



MKT 688-03
Consumer Behavior Seminar - Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Claudia Townsend
Associate Professor of Marketing

Course meeting: Wednesday 1pm-4pm, Kosar/Epstein 503

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goal of this course is to provide you with an introduction to topics in consumer behavior. As many of you are novices in the area of consumer research, the class will be organized in a way that allows you to (1) gain exposure to a breadth of consumer behavior topics and (2) gain depth in at least two areas of your choice.

The breadth objective will be achieved through our weekly class meetings. To be a student of consumer behavior, one must also know something about the dominant theories in the social sciences. Therefore, the course will cover both classic and more recent consumer behavior publications. You are responsible for all readings. The depth objective will be accomplished through individual development of research proposals.

You will also be responsible for writing a review as if it were submitted to JCR and you were assigned as a reviewer. Reviewing is a critical aspect of your future job as a professor and also enables you to sharpen your analytical skills. Also, by learning how to identify the strengths and flaws in someone else's work you will be able to be more critical of your own.

GRADING:

Class Participation	25%
Reader Responses	10%
Research Proposals (2X25%)	50%
Review	15%

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Session #/Date	Topic	Assignment
1. Aug. 25	Introduction & Overview of Consumer Behavior	
2. Sept. 1	Finance, Money, & Markets	
3. Sept. 8	Knowledge & Learning	
4. Sept. 15	Attitude & Persuasion	
5. Sept. 22	Social Influence & Consumer Behavior	First research ideas
6. Sept. 29	Self Identity & Consumer Behavior	
7. Oct. 6	Signaling via Consumption <i>Assignment of manuscript for review</i>	First Proposal due
8. Oct. 13	Marketing through the Senses	
9. Oct. 20	Emotions	Review due
10. Oct. 27	Consumer Well-being & Prosocial Behavior	
11. Nov. 3	Experiential Consumption	Second research ideas
12. Nov. 10	21st Century Marketing	
13. Nov. 17	Presentations of Second Proposal	Second Proposal due

I. Class Participation (25%)

It is vital that students come to class prepared for discussion. What you get out of this course depends upon what you, and your fellow students, put into it. You cannot expect to develop your research skills by passively attending class and taking careful notes. You should be an active listener, thinking carefully about the concepts and issues raised, and a willing and active participant, able to present your analysis and your viewpoint to the class when opportunity presents itself.

You should be prepared to discuss each article on the syllabus in depth, including your ideas about the contributions and/or shortcomings of each. A good preparation tool is an outline of the hypotheses, study designs, theoretical contributions and limitations of each paper.

We will rotate the discussion leader for each paper.

When you are discussion leader it is your responsibility to:

1. Lead discussion of that paper. You will not lecture to your classmates. Instead, you will be stimulating discussion— everybody will be expected to participate. But it is recommended you come with some questions prepared to motivate discussion as well as your own thoughtful answers.
2. Provide a summary and critique of the paper. This should be no more than two pages single spaced and should include the following:
 1. Summary outline of the theories used, hypotheses, and study designs
 2. Critique of the paper with what you feel are the two greatest contributions and two greatest flaws of the work.
 3. At least two questions to stimulate discussion about the article.

Send this to me by 12pm the day before class (23 hours before class).
Please bring hard copies for everyone to class.

II. Reader Response 10%

When you are NOT discussion leader it is your responsibility to:

Write a reader response for each paper discussed. *Reader responses should be prepared for a person who has read the original article.* Therefore, your write-ups should not be seen as a summary or review of the article. Primary dimensions on which these reader responses will be evaluated are the logic supporting your evaluation of the paper and its contribution, as well as your ability to either constructively critique or build on the work.

Please also include at least

- **One discussion question**
- **One novel research idea inspired by this paper.** You will use these research ideas to come up with your research proposals. So spend time on these.

Note: the discussion section of a paper is generally not the best place to find research ideas. Each critique will be graded on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is only a weak analysis and little to no discussion and 5 represents a rigorous, complete analysis.

Note for week 1 : The readings for week 1 are a bit different. Your reader responses may be more thought pieces as you will be unable to do as much critiquing. Think more about whether you think what they say is still relevant today, how it may change in the future, and if these various outlooks on the field are missing anything critical.

Send this to me by 12pm the day before class (23 hours before class). You can send me one document for all the papers. Please list them in the order as listed on the syllabus with a new page for each one.

III. Research Proposals (2X25%) 50%

Each research proposal should identify a basic problem (you can go outside the topics discussed in class), outline hypotheses, describe appropriate experimental design and procedure to investigate these hypotheses and briefly discuss how you would analyze the data. Your proposal should reflect in-depth reading (beyond what is included in this syllabus) in your selected area. It does not need to have any empirical data collection or analysis. However, you are required to develop a proposal that is detailed enough in terms of hypotheses to be tested, experimental design, method and procedure, so that I am able to assess the proposal carefully and give you constructive comments. The proposal should start with a “contribution statement” which makes it clear how the investigation of this idea would contribute to the current state of literature. It should include a brief literature review. It should provide testable hypotheses as well as detailed description of what a study would look like. For this be as detailed as possible – write it up as you would see it in a journal (sample size, design, etc.). Please include a figure of expected results.

The proposal should be no more than 10 pages long (double space, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, written in either JCR or APA format). See **Appendix I** for basic outline. However, you may

wish to include an appendix that gives more detail on the study stimuli, specific wording of study questions, etc.

Each proposal needs to be unique (i.e., you cannot use something you are already working on, have used for another course, nor revise the first proposal and submit it as the second).

You will have the opportunity to present your second research proposal and receive feedback from class members during the last week of class. You should prepare Powerpoint slides and plan on spending no more than 20 minutes describing your research project to your peers. Your presentation should include a brief review of the relevant literature, the conceptual framework you are proposing/testing (including testable hypotheses), and the experimental design, procedures and stimuli you plan to use for testing the hypotheses.

During the presentation class period, you will each be required to ask one question of every other presenter and make constructive suggestions about their idea. Active participation in talks, from job talks to brownbags, is an essential part of being a good department member. This is your chance to try out the formulation and answering of questions and respond to answers in a non-threatening environment. See Appendix II for guidelines for preparing and responding to academic presentations.

Due dates are as follows:

Ideas: September 22nd and November 3th : In these classes you will have a chance to present research ideas to the group for evaluation and feedback. This is an opportunity but not a requirement. My recommendation is that you come with at least two ideas. For each idea I recommend you think about (and potentially write down):

- The research question (I recommend you examine the literature to ensure it hasn't already been answered.)
- Your hypothesis
- The managerial importance and novelty of this idea
- The theoretical importance and novelty of this idea
- One study design for testing this idea.

Proposals: October 6th: first proposal (email it to me before class and bring a hard copy to class printed double-sided)

November 17th: second proposal (email it to me before class and bring a hard copy to class printed double-sided).

20 minute-presentations with PowerPoint slides will be made in class. See **Appendix II**.

IV. Review 15%

You will serve as a “reviewer” for a paper submitted for consideration at either the *Journal of Marketing Research* or the *Journal of Consumer Research*. Write no more than a three-page review and break your issues into major and minor concerns. See Appendix III for guidelines for writing an academic review. There is also a tutorial on review writing posted on the JCR website (ejcr.org) that I recommend you [read](#).

The review is due **October 20th**.

READINGS AND CLASS SCHEDULE

We will be reading a number of award-winning articles this semester, including winners of the *JCR* Ferber Award, the annual “Best Article in *JCR*” award, and the *JMR* O’Dell award.

- The **Robert Ferber Award** competition is held annually in honor of one of the founders and the second editor of the *Journal of Consumer Research*. The award is given to the best interdisciplinary dissertation article published in the latest volume of *JCR*. The 2019 award will go to the best dissertation article published in 2019.
- The **Best Article in *JCR*** for a given year is chosen by the members of the *JCR* Policy Board after receiving nominations from the Editorial Review Board. It is given for an article published three years previously (so the 2019 award will go to an article published in 2016).
- The **annual William F. O’Dell Award** is given to the article published in the *Journal of Marketing Research* five years previously that has made the most significant, long-term contribution to marketing theory, methodology, and/or practice. The 2019 award will go to an article published in 2014.

** Indicates we will Zoom with the identified author.

Class 1 Aug 25. Introduction and Overview of Consumer Behavior

- Simonson, Itamar, Ziv Carmon, Ravi Dhar, Aimee Drolet, and Stephen M. Nowlis (2001), “Consumer Research: In Search of Identity,” *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52 (1), 249-275.
- MacInnis, Deborah J. and Valerie K. Folkes (2010), “The Disciplinary Status of Consumer Behavior: A Sociology of Science Perspective on Key Controversies,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, (April), 899-914.
- Peraccio, Laura A., Mary France Luce, and Ann L. McGill, (2014), “Building Bridges for an Interconnected Field of Consumer Research,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, (April), 5-8.
- Morales, Andrea, On Amir, and Leonard Lee (2017), “Keeping it Real in Experimental Research – Understanding When, Where, and How to Enhance Realism and Measure Consumer Behavior,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (August), 465-476.

Class 2 Sept 1. Finance, Money, and Markets

- Jane Jeongin Park, Aner Sela, (2018) Not My Type: Why Affective Decision Makers Are Reluctant to Make Financial Decisions, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 45, Issue 2, August Pages 298–319.
- **Tully, Stephanie and Eesha Sharma (2018), “ Context-Dependent Drivers of Discretionary Debt Decisions : Explaining Willingness to Borrow for Experiential Purchases,” *Journal of Consumers Research*, 44, 960-73.
- Shaddy, Franklin, and Anuj K. Shah (2018), “Deciding Who Gets What, Fairly,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45 (4), 833–848.
- Yoon Haewon, Yang Yang, Morewedge Carey K. (2021) “Early Cost Realization and College Choice” *Journal of Marketing Research*, July.

Class 3 Sept 8. Knowledge and Learning

- Alba, Joseph W. and J. Wesley Hutchinson (1988), “Dimensions of Consumer Expertise,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13 (March), 411-454, **(Winner, Best Article in JCR for 1988)**
- Alba, Joseph W. and J. Wesley Hutchinson (2000), “Knowledge Calibration: What Consumers Know and What They Think They Know,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27 (September), 123-156. **(Winner, Best Article in JCR for 2000)**
- Wood, Stacy L., and John G. Lynch, Jr. (2002), “Prior Knowledge and Complacency in New Product Learning,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (December), 416-426.
- **Longoni, Chiara and Luca Cian (2020), “Artificial Intelligence in Utilitarian vs. Hedonic Contexts : The “Word-of-Machine” Effect “ *Journal of Marketing*.

Class 4 Sept 15. Attitude and Persuasion

- Petty, Richard E., John T. Cacioppo, and David Schumann (1983), “Central and Peripheral Routes to Advertising Effectiveness: The Moderating Role of Involvement,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10 (September), 135-146.
- Friestad, Marian and Peter Wright (1994), “The Persuasion Knowledge Model: How People Cope with Persuasion Attempts,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12 (June), 1-31.
- Vosgerau, Joachim and Claude Messner (2010), “Cognitive Inertia and the Implicit Association Test,” *Journal of Marketing Research*, 47 (April), 347-386.
 - Review Project Implicit at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/> and perform the IAT. Bring your results.
- Goldstein, Noah J., Robert J. Cialdini, and Vidas Griskevicius (2008), “A Room with a Viewpoint: Using Social Norms to Motivate Environmental Conservation in Hotels,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35 (October), 472-482. **(Winner Best Article in JCR for 2008)**

Class 5 Sept 22. Social Influence and Consumer Behavior

- Ariely, Dan and Jonathan Levav (2000), "Sequential Choice in Group Settings: Taking the Road Less Traveled and Less Enjoyed," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27 (December), 279-290.
- **Mourey, J. A., Olson, J.G. & Carolyn Yoon (2017), "Products as Pals: Engaging with Anthropomorphic Products Mitigates the Effects of Social Exclusion," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (2), 414-431.
- Argo, Jennifer J., Darren W. Dahl, and Rajesh Manchanda (2005), "The Influence of a Mere Social Presence in a Retail Context," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (September), 207-212.
- Jayati Sinha, Fang-Chi Lu, (2019) "Ignored or Rejected: Retail Exclusion Effects on Construal Levels and Consumer Responses to Compensation," *Journal of Consumer Research*.
- Melnyk, Vladimir, François A. Carrillat, and Valentyna Melnyk (2021), "The Influence of Social Norms on Consumer Behavior: A Meta-Analysis" *Journal of Marketing*.

Class 6 Sept 29. Consumer Self Identity

- Belk Russell, W. (1988), "Possessions and the Extended Self," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (2), 139-68.
- Aaker, Jennifer (1997), "Dimensions of Brand Personality," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34 (3), 347-56.
- Reed II, Americus (2004), "Activating the Self-Importance of Consumer Selves: Exploring Identity Salience Effects on Judgments," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (2), 286-95. **Ferber Award Winner**
- **Bhattacharjee, Amit K., Jonah A. Berger, and Geeta Menon (2014), "When Identity Marketing Backfires: Consumer Agency in Identity Expression," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41 (2), 294-309.

Class 7 Oct. 6. Signaling via Consumption

- Warren, Caleb and Margaret C. Campbell (2014), "What Makes Things Cool? How Autonomy Influences Perceived Coolness," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41 (August), 543-63. **(Winner, 2015 Ferber Award)**
- Han, Young Jee, Joseph C. Nunes, and Xavier Drèze (2010), "Signaling Status with Luxury Goods: The Role of Brand Prominence," *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (4), 15-30
- **Bellezza, Silvia, Neeru Paharia, and Anat Keinan (2017), "Conspicuous Consumption of Time: When Busyness and Lack of Leisure Time Become a Status Symbol," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (June), 118-138 **(Honorable Mention, 2018 Ferber Award)**
- Bellezza, Silvia and Jonah Berger, (2020) "Trickle-Round Signals: When Low Status Is Mixed with High" *Journal of Consumer Research*.
- Acar, Oguz A. Darren W. Dahl, Cristoph Fuchs, Martin Schreier, "The Signal Value of Crowdfunded Products," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 58, 4, 644-661.

Class 8 Oct 13. Marketing through the Senses

- **Peck, Joann, and Suzanne B. Shu (2009). "The Effect of Mere Touch on Perceived Ownership," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (Oct), 434-447.

- Aparna A. Labroo, Jesper H. Nielsen, (2010) Half the Thrill Is in the Chase: Twisted Inferences from Embodied Cognitions and Brand Evaluation, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 37, Issue 1, June, 143–158.
- Ryan S Elder, Ann E Schlosser, Morgan Poor, Lidan Xu, (2017) So Close I Can Almost Sense It: The Interplay between Sensory Imagery and Psychological Distance, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 44, Issue 4, December, 877–894.
- Biswas, D., and Szocs, C. (2019). The Smell of Healthy Choices: Cross-Modal Sensory Compensation Effects of Ambient Scent on Food Purchases. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 56(1), 123–141. (most read article in JMR in past 6 months when it was published)

Class 9. Oct 20. Emotions

- Aparna A. Labroo, Vanessa M. Patrick (2009) Psychological Distancing: Why Happiness Helps You See the Big Picture, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 35, Issue 5, February 800–809.
- Kelly Goldsmith, Eunice Kim Cho, and Ravi Dhar (2012), “When Guilt Begets Pleasure: The Positive Effect of a Negative Emotion,” *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49 (December), 872-881.
- ****Salerno, Anthony**, Juliano Laran, and Chris Janiszewski (2019), “The Bad Can Be Good: When Benign and Malicious Envy *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 46, Issue 2, August 2019, Pages 388–405.
- Huang Feifei, Fishbach Ayelet (2021), “Feeling Lonely Increases Interest in Previously Owned Products”. *Journal of Marketing Research*, July.

Class 10 Oct 27. Consumer Well-being and Prosocial Behavior

- Aaker, Jennifer, Kathleen D. Vohs and Cassie Mogilner (2010), “ Nonprofits are seen as Warm and For-Profits as Competent : Firm Stereotypes Matter, ” *Journal of Consumer Research*, August, 224-37.
- Lee, Saerom, Lisa Bolton, and Karen Page Winterich, (2017), “To Profit or Not to Profit? The Role of Greed Perceptions in Consumer Support for Social Ventures,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (December), 853-876.
- Amit Bhattacharjee, Cassie Mogilner, (2014) Happiness from Ordinary and Extraordinary Experiences, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 41, Issue 1, 1 June 2014, 1–17 **(2017 Best Paper Award)**
- Weingarten, Evan and Joseph Goodman, “ Re-examining the Experiential Advantage in Consumption : A Meta-Analysis and Review, ” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 47, 6, April, 855-877.
 - Also listen to author interview : <https://consumerresearcher.com/meta-analyzing-experience>

Class 11 Nov 3. Experiential Consumption

- Holbrook, Morris B. and Elizabeth Hirschman (1982), “The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings and Fun,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9, 132-140.

- Leonardo Nicolao, Julie R. Irwin, Joseph K. Goodman, (2009) Happiness for Sale: Do Experiential Purchases Make Consumers Happier than Material Purchases?, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 36, Issue 2, August, 188–198.
- Cindy Chan, Cassie Mogilner, (2017) Experiential Gifts Foster Stronger Social Relationships Than Material Gifts, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 43, Issue 6, April, 913–931. **Ferber Award Winner**
- **Alixandra Barasch, Gal Zauberman, Kristin Diehl, (2018), “ How the Intention to Share Can Undermine Enjoyment: Photo-Taking Goals and Evaluation of Experiences,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, Volume 44, Issue 6, April, 1220–1237.

Class 12, Nov 10. 21st Century Marketing

- Jonah Berger, Jonah and Katherine L. Milkman (2009) “What Makes Online Content Viral?” *Journal of Marketing Research* Vol. 49, No. 2, April **JMR O’Dell Award**
- Kidwell, Blair, Robert A. Farmer, and David M. Hardesty (2013) “Getting Liberals and Conservatives to Go Green: Political Ideology and Congruent Appeals,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (August), 350-67.
- Trudel, Remi, Jennifer J. Argo, and Matthew D. Meng (2016), “The Recycled Self: Consumers’ Disposal Decisions of Identity-Linked Products,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43 (August), 246-264.
- **Maria A Rodas, Deborah Roedder John, Carlos J Torelli, (2021), “Building Brands for the Emerging Bicultural Market: The Appeal of Paradox Brands,” *Journal of Consumer Research*,

** Indicates we will Zoom with the identified author.

Appendix I
Guidelines for Writing a Behavioral Paper
(Adapted from Jim Bettman, Duke University)

- Introduction
 - Positioning
 - Importance - big picture - knowing the literature and important issues
 - State purpose early and often
 - Issue in marketing/conceptual issue/combination of the two
 - Not no one has studied this (as the main reason)
 - Overview of the paper
- Literature Review and Hypotheses
 - Use only what you need for the case at hand
 - Use subheads and overviews of coming points - try to have a logical flow
 - Summarize main points you want the reader to get
 - Hypotheses - explicit or not?
- Method
 - Overview
 - Sections - see psychology journals
 - Subjects, Design, Procedure, Measures, Analyses
- Results
 - Only present results relevant to hypotheses
 - Organize by H (repeat) or by major dependent variable
 - Try to present in some logical flow
 - Use tables and figures
 - Discuss after presenting - discussion section for each study
- Overall Discussion
 - Summary
 - Relate back to introduction and purpose - conclusions
 - Some issues better in discussion than up front
- References
 - Pick a style and stick with it – in this class we will use the *JCR* style guide available on the *JCR* website.

Appendix II
Guidelines for Preparing an Academic Presentation
(Adapted from Cait Lamberton, University of Pittsburgh)

The main thing to keep in mind as you prepare to present your work at an academic conference is that you have a limited amount of time (typically 15-20 minutes) in which to convey the main ideas. So be succinct! You cannot discuss all of the details of your work. The most common mistake that I see at conferences is poor time management – specifically, overkill on the literature review and hypotheses. It is important that you embed your work in the relevant theoretical network, but it is critical that you leave sufficient time to convince the audience that your work makes a contribution to the field’s body of knowledge. This is done by presenting your empirical work.

The key aspects of your presentation and ballpark estimates for time allocation are below:

1-2 minutes	The Problem – What is the phenomenon and why is it interesting?
3-5 minutes	Literature review/hypothesis development – Focus only on the most relevant literature.
8-10 minutes	Empirical work – For our class, discuss the study that you will run to test your hypothesis. BE SPECIFIC. Be sure to explain how the theoretical components of the paper are operationalized...specifically and clearly. Though you will likely not have data at this point, discuss how you will analyze the data you collect and what you anticipate finding in the results. Also, take this opportunity to practice explaining graphs. Take your time. Be clear.
2-3 minutes	Conclusions/Implications – Clearly articulate the theoretical and practical contributions. Also, go beyond what’s written to CONNECT this work to other papers we’ve read in class. Does it converge with prior work? Diverge? Challenge? Explain? Extend?
1-2 minutes	Next steps – How would you follow up on this work?
Questions	Learn how to respond to questions and suggestions. We’ll discuss this.

As an Audience Member: Asking Questions and Providing Suggestions

Each non-presenter will be required to ask a question or give a suggestion for each presentation. Remember that questions should be phrased in constructive ways. Also, remember that your response to an answer is important; if you get a bad answer, is it because your question was unclear? Or is it because the speaker simply didn’t answer your question? At what point is it time to accept the answer as provided or move the discussion off-line? Understanding these dynamics is crucial to being a good audience member and departmental citizen.

Appendix III
Guidelines for Critiquing a Research Article
(Adapted from Ryan Hamilton, Emory University)

Things to remember when writing a review:

1. You, as a reviewer, do NOT get to decide whether a paper is published or not. Your role is to provide a recommendation to the Editor, who makes the final decision. This means that your review should not include a disposition (e.g., don't say, "This paper shouldn't be published" in the review itself.) Include a separate, confidential note to the editor with your recommendation. In the note to the editor, include a specific recommendation and a brief justification for your recommendation. Don't repeat a lot of information you included in your review—the editor will read your review. At most journals, the possible outcomes are:
 - a. Accept – No changes need to be made. The paper can be published as-is.
 - b. Conditional Accept – Minor changes need to be made. Minor changes include things like flow, clarity, and length-to-contribution ratio (i.e., make it shorter).
 - c. Revise and Resubmit – Some major concerns need to be addressed. Major concerns include things like problems with the empirical results (e.g., incorrect statistical tests, problematic manipulations), problems with the theory (e.g., insufficient explanation, insufficient support for propositions), or problems with contribution (e.g., too much like other published work, nothing surprising)
 - d. Risky Revision – Many major concerns. This is a signal that even though a revision has been invited, the bar for making it to the next round is substantial.
 - e. Reject and Resubmit – Many major concerns. A substantially new and different manuscript is expected to be returned.
 - f. Reject – Insurmountable problems. No amount of change is likely to fix it. Don't send it back to this journal.
2. There are real people on the other side of that nameless manuscript. Because reviews are double blind, some people feel licensed to be unnecessarily cruel or dismissive. Remember that the manuscript—even if, in your opinion, it is objectively bad—was likely the result of months or years of work by the authors. This does not mean that you should go easy on the manuscript. The authors, the editor, and the field as a whole deserve an honest assessment of the quality of the work. But make your criticism constructive and frame it in a way that is helpful rather than petty and destructive.
 - a. Recognize that most of your review is an expression of your opinion—usually you are not communicating facts. Use language appropriate for expressing opinions.
 - b. When making criticisms and suggestions, focus on the manuscript, not the authors. Don't say, "You claim X, but this claim is not well supported." Instead, say, "The manuscript claims X, but the support for this claim was unclear." Criticisms are easier to take if they don't feel like personal attacks.

- c. Don't make demands of the authors, point out problems and make suggestions for how they can be resolved. Don't say, "You must do X." Instead, say, "One way to resolve this would be to do X."
 - d. Because the decision to reject a paper lies with the Editor, even if you see nothing redeemable in a manuscript, you could still be asked to read the same work again in a subsequent round. Resist the natural urge to be dismissive once you have decided you are going to recommend rejection. Even for manuscripts you don't like, focus on providing suggestions that will improve the paper. If you believe there is nothing that the authors could do to make it publishable, what would make it less bad?
- 3. Take the authors' perspective when making your suggestions. As an author, when you read a review, you typically want to know what can be done to resolve the reviewer's concern. Whenever you point out a problem, suggest ways that the authors could convince you. If you call for more data, be specific about what types of data would be sufficient to convince you. If you call for a more detailed theoretical account, be specific about what details are lacking. What would the improved theory look like?
- 4. Be thorough on your first-round reviews. The implicit contract between reviewers and authors is that you won't raise issues in subsequent rounds that weren't raised in the first round. If a revision has caused new problems, then obviously those should be raised. But authors will rightly think it unfair if they have worked to address all the concerns you raised and then, after they have put in all that work, you come back with a new list of problems that were all there in the original manuscript. Authors (and Editors) can become rightly concerned that you could just coming up with new concerns at every round and that there will never be a conclusion.
- 5. Refer to problems with specific page numbers where appropriate. Pull quotes from the manuscript to illustrate the points you are trying to make. Help the authors to know exactly what you are talking about.

How to organize a review:

There is no one right way to write a review. Unlike research articles, there is not a set format which everyone follows. Your goal should be to make things as clear and easy to follow as possible. Try to group concerns and suggestions together into themes. Here's one way to organize a review:

1. *Note to the Editor*. This is a very brief paragraph giving the Editor your recommendation (e.g., I recommend a Revise and Resubmit) and a justification for the recommendation (e.g., Although the topic is interesting and the data is interesting, the theory needs to be more specific and to build more on previous theory). Do not reiterate a lot of the information from the review—the Editor will read the review. Note: This section is confidential, the authors will not see any of this information unless the Editor chooses

to share it (e.g., the Editor might say, “Reviewer 2 recommends that the paper be rejected.”).

2. *Note to the Authors* (THIS is the review)

One good way to start a review is by summarizing the purpose of the article and its findings and contribution as you see them. Don’t just pull some sentences from the abstract of the paper—restate the main ideas in your own words. This can help the authors by letting them know whether a thorough reader (you) understands the main ideas of the paper in the way the authors had intended.

You should also try to say something positive upfront about the paper: Is the topic interesting? Is the paper generally well written? Clever studies? Most of the review will inevitably be about things that could be improved. Try to take some time and reassure the authors that all their efforts didn’t produce something that was totally worthless. Give them something to build on as they go forward.

Try to cover these topics:

- *Contribution.* Is this work too similar to what we already know? Is this a fundamental problem with the paper, or could a better positioning emphasize what is new and interesting? (In other words, is this just a communications problem?) Is there anything that would convince you that the contribution is larger? Would you be convinced if they went out and talked to managers and the managers were surprised by the findings? Or if they cited more papers that predicted something different from what they find?
- *Conceptual Issues.* Here you organize some of your criticisms of the theory. Was it confusing or incomplete? Are the predictions logical and well supported? Do they cite the relevant papers from the literature? Are there important moderators or boundary conditions they should be considering?
- *Empirical Issues.* Are there problems with the experiments? Were they confusing? Was the link back to the theory unclear? Were all the experiments necessary? Were there other experiments that would improve things?
- *Minor Issues.* This is where you put suggestions dealing with the flow of the paper, where you sometimes suggest other papers they should investigate, or point out typographical errors that were significant enough to cause the reader some confusion.

It is fairly standard to end the review by wishing the authors luck with their research. This can be an important reminder to the reviewer, too: Is this review written in the spirit of improving the manuscript and moving it closer to being published? Or were you trying to push the research in a direction the authors clearly did not want to go?