CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR II

Course Logistics:

Classroom: TBD
Dates: See detailed calendar
Office Hours: By appointment only

Instructor:

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Course objectives

- Establish a strong theoretical and empirical foundation in psychology, marketing, and key areas of behavioral science research relevant to consumer behavior.
- Develop the ability to critically evaluate theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and empirical findings in behavioral research.
- Strengthen skills in conceptualizing, operationalizing, and developing research ideas, while identifying opportunities for original contributions to the field.
- Enhance the ability to systematically review, synthesize, and present research, fostering rigorous academic discourse and engagement.

Course description

This Ph.D. seminar provides a rigorous foundation for critical thinking and research on the psychological and behavioral underpinnings of consumer behavior. The course explores key theoretical frameworks, empirical research, and methodological approaches drawn from marketing, psychology, and related disciplines.

Seminars will center on in-depth discussions of assigned readings, with each session organized around a foundational topic in consumer behavior research. Students will be expected to critically evaluate the theoretical contributions, methodological rigor, and empirical support of each paper. Special emphasis will be placed on the craft of academic writing, examining how research ideas are structured and communicated effectively.

To develop essential research skills, the course includes exercises in reviewing, synthesizing, and presenting research, helping students refine their ability to engage with the academic literature and contribute meaningfully to scholarly discourse. As a culminating component, students will integrate the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course to develop a research proposal, positioning their ideas within the broader field of consumer behavior.

Grading
- Class participation: 40%
- Discussion sheets of assigned readings: 10%
- Research paper: 50%

Class participation (40%). Individual participation will be evaluated based on your ability to lead and contribute to an engaging and informative discussion during seminars. There are two aspects of this class participation. First, for some readings, you will briefly introduce the article and then lead the entire discussion of the article. Second, for all other readings, you will act as a discussant rather than leader. You should come to the seminar prepared to present your perspective about the major ideas, contributions, and/or shortcomings of each article. You must actively listen and think critically about the concepts and issues discussed, and for each reading, you must be willing and able to present your analysis and viewpoint to the class.

Discussion Sheets of Assigned Readings (10%). It is very important that you read all

of the assigned papers thoroughly. They will form the basis for the class discussion. For each topic, I have made a conscious effort to select review or conceptual papers that provide a broad overview, classic empirical papers, and contemporary empirical papers.

To help you organize and clarify your thoughts about the readings, you must submit a Discussion Sheet for each assigned paper unless specified otherwise. Discussion Sheets are brief summaries (1-2 pages, single-spaced) of the key aspects of the article, any questions that arise from the article, and any further thoughts that the article inspires. The summary is intended to assist you in introducing the article to the class and discussing it. Do not use summaries that students wrote in previous years or generative AI platforms (e.g., ChatGPT); writing the summaries yourself is what will help you form clear thoughts about the papers. Note: Discussion Sheets must be handed in to the professor before each seminar starts.

Research Proposal Paper (50%). Each student will develop a research proposal addressing a novel and meaningful question in consumer behavior. The proposal should introduce an original research idea, situating it within existing literature and outlining a structured plan for empirical investigation.

Specifically, the proposal should:

- **Define the research question** and provide a concise review of relevant literature. This review should establish the study's contribution rather than serve as an exhaustive summary, focusing on (a) how the research builds on prior work and (b) how it informs hypothesis development.
- **Develop a conceptual model**, clearly identifying and defining the key constructs under investigation.
- **Formulate testable hypotheses**, grounded in logical reasoning and existing research, that articulate expected relationships within the conceptual model.
- **Design a research plan** to empirically test these hypotheses through at least three studies. This section should specify (a) the study design, (b) the procedures participants will follow, and (c) the independent, dependent, mediator, moderator, and control variables, including how they will be manipulated or measured.
- **Outline the data analysis strategy**, detailing the statistical techniques that will be used to evaluate the hypotheses.

Structure this research proposal similarly to an academic journal article (e.g., JCR). Actual data collection is not required.

The proposal will be assessed based on:
  (a) Completion of key components: How well each of the above tasks is executed.
  (b) Creativity and originality: The extent to which the project presents an innovative and thought-provoking research idea.
  (c) Logical and empirical grounding: The use of sound reasoning and established research principles to develop the study.
  (d) Clarity and effectiveness of writing: The proposal should be well-organized, articulate, and adhere to academic writing standards

The evaluation criteria will align closely with those applied to the academic papers discussed throughout the course.

Classroom Etiquette

Checking and/or using a mobile phone during class is extremely rude and disrespectful to others. Such behavior is strictly forbidden during our seminars, and failure to fully engage in the discussions at all times will result in a grade of zero for class participation.

Faculty Bio
I am a social scientist and Associate Professor of Marketing at Bocconi University in Milan, Italy. I conduct interdisciplinary, empirical research that investigates adoption of artificial intelligence as a tool for social good, with direct applications for companies, law, and policy. A secondary area of research looks at the determinants of positive behavior change and the drivers of sustainability and climate action.

Sessions by Topic & Assigned Readings
subject to change

Session 1: Prospect Theory & Heuristics

Thaler, R. H. (1999). Mental accounting matters. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 12(3), 183-206

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases: Biases in judgments reveal some heuristics of thinking under uncertainty. *Science*, 185 (4157).

Gigerenzer, G. (1991). How to Make Cognitive Illusions Disappear: Beyond 'Heuristics and Biases.' *European Review of Social Psychology*, 2 (1), 83-115.

Session 2: Forecasts & Predictions & Belief Update

Levine, L. J., Lench, H. C., Kaplan, R. L., & Safer, M. A. (2012). Accuracy and artifact: reexamining the intensity bias in affective forecasting. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *103*(4), 584.

Vlasceanu, M., Morais, M. J., & Coman, A. (2021). The Effect of Prediction Error on Belief Update Across the Political Spectrum. *Psychological Science*, *32*(6), 916-933.

Van Bavel, J. J., Rathje, S., Vlasceanu, M., & Pretus, C. (2024). Updating the identity-based model of belief: From false belief to the spread of misinformation. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 101787.

Session 3: AI & Technology

Tully, S., Longoni, C., & Appel, G. (2025). Lower Artificial Intelligence Literacy Predicts Greater AI Receptivity. *Journal of Marketing.*

Castelo, N., Bos, M. W., & Lehmann, D. R. (2019). Task-dependent algorithm aversion. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *56*(5), 809-825.

Bonnefon, J. F., Rahwan, I., & Shariff, A. (2024). The moral psychology of Artificial Intelligence. *Annual review of psychology*, *75*(1), 653-675.

Hermann, E., Williams, G. Y., & Puntoni, S. (2024). Deploying artificial intelligence in services to AID vulnerable consumers. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *52*(5), 1431-1451.

Session 4: Sustainability & Climate Change

Xu, H., & Bolton, L. E. (2024). How do consumers react to production waste?.*Journal of Consumer Research*, *51*(2), 212-237.

White, K., Habib, R., & Hardisty, D. J. (2019). How to SHIFT consumer behaviors to be more sustainable: A literature review and guiding framework. *Journal of Marketing*, *83*(3), 22-49.

White, K., Cakanlar, A., Sethi, S., & Trudel, R. (2025). The past, present, and future of sustainability marketing: How did we get here and where might we go?. *Journal of Business Research*, *187*, 115056.

Session 5: Research Proposal Workshop

Session 6: Morality OR Group Processes