

MCS*3600 Consumer Information Processes

Fall 2021
0.5 Credits

General Course Information

Instructor	Professor Sunghwan Yi
Email	syi@uoguelph.ca
Office Location	MINS 201B
Class Schedule	Mondays and Fridays 11:30 am -12:50 pm (section 1) Mondays and Fridays 2:30 pm – 3:50 pm (section 2)
Office Hours	Mondays and Fridays 1:15-2:15 pm (online over Zoom); or by appointment
Pre-requisites	MCS*2600 (Fundamentals of Consumer Behaviour) and MCS*3030 (Research Methods)

Course Description

This course provides an in-depth treatment of research on consumer information processing, especially research on consumer judgment and decision making.

Theories covered in the course address the following concepts: visual perception, consumer motivation, conscious and non-conscious mental processing, stereotypes toward/against products, erroneous consumer judgment (due to ambiguous product labeling), and consumers' susceptibility to simple cues. Applications to consumer policy and responsible marketing strategies are also discussed.

Course Learning Outcomes

The primary learning outcome of this course is for you:

To understand and analyse consumers' information processing in judgment, decision making, and choice.

Building on the knowledge and skills you learned in MCS*2600 (Fundamentals of Consumer Behaviour and Research Methods), this course will provide an in-depth analysis of consumer judgment and decision making from a **theoretical** standpoint.

Learning outcomes include the following:

- 1) to gain understanding of advanced theories and concepts in consumer behaviour research,
- 2) to understand the process of conducting consumer research and reporting empirical findings in the form of research articles,
- 3) to critically interpret research findings reported in journal articles and to appreciate the value of consumer research to the public, consumer policy makers, and marketing practitioners,
- 4) to apply consumer behaviour concepts and theories to specific product/service categories and to develop implications for consumer well-being and marketing practice, and
- 5) to generate your own research questions in a specific product/service context and design an empirical study to test them.

The knowledge and skills you will obtain in this course will be indispensable for your later career in marketing and consumer research and practices.

Students are expected to **study about 6-9 hours each week** regarding this course.

Course Resources

The main course materials are 12 research articles on consumer behaviour discussed throughout the course. They are listed on pp. 5-6. These articles can be found from the UG library online course reserve (ARES):

<https://ares.lib.uoguelph.ca/ares/>.

I strongly encourage you to *print* the PDF of all the articles in the first week of the semester so that you can easily carry and access them in a *binder*. This is practically your textbook for this course.

You are encouraged to consult with a textbook on consumer behaviour whenever you feel you are not knowledgeable about concepts and theories. You can refer to the Consumer Behaviour textbook used in MCS*2600 (Fundamentals of Consumer Behaviour).

Online Communication:

Course materials will be posted in the courselink website, where you will find course reminders and updates as well:

<http://courselink.uoguelph.ca/>.

I do not usually check emails more than once a day. Thus, you can expect a response from me within 24 hours. Any emails you send past Friday 5 pm will not be checked over the weekend.

Course Assessment

Method and Timing of Evaluation

Your performance will be evaluated based on the following:

Group components (45%)		Associated learning outcomes
Article Presentation	15%	#1, #2, #3
Facilitation of discussion of presented article	5%	#3, #4
Short Research proposal (Step 1)	5%	#4, #5
Short Research proposal (Step 2)	20%	#4, #5
Individual components (55%)		
Quizzes for experimental design issues	8%	#1 : graded by instructor
Article quizzes	32%	#2, #3
Participation	15%	#2, #3

Note: No make-up will be offered for missed quizzes.

Late submission of proposals will incur a penalty of 5% reduction per each day past the due date.

Course Philosophy and Approach:

This course consists of review of experimental methodology and relevant statistical tools (Weeks 1-2), reading and discussing academic articles on consumer behaviour (i.e., watching my lecture and group presentation, participating in Q&A and discussion, and taking a quiz for each of the 12 articles), and brainstorming for and preparing a research proposal on the group basis.

The mainstay of this course is **reading academic articles** in the field of consumer behaviour, critically reflecting on hypotheses, methods, and findings of the articles, presenting and discussing findings from the articles. Students are expected to read an assigned article prior to watching a group article presentation. Each group will present one article.

In this course, the role of the instructor is restricted to giving an introduction to articles, facilitating discussion, and resolving unclear points.

Tentative Course Schedule

Disclaimer: Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via Courselink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website and circulated by email.

Classes up to September 27 will be delivered online.

Clas s	Date	Topics	Article Presen tation	Article Quiz
1	September 10 F	Course overview Group formation and assignments of articles		
2	September 13 M	Academic research on consumer behaviour Review of Experimental Design Online Quiz #1 for experimental design issues: September 15 W 5 pm to September 16 Th 5 pm		
3	September 17 F	Review of Basic Methodologies (cont'd) Online Quiz #2 for experimental design issues: September 20 M 5 pm to September 21 T 5 pm		
4	September 20 M	Review of Basic Methodologies (cont'd) (Read the paper entitled "How to read academic journal articles" as well) Online Quiz #3 for experimental design issues: September 22 W 5 pm to September 23 Th 5 pm		
5	September 24 F	Review of Basic Methodologies (cont'd) Online Quiz #2 for experimental design issues: September 27 M 5 pm to September 28 T 5 pm		
6	September 27 M	Instructor's lecture for on Article #0 Sample quiz based on Article #0 available September 29 W 5 pm to September 30 Th, 5 pm (not graded)	#0	
7	October 1 F	Intro lecture for article #1		

8	October 4 M	Intro lecture for article #2	#1	Quiz 1: till Oct 7 Th, 5 pm
9	October 8 F	Online materials to be uploaded on the courselink		
	October 11 M	Thanksgiving (No class)		
10	October 15 F	Intro lecture for article #3	#2	Quiz 2: till Oct 19 T, 5 pm
11	October 18 M	Intro lecture for article #4	#3	Quiz 3: till Oct 21 Th, 5 pm
12	October 22 F	Special lecture on interaction effects and consumer well-being research	#4	Quiz 4: till Oct 26 T, 5 pm
13	October 25 M	Guest lecture – “How to write a research summary and a research proposal” (Attendance absolutely required) ** In the process of confirming date		
14	October 29 F	Intro lecture for article #5		
15	November 1 M	Intro lecture for article #6	#5	Quiz 5: till Nov 4 Th, 5 pm
16	November 5 F	Intro lecture for article #7 A 2-page group research summary (Step 1) due	#6	Quiz 6: till Nov 9 T, 5 pm
17	November 8 M	Intro lecture for article #8	#7	Quiz 7: till Nov 11 Th, 5 pm
18	November 12 F	Intro lecture for article #9	#8	Quiz 8: till Nov 16 T, 5 pm
19	November 15 M	Intro lecture for article #10	#9	Quiz 9: till Nov 18 Th, 5 pm
20	November 19 F	Intro lecture for article #11	#10	Quiz 10: till Nov 23 T, 5 pm
21	November 22 M	Intro lecture for article #12	#11	Quiz 11: till Nov 25 Th, 5 pm
22	November 26 F		#12	Quiz 12: till Nov 30 T, 5 pm
23	November 29 M	Feedback for research proposals		
24	December 3 F	Feedback for research proposals		

The group research proposal (Step 2) due on December 6, Monday noon.

Components of the Course (A to G)

A. Presentation of Articles

You are requested to form a group of **five** students in the first week of the semester. **Once all five members are identified, they are asked to sign up to a group on the courselink on September 17th Friday 11 am-6 pm.** Note that if you sign up for Group #1, you are supposed to present Article #1 on the date specified in the course schedule. The list of articles to be presented is shown below.

The instructor will give intro lecture for each article, which explains background of the assigned article, major research questions, select hypotheses and one of the experiments in the article (usually the first experiment).

The presentation group is expected to read the assigned article and brainstorm with group members two weeks ahead of the due date of presentation. Check out the Video assignment tab in the courselink and use relevant functions (e.g., scheduling group meetings, setting up milestones, adding and combining videos, etc.). Detailed guidelines for preparing a group presentation will be available by September 23rd.

List of Articles to Be Presented and Discussed

[Tip: How to search for articles]

You can search for articles below from the UG library online course reserve: <https://ares.lib.uoguelph.ca/ares/>

Article #0 (For practice)

Wansink, B., & van Ittersum, K. (2003), Bottoms up! The influence of elongation on pouring and consumption volume, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30 (December), 455-463. (A Re-inquiry)

Article #1

Vohs, K. D., & Faber, R. J. (2007). Spent resources: Self-regulatory resource availability affects impulse buying. *Journal of consumer research*, 33(4), 537-547.

Article #2

Wansink, B., & Chandon, P. (2007). The Biasing Health Halos of Fast-Food Restaurant Health Claims: Lower Calorie Estimates and Higher Side-Dish Consumption Intentions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (October)

Article #3

Wansink, B., & Chandon, P. (2006). Can “Low-Fat” Nutrition Labels Lead to Obesity? *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43, 605-617.

Article #4

Raghunathan, R., Naylor, R. W., & Hoyer, W. D. (2006). The unhealthy = tasty intuition and its effects on taste inferences, enjoyment, and choice of food products. *Journal of Marketing*, 70, 170-184.

*** Before reading this paper, familiarize with the **Implicit Association Test (IAT)** by trying out at least two IAT tasks available at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/> .

Article #5

Chernev, A. & Gal, D. (2010). Categorization effects in value judgments: Averaging bias in evaluating combinations of vices and virtues. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 47, 738-747.

Article #6

Huyghe, E., Verstraeten, J., Geuens, M., & Van Kerckhove, A. (2017). Clicks as a Healthy Alternative to Bricks: How Online Grocery Shopping Reduces Vice Purchases. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(1), 61-74.

Article #7

Gourville, J. T. & Soman, D. (2005). Overchoice and assortment type: When and why variety backfires. *Marketing Science*, 24 (3), 382-395. Watch this Ted video before reading the article:
http://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_on_the_paradox_of_choice.html

Article #8

Sela, A., Berger, J., & Liu, W. (2008). Variety, vice, and virtue: How assortment size influences option choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(6), 941-951.

Article #9

Luchs, M. G., Naylor, R. W., Irwin, J. R., & Raghunathan, R. (2010). The sustainability liability: Potential negative effects of ethicality on product preference. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(5), 18-31. (You do not need to read Study 3 and Study 5.)

Article #10

Lin, Y. C., & Chang, C. C. A. (2012). Double standard: the role of environmental consciousness in green product usage. *Journal of Marketing*, 76(5), 125-134.

Article #11

Berger, J., & Fitzsimons, G. (2008). Dogs on the street, pumas on your feet: How cues in the environment influence product evaluation and choice. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 45(1), 1-14. Watch this TED video before reading the article:

http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_asks_are_we_in_control_of_our_own_decisions.html

Article #12

Cheema, A., & Soman, D. (2008). The effect of partitions on controlling consumption. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 45, 665-675.

*** The following background reading is **required**: Geier, A., Wansink, B., & Rozin, P. (2012) Red potato chips: Segmentation cues can substantially decrease food intake. *Health Psychology*, 31, 395-401.

B. Discussion Preparation Questions

I will post questions for each article on the courselink in order to encourage students' careful reading of articles.

Your answer is not graded. However, since some of these questions are used for **article quizzes**, you have every reason to take them seriously!

C. Participation in class and other groups' presentation

More details will be provided in Week 3.

D. Article Quizzes (To be completed online via Courselink)

There is no mid-term or final exam in this course. I will assess your understanding of the articles with article quizzes.

In order to ensure that you have read the assigned article and paid attention to the article presentation given by your peers, a quiz will be offered for each article. Check the course schedule for the date and time of 12 article quizzes.

In order to ensure that online quizzes are taken in fair and responsible manner, you are required to use Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor. You will need a Windows-based PC/tablet or an I-pad/Mac machines for this. (Chromebooks are not compatible with Respondus LockDown.)

<https://web.respondus.com/respondus-lockdown-browser-the-student-experience/>

https://support.respondus.com/support/index.php?/default_import/Knowledgebase/Article/View/219/25/can-an-ipad-be-used-to-take-a-lockdown-browser-exam-instructions-for-students

We will **use top 8 quiz grades** to calculate your final grade (8 quiz grades by 4% = 32%), not including the grade of quiz for the article your group presented. This means you will be able to miss up to 3 quizzes without penalty. **If you miss a quiz, there is no way for you to make up!**

E. Quizzes for Experimental design issues (To be completed online via Courselink)

Four online quizzes will assess your understanding of the materials covered in the lecture of experimental design and analysis techniques covered in the first two weeks. Each of which will be 2% toward your final grade. Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor are required for these as well. Check the course schedule for the date of these quizzes. The exact timing of these quizzes will be announced in the courselink.

F. Short Research Proposal

The purpose of the research proposal is to help you apply a theory you learned in this course **to a new product/service category or industry.**

Basically, you are to come up with a couple of research questions (and testable hypotheses) about how a consumer behaviour theory can be applied to a novel purchase and/or consumption context. Furthermore, you need to design an experiment to demonstrate how the hypotheses can be tested (i.e., the manipulation of more than one IVs and the measurement of the main DV).

Stage 1: A two-page research idea summary

Reread the article that your group **has been assigned to present** and the two articles you are assigned to as “**assistance group**”. Select one article of your liking with your group members.

Brainstorm with your group members about how the gist of the theory and/or concept can be extended **to a unique purchase/consumption context.** The new context needs to be substantially different from the context used by the authors.

It is a good idea for you to propose two purchase/consumption contexts at this stage so that I can help you select a better one.

It may be helpful if you make believe that you were working for a certain industry, and consider how main concepts in your article can be applied to one of the purchase/consumption issues in it. Alternatively, you may make believe that you were working for the federal or provincial government, such as the Office of Consumer Affairs under Industry Canada (<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/oca-bc.nsf/eng/home>) or the Health Canada’s Food and Nutrition unit (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/using-utiliser/label-etiquet-eng.php>).

Bear this question in mind when you do this summary: “For whom and/or why is this research question important?”

Clearly identify your research question and testable hypotheses in the context(s) of your choice.

**** Important:** Use double space and the 12 Times New Roman font (1 inch Margin in all directions). Also, include *two to three references* closely related to your idea in the summary.

Stage 2: A full research proposal

Prepare a 7- page research proposal (Cover page, references and appendices are extra).

- (a) Page 1-2: Explain the motivation of the research (i.e., why this is an important research question in the product/service context of your choice) and situate your research question in previous research (i.e., how your research improves our understanding of the problem).
- (b) Page 3-4: State your research question and the rationale for this question. Propose specific 1-2 testable hypotheses (i.e., why this predicted finding is likely to be obtained).
- (c) Page 5-6: Describe the experimental design you need to test your hypothesis. Make sure you clearly specify the overall experimental design. For example, you can specify a 2 (independent variable X1: high vs. low) * 2 (independent variable X2: high vs. low) factorial design. You also need to clearly describe how you will manipulate or measure independent variables and how you will assess a dependent variable (e.g., choice, attitude, memory, etc.).
- (d) Page 7: Describe how the results of this experiment will look like. I strongly encourage you to depict the expected results in a table or graph.
- (e) References (Follow **the APA format:**
<http://www.mhc.ab.ca/library/howtoguides/APASamplePaperAug2007.pdf> .

**** Important:** Use double space and the 12 Times New Roman font (1 inch margin in all directions).

**** Group consultation** about finding right references for your research proposal offered by a campus librarian. Make sure you make the most of this special assistance!

G. Peer Evaluation

You will have the opportunity to evaluate your group member's contribution to the group work at the end of semester. This also means that your contribution will be evaluated by your peers. If it turns out that your contribution is substantially lower than your peers', you may not receive full credits for group work. In order to facilitate every members' commitment to fair contribution to group work, I will have each group sign a "Group Work Contract" and submit it to me via Courselink by September 24 Friday.

If you have difficulty working with your group members during the semester, you are encouraged to let me know as early as possible.

Course Policies

All students are expected to abide by the University's academic regulations in the completion of their academic work, as set out in the undergraduate calendar (see <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/index.shtml>). Some regulations are highlighted below:

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and directs all members of the University community – faculty, staff and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The University of Guelph takes a serious view of academic misconduct and it is your responsibility as a student to be aware of and to abide by the University's policy. Included in the definition of academic misconduct are such activities as cheating on examinations, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and submitting the same material in two different courses without written permission.

To better understand your responsibilities, read the Undergraduate Calendar at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml> You are also advised to make use of the resources available through the Learning Commons (<http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/>) and to discuss any questions you may have with your course instructor, teaching assistant, Academic Advisor or Academic Counselor.

Students should be aware that faculty have the right to use software to aid in the detection of plagiarism or copying and to examine students orally on submitted work. For students found guilty of academic misconduct, serious penalties, up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University can be imposed.

Academic Consideration

Students who find themselves unable to meet course requirements by the deadline or criteria expected because of medical, psychological or compassionate circumstances beyond their control, should review the regulations on Academic Consideration in the Undergraduate Calendar (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/c08/c08-ac.shtml) and discuss their situation with the instructor, Program Counsellor or Academic Advisor as appropriate.

Religious Holidays

Should a student need to miss scheduled tests, mid-term examinations, final examinations, or requirements to attend classes and participate in laboratories for religious reasons, please advise the instructor within two weeks of the distribution of this course outline so that alternate arrangements can be made. For further information see <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-accomrelig.shtml>

University Grading Scheme

This course follows the University grading scheme outlined in the University Calendar:

A+	90-100%	Excellent: An outstanding performance in which the student demonstrates a superior grasp of the subject matter, and an ability to go beyond the given material in a critical and constructive manner. The student demonstrates a high degree of creative and/or logical thinking, a superior ability to organize, to analyze, and to integrate ideas, and a thorough familiarity with the appropriate literature and techniques.
A	85-89	
A-	80-84	
B+	77-79	Good: A more than adequate performance in which the student demonstrates a thorough grasp of the subject matter, and an ability to organize and examine the material in a critical and constructive manner. The student demonstrates a good understanding of the relevant issues and a familiarity with the appropriate literature and techniques.
B	73-76	
B-	70-72	
C+	67-69	Acceptable: An adequate performance in which the student demonstrates a generally adequate grasp of the subject matter and a moderate ability to examine the material in a critical and constructive manner. The student displays an adequate understanding of the relevant issues, and a general familiarity with the appropriate literature and techniques.
C	63-66	
C-	60-62	
D+	57-59	

D	53-56	Minimally acceptable: A barely adequate performance in which the student demonstrates a familiarity with the subject matter, but whose attempts to examine the material in a critical and constructive manner are only partially successful. The student displays some understanding of the relevant issues, and some familiarity with the appropriate literature and techniques.
D-	50-52	
F	0-49	Fail: An inadequate performance.