

University of Illinois at Chicago  
Marketing 594 / Fall 2012  
Ph.D. Seminar in Consumer Behavior (consumer psychology)

*Instructor:* Alan Malter, PhD  
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*Email:* [amalter@uic.edu](mailto:amalter@uic.edu)

*Time:* Wednesdays, 1:00-3:30  
*Room:* BSB, room 131  
Office hours: after class, or by appointment

**Course Objectives:**

The overarching objective of this course is to “become a life-long learner” of consumer psychology. Specifically, the course aims to further the students’ training in three areas:

1. Mastery of content area. The course will introduce you to selected streams of research in consumer psychology. The readings include classics in the field, up-to-date literature reviews, as well as more recent contemporary works. The coverage of articles, however, is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, the aim is to visit the most thoughtful and insightful papers in selected areas and understand the scholarly inquiry, thought and processes driving the research stream.
2. Critical thinking skills. The course should help you to develop critical thinking skills, which are independent of content area. Scholarly research requires conceptual thinking (ability to identify abstract concepts, develop theoretical models and hypotheses), empirical skills (ability to design and conduct studies), integrative skills (to see the relationship among a group of papers), analytical thinking (deductive reasoning, identify and rule out alternative explanations), etc. The assignments and project work in the course are intended to help you develop such skills that can be applied to any behavioral science topic.
3. Intellectual curiosity as a scholarly habit. Class discussions will encourage the student to develop a mindset of creative inquiry. In every session you will be expected to answer “What new questions are raised by these papers? What implications are there for other streams of research?”

**Class Periods:**

The class will meet as a seminar once a week, starting Wednesday, August 29. The typical class session will consist of two segments. The first part of the class session will be devoted to a summary and synthesis of the week’s assigned readings by a student discussion leader. The second part will be an open discussion of the merits and contributions of each assigned reading and directions for future research. The list of reading materials may be adjusted as we progress through the semester.

**Textbook:**

The recommended text is the (2008) *Handbook of Consumer Psychology*, Curtis P. Haugtvedt, Paul M. Herr, and Frank R. Kardes, eds. Lawrence Erlbaum. A

number of chapters will be assigned from this book, which is also a good resource and starting point to investigate other topics of interest.

### **Additional Readings:**

In addition to the text, students will also be required to read specified articles from leading journals. Everyone will be expected to read the classic empirical articles and conceptual papers. In addition, weekly discussion leaders will be expected to incorporate other relevant articles that provide context and/or the latest advances in research on the topic.

### **Written Assignments due Tuesday at noon prior to class:**

For each of the required readings, each student not taking a turn as weekly discussion leader will be required to email the professor by Tuesday noon with your thoughts on the readings. You may be given specific prompts for your thoughts. These prompts are intended to help you integrate the readings, focus on some topical issues, think of some novel perspectives, etc. In the absence of specific questions or prompts, the default is to prepare a **one-page paper** that answers the following questions about the “classic” article:

1. What makes this research article or chapter a **significant contribution**?
2. Do you agree with how it was characterized in the **literature review chapter**? Why or why not?
3. What are the major (conceptual, methodological, and analytical) **strengths** and major **limitations** of the paper? What ideas do you have for building upon it?
4. What **new research questions** does this paper raise?

### **Weekly Research Discussion Leadership:**

For four of the weekly topics, you will be asked to make a presentation and lead a discussion in class that synthesizes the readings and raises issues and questions for further consideration. Questions should be developed to address key issues discussed in the assigned readings and could seek to integrate the assigned readings with other consumer behavior topics covered in prior weeks. The discussion leader will be required to submit a draft of their questions to the professor via e-mail by **TUESDAY at 12:00 noon** before the Wednesday seminar session. A separate handout describes this assignment in detail.

### **Class Participation:**

Because this is a seminar, your active participation is crucial to the success of this course. You are expected to come to class having carefully read ALL of the required readings for that week and being prepared to discuss them. You may be called on without warning and asked questions about the readings. The quality of your answers and comments in class will figure into this portion of your grade. Please note that this grade is not a function of the *quantity* of comments. It is the quality that counts. Regular

attendance is also important. Credit for attendance will not be given if you arrive more than 10 minutes after the start of class or leave significantly early. Please do not bring in excuses for missed classes. If over the course of the semester you only miss one class, it will not affect your grade (though it will diminish your learning).

### **Compare and Contrast Assignment:**

The purpose of this assignment is to compare an article from a top level (or “A” level) journal to an article on the same topic in a lower ranked journal.

Choose an article on a topic of interest in a top marketing journal (*Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*). This article should be an **empirical** paper – preferably including an experiment. Choose another article on the same topic in a lower ranked journal (*Journal of Business Research*, *Psychology & Marketing*, *Journal of Retailing*).

State the two articles at the top of the page, and then, in one to two pages, address:

- What are the key differences between the two articles?
- How does this inform you concerning the journals?

**In class on SEPTEMBER 19, have a copy of your compare and contrast for everyone and present your key findings/insights from this assignment for about 5-10 minutes.**

For a good example, I suggest looking at the following two articles by the same pair of authors (ideal but hard to find; so usually each article will be by different authors):

Morrin, M. & Ratneshwar, S. (2000). The impact of ambient scent on evaluation, attention, and memory for familiar and unfamiliar brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 49, 157-165.

Morrin, M. & Ratneshwar, S. (2003). Does it make sense to use scents to enhance brand memory? *Journal of Marketing Research*, 15 (February), 10-25.

### **Research Proposal:**

A research paper in the form of a research proposal is due at the end of the semester. The goal is to produce a paper that will be suitable for submission to the annual North American conference of the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) (submission deadline in March 2013). Each student will be required to submit a competitive paper to the 2013 ACR conference, which will be held in Chicago in October 2013. Ideally, the paper will serve as a platform for your further research on the topic, including following through and actually collecting the data as proposed in the paper, which can then be expanded to a journal-length manuscript. I encourage you to choose, in consultation with me, a research problem that is of special interest to you. A one-page description of your proposed topic must be submitted by **Wednesday, October 31.**

As a rough estimate, your final paper should aim for 15-20 double spaced pages of text, 12 point font. I expect the reference list to include at least 15 sources. Some guidelines to help you develop your paper are:

1. Identify a topic that is relevant to consumer behavior, and that could be studied using an experiment or quasi-experiment (lab or field).
2. Explain why this topic is important, relevant, and interesting.
3. Review the relevant literature to learn what is known and what is not known about this topic.
4. Identify one or more novel and specific research questions (hypotheses), and relate them to relevant literatures. Build a logical argument to support your hypotheses.
5. Clearly articulate what the contribution to scholarly knowledge would be if you carried out this research and found support for your hypotheses.
6. Discuss the methodological decisions that need to be made, and describe the pretesting that will be necessary in order to make them.

In lieu of a final exam, students will present their draft papers in a special class session on **Wednesday, December 5** (25-minute presentations), and submit a hard copy of the paper by 12:00 noon on **Friday, December 7**. More detailed guidelines for the presentation and paper, and specific guidelines (the “call for papers”) for ACR will be distributed later in class.

At the end of the Fall semester, each student will receive a course grade of “Incomplete.” A final course grade will be given in March, after each student revises his or her paper (based on my feedback) in the format required to submit to the ACR conference and submits to ACR to be reviewed. Data collection is encouraged and will enhance your chances of acceptance by the ACR conference, but is not required.

### **Course policies:**

On written work: Grammar and spelling should be carefully checked. Any work that you submit must be your own, original work, developed specifically for this course. Copying work from any other source without attribution will be treated as a violation of the University’s Codes on Academic Integrity and dealt with according to UIC policies. For a more complete statement of UIC disciplinary policies, see:

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/dos/studentconduct.html>

### **Disability Services Notification:**

Concerning disabled students, the University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that individuals with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for full access and participation in UIC Programs must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Please contact DRC at (312) 413-2183 (voice) or (312) 413- 0123 (TDD). More details are available at:

[http://www.uic.edu/depts/oar/campus\\_policies/disability\\_notification.html](http://www.uic.edu/depts/oar/campus_policies/disability_notification.html)

**Grading:**

Grades will be based on the following criteria:

Written Weekly Assignments:	10%
Contributions to Class Discussions:	20%
Compare and Contrast assignment	10%
Presentations/Discussion Leadership:	20%
Research Presentation	10%
Research Paper	20%
Research Paper – Final revision for ACR*	10%

\*Note: ACR deadline is in March 2013

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

As a discussion leader, your role is to synthesize the issues raised by the week's readings, critically evaluate the theories and research presented in them, and stimulate discussion. Discussion leading is an important part of the course, and a significant part of your grade. Feedback will help you to do the best possible job. **By 12:00 noon on the Tuesday before your class discussion-leading is scheduled**, submit a detailed outline of the questions and points you plan to raise in class by email. I will get back to you with feedback by the end of that day (10:00 p.m.). See the outline and tips below for help in structuring your presentation.

Part 1: Presentation. This is where you will raise the issues and questions that you want the class discussion to address. Take about 20-25 minutes to do this.

Whatever you do, **do not** use more than 5-10 minutes of this time to summarize the readings. Assume that we've all read them. Your presentation should be devoted to your own thoughts about the week's topic. Evaluate the readings/studies/models. Point out what you see as problems with the theories or the assumption on which the research was based. Relate the readings to literature in your area of expertise. Raise unanswered questions and hypotheses. Suggest implications for future research and theory development, etc.

Part 2: Discussion. Next, about 90 minutes will be devoted to a discussion of the issues you raised, as well as other issues that come up. Your role at this point is to participate in the discussion and keep it going. It is important to come prepared with a list of several questions to pose to the class. Use these to direct the focus of the class discussion and to keep everyone involved.

Suggestions on keeping things interesting: Throughout your presentation and discussion, feel free to be controversial and to state strong opinions. Also, ask specific questions (e.g., "what variables might moderate this effect?") rather than general ones (e.g., "what do you think about this study?"). You may also bring in some popular-press articles that illustrate the issues or effects being discussed as an effective way to keep things interesting.

## INFORMATION SHEET FOR SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Undergrad degree (major, minor, institution, year):

Graduate degree (major, minor, institution, year):

Department at UIC, and year in PhD program:

Prior courses in psychology:

Academic and Industry Work Experience:

Current Research Interests (general, and in CB specifically):