectures, exercises, cases, and videos). The format of the final exam will be multiple-choice and/or short answer questions, and/or a case analysis. A detailed study guide will be provided. **Please remember the University's Honor Code (see below)! Cheating is not fair to other students and is not worth the consequences!**

PARTICIPATION & QUIZZES: (20%)

In order to earn participation points, you must be present in class and get involved. Most days there will be some combination of in-class discussion, cases and/or exercises (often in small groups) related to the book material. Hopefully the exercises will be interesting and fun and help you to better understand the concepts from the book. Articulating your opinions and ideas and sharing relevant examples based on your experiences will enhance the learning experience for everyone and deepen your understanding of the material.

Professional behavior is expected at all times. Please be on time, try to maintain a positive attitude, and respect the opinions of your professor and other students. If you come to class prepared to contribute on a regular basis, you will receive better participation scores. I suggest you come with at least 2 topics you want to discuss from the readings. Attendance will be taken for each class; be sure you sign the sign-in sheet as it is circulated or ask for it at the end of class. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with another student to find out what material, schedule changes, etc. you missed. You are expected to spend the entire period in class in order to get the most of your learning experience and to avoid disruptions to your colleagues.

There will be announced reading quizzes throughout the semester. Questions will be based on the assigned text and Harvard Business readings for that day. The format of the quizzes will be multiple-choice/short answer questions.

FIELD LAB Reflection Paper: (20%)

After completing the 8-hour field lab experience as a class, you will then write and turn in a reflection paper detailing what you learned and how it relates to the Consumer Behavior topics we cover in class. Additional instructions will be given in class before the field lab.

The field lab will take place on Tuesday, February 11th in Hong Kong. Attendance is mandatory. Our morning stop will be at Hong Kong Baptist University where we will hear about the current research program of Dr. Kara Chan. Dr. Chan's interests are in comparing Chinese cultural influences on young girls as consumers in various countries with Chinese populations (China, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong). We have invited her students to join us at the university and we will share lunch with Dr. Chan. In the afternoon we are planning to visit Ocean Park Hong Kong (香港海洋公園) where each student will complete observation and/or ethnographic research on its customers. The park hours are 10am-7pm. This park is the 12th most visited theme park in the world by annual attendance-6.95 million visitors in 2011. Ocean Park opened in 1977 and includes rides, animal exhibits, observatories, laboratories, and an education department. This is the first

institution to successfully perform artificial insemination on bottlenose dolphins, and their giant panda program is also well known. Since 2005, Ocean Park has competed against the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort for visitors. We plan to focus on how Ocean Park's marketing strategies help differentiate them from this more famous competitor.

The typed reflection paper should be approximately 4-6 pages, single-spaced which is about 3,200-4,800 words (10-12 point font, one-inch margins).

INTERNATIONAL RITUAL CONSUMPTION PROJECT: (10%)

This is a group project. Each group selects a culturally important rite of passage or holiday ritual (e.g., wedding, funeral, baptism, Christmas, Valentine's Day, New Year's celebration, Independence Day, national holiday, sporting competition) and describes how the event is celebrated and handled in the culture of choice. If the holiday/event is also celebrated in the U.S., then include a comparison of the two events and why the differences in consumption exist (individual, cultural, economic, etc.). Please include examples and descriptions of the behaviors you identify. Include value frameworks such as Rokeach and Hofstede in your report. Groups (3 or 4 students) will also conduct experiential interviews with members of the culture to delve into the participants, roles, locations, required products/services and timing for the selected ritual. More details on this project will be given in class. The typed paper should be approximately 4-6 pages, single-spaced, about 3,200-4,800 words (10-12 point font, one-inch margins). To persuade group members to participate as opposed to social-loaf or free-ride, peer evaluations will be considered when assigning grades. In order to count, peer evaluations will need to be turned in on the day the group assignment is due! Peer evaluations are confidential in that nobody will see the evaluations except for me. If the group consensus on the peer evaluations indicates a participant did not contribute his/her fair share, I will dock that person's grade. Presentations will be at the end of the semester and last approximately 15 minutes.

COUNTRY PROFILE AND ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY: (10%)

- **Country Profile:** Groups of 3 or 4 students are assigned to 2 different scheduled ports. During the class right before arriving in a port, a group will present the findings from their written report based on research on the consumer market characteristics of the country. The typed paper should be approximately 2-3 pages, single-spaced which is about 1,600-2,400 words (10-12 point font, one-inch margins).
- **Ethnographic Study:** A second group records and interprets ethnographic observations of individuals' behaviors in a natural consumer behavior setting (e.g. market, mall, street vendors, fast-food restaurant, tourist site, recreation event (soccer, boxing, etc.). Ethnographic research is qualitative research that explores cultural phenomena by looking at the social meanings of ordinary activities by observing people (informants) in naturally occurring settings. Analyses of these observations are interpreted utilizing themes that answer the question: "What's going on in this setting?" The results are written up and reported in the class right after leaving the port. The typed paper should be approximately 2-3 pages, single-spaced which is about 1,600-2,400 words (10-12 point font, one-inch margins). To persuade group members to participate as opposed to social-loaf or free-ride, peer evaluations will be considered when assigning grades. In order to count, peer evaluations will need to be turned in on the day the group assignment is due! If the group consensus on the peer evaluations indicates a participant did not contribute his/her fair share, I will dock that person's grade.

- Then the class will compare the two presentations and discuss the similarities and differences.

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."