

An Annotated Syllabus for Many College Courses*

- **Including courses that . . .**
 - Range in size from 20-200 students,
 - Involve class participation,
 - Have many non-native English speakers,
 - Are mixed with both grads and undergrads, or
 - Have a lot of students who are super serious about grades

It's useful to have your most recent syllabus revision listed by its date (instead of by its version number)

Professor Wansink
8-21-17

Consumer Behavior



Professor Brian Wansink
AEM 3440/6440
Fall 2017

Office Hours: Monday 4:15-6:45
or by appointment
Class Previews: MW 7:30-8:30 Warren 25
Phone: 254-6302; Warren 475H

Non-native English speakers and shy students have a hard time participating in large classes. Class Previews help them. An hour before each class, I hold a Class Preview that tells people the discussion questions I'll be asking that day, and then we discuss them ahead of time. Anyone's welcome to show up.

Teaching Assistants

Corky Lang; ejw104@cornell.edu; Mon and Wed in Warren 130. Time TBD
Lesley West; mhk268@cornell.edu; Tues and Thurs in Warren 130. Time TBD

For large classes, try to have TA office hours every day (or M-Th)

Students ask: "What's this class about?" & "What will we do in class?" One intro paragraph can answer both.

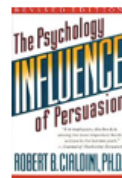
The first objective of this course is to develop a useful, conceptual understanding of the problems and strategies associated with the psychology behind consumer behavior. The second objective is to help provide frameworks that will enable you to responsibly, systematically, and creatively address these issues. As a result, the focus of this course will be as much on planning and implementation as on conceptual analysis. Because of this, the more theoretical readings from the packet are supplemented with handouts dealing with more practical issues. During the semester, our class sessions will primarily entail demonstrations, lecture-discussions, and in-class exercises.

Most of the assignments are tool-based. You will read about how to use the tool – on your own – in order to do the assignment (it will not be explained in prior class). We will then discuss the tool and your assignment the day you turn it in.

Required Reading

Books or things they need to buy is listed on front page.

- 1) Journal articles and cases in the course folder on the web or handed out in class
- 2) *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, Robert Cialdini, (any edition).
- 3) *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*, Paco Underhill
- 4) *Slim by Design: Mindless Eating Solutions to Everyday Life*, Brian Wansink



AEM 3440 Course Requirements and Evaluations

By this point in your education, it should be evident that what you get out of a course is largely determined by what you put into it. If you put forth your best effort, it should be a rewarding experience. There are four course requirements. Further detail will be provided in class.



Try to be super specific about what you expect for an A assignment, and what your policy is on late assignments and missed classes.

1. Assignments. Assignments are 1-2 pages and focus on original insights, observations, and applications. They can be either typed or handwritten, but they must be on time. Hard copies (not e-mails) of all of the assignments and exams will be due immediately before the beginning of the assigned class. This is the way top business school programs operate: Assignments not turned in before the beginning of the class period will not be graded. Before you do each assignment, you will need to read the methodology article explaining the technique. These are not easy articles, and we will not go over the techniques until the day the assignments are due. If you cannot make it to class, send your assignment in with a friend. At the beginning of class, these assignments are given to graders and then returned to you at the next class session. These seven short assignments are each worth 5% of your grade. At the end of the semester, each student's assignment with the lowest score will be dropped.

Letting students drop their lowest scoring assignment reduces their anxiety and the pressure they feel.

I'll hand out a copy of a past quiz, so they can see the types of questions

2. Reading Quiz and Application. There are three books for this course. They can be bought, downloaded, or borrowed. For two of the books, *Why We Buy* and *Slim by Design*, there will be a 10 question in-class, open-note (but not open-book) reading quiz. The third book, *Influence* will be the focus of one of the assignments.

Rather than having both the final exam and their project due at the end of the semester, I frontload the course with the most work and move their project up to the half-way point.

3. Integrative Midterm Project. This integrative assignment will involve pulling together the various elements of this course (most notably Laddering, Prototyping, and Behavioral Event Modeling) and directing them toward helping a person or segment of people to modify their behavior in a constructive manner. The project will be fully described in class. Two copies will be turned in.

By having students turn in two copies of their project (one to grade and one to file), it helps ensure the same projects don't show up year after year.

4. Take-Home Exam. A take-home exam will be handed out the Monday before Thanksgiving. This exam will be a mixture of short essay and mini-case analyses and will focus on building theories of how consumers behave in different situations. The students who will do the best on this exam are those who know the consumer behavior principles that are operating in a given situation and are creative in thinking how they, as a manager, would respond to the scenarios presented. Two copies will be turned in.

5. Class Contribution This is a screen-down, no-laptop course. Adequate preparation and full participation is assumed. In addition, I view prompt attendance as a signal of how involved you wish to be in the discussion. If you are unprepared for a class, or if you think you might miss a class or be late for one, please let me know prior to that class. Occasionally, we will conduct exercises in class which will count for that day's participation. If you let me know about your absence ahead of time, you will have the opportunity to make that day up with a short write-up about that day's readings. Class contribution is 15% of your grade and can be the difference between an A- and a C+.

I have a screen-down, no-laptop policy. If people say they are taking notes, I ask them to send me the notes after class to see if what I'm teaching is coming across like I hope.

Class insight cards can give class contribution points to well-prepared, but shy students.

To help with your contribution, and to reward those who attend class, you will be asked to complete in-class Insight Cards (5-10 times during the semester). These could be relevant to a reading for the day, they could be the application of a principle, or they could involve an unusual behavioral observation. These will be worth 0, 1/2, or 1 point of contribution. The majority of insights (about 60%) will receive 1/2 point, but the most remarkable Insight Cards will receive 1 point and the least will receive 0 points.

Extra credit opportunities are great. It really helps reduce student anxiety.

6. Extra Credit Workshop Studies. Up to five optional extra credit studies will be offered at different points in the course. These will each be 45 minutes long and will be held at different announced times throughout the semester and are optional. A student receives 1 extra credit point per study. If a student still wants to receive extra credit but does not wish to be involved in the studies, he or she has the option of writing a two-page research paper (within a week of that study) which exhibits a commensurate level of understanding of that topic under examination.

Final grades are based on the designations and standards published in the student handbook. Grades are assigned according to how well you have satisfied the course requirements. Final grades are based on my perceptions of your performance on the four main requirements, according to the following weights:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. Assignments | | (35%) |
| Why We Buy | 5% | |
| Laddering Assignment | 5% | |
| Prototyping | 5% | |
| Inside Sources | 5% | |
| The Story Telling Method | 5% | |
| Ad/Influence Analysis | 5% | |
| Behavioral Event Modeling | 5% | |
| 2. Reading Quiz & Application | | (10%) |
| Why We Buy | 5% | |
| Slim by Design | 5% | |
| 3. Integrative Midterm Project | | (20%) |
| 4. Take-home Exam: | | (20%) |
| 5. Class contribution & involvement | | (15%) |
| [6. Extra Credit Workshop Studies | 0-5%] | |



If your course is cross-listed with both undergrads and grads, the graduate students will need to do something more (usually about 20-25% more). I also have four specialized class sessions only for them.

AEM 6440 Course Requirements and Evaluations

There are a number of graduate students in this course and the code for it is AEM 6440. In addition to the requirements for AEM 3440, people receiving graduate credit for the course are required to write a paper that will help establish them as an expert in their field. To help them accomplish this, we will have three short workshops together as well as brief one-on-one meetings. The article will involve taking your choice of one of four research tools (laddering, prototyping, story telling, or behavioral event modeling) and introducing and explaining this tool – and given relevant examples – to others in your chosen field. This could be marketing, nutrition, food design, textiles, sociology, communication, behavioral economics and so on.

Because one way to begin building a reputation as an expert within your field is to publish, your objective will be to target a applied journal in your chosen field and to write the article in the same style and tone as other articles in that journal (and a similar length). You will then submit it before the end of the course. We will work on this in the workshops on one-on-one, so it is nothing to be nervous or intimidated about. The paper represents 20% of your grade, and the other points will be scaled down accordingly. It should be submitted to the journal and submitted to me by December 15th.

Course Organization and Class Sessions

For each class session there will be required readings in the class folder on Blackboard associated with the topic for the day and about assignments associated with that day. In addition, there will generally be a worksheet associated with each day. Printing the worksheet out before class will provide a useful means to follow the discussion in each class.

Our schedule allows us the flexibility to integrate up to two relevant guest speakers in to the course ("Consumer Behavior Roundtables"). To accommodate these opportunities, the last sessions of

the course are flexibly designed to be moved forward and the rest of the scheduled sessions shifted backward to accommodate unique opportunities that can arise during the semester.

COURSE OUTLINE

Part 1: Understanding Customers

Aug 23 An Overview of Consumer Behavior:
Aug 28 Why Consumers Buy – Assignment Due
Article: Why We Kick the Tires
Aug 30 Why Brands Die
Article: Can My Brand Be Saved?
Why Brands Die
Revitalizing Mature Brands



Part 2: Meaningfully Segmenting Customers

Sept 4 No Class – Labor Day Break
Sept 6 Laddering – Assignment Due
Article: Laddering
Sept 11 Segmentation and Positioning
Article: Segmentation
Laddering Mature Brands
Sept 13 TAs will be available to help with prototyping assignment (opt)
Sept 18 Prototyping Target Customers - Assignment Due
Article: Prototyping Target Customers
Sept 19 Why We Buy
Book: Book Quiz & Application
Sept 20 Qualitative Marketing Research
Article: Convenience Panels
Listening to the Consumer
Sept 25 Quantitative Marketing Research
Articles: Generating Consumer Insights
Locating and leveraging insights from inside sources
Assignment: Complete Inside Sources Assignment (5 points)



I try to organize the course into very discrete sections. This way I can frequently review each section in class before I start a new one. This way it very discretely shows how they build on each other.

Part 3: Predicting Behavior

Sept 27	Complex Decision Making
Oct 2	Low Involvement Decision Making Article: Environmental Cues
Oct 4	Diffusion and World-of-Mouth Marketing
Oct 9	No Class – Fall Break
Oct 11	Integrative Assignment Due - Two copies Consumer
Oct 16	Learning, Habit, and Brand Loyalty



Part 4: Changing Attitudes

Oct 18	Ad/Influence ₂ (Last names M-Z): Authority, Commnt, & Social Proof - <u>Assignment Due</u> Book: Cialdini: Chapters 6, 3, and 4
Oct 23	Ad/Influence ₁ (Last names A-L): Liking, Reciprocity, & Scarcity - <u>Assignment Due</u> Book: Cialdini: Chapters 2, 5, and 7
Oct 25	Shaping Your Attitudes and Your Restaurant Ordering: Guest speaker Gregg Rapp , World's Premier Menu Engineer (also see <i>Slim by Design</i> , p. 80)
Oct 30	Predicting Ad Effectiveness (Cool points for anyone who wears a Halloween costume other than Prof)



Part 5: Using Consumer Behavior to Improve Your Life and Others

Nov 1	Behavioral Event Modeling – <u>Assignment Due</u> Article: Behavioral Event Modeling
Nov 6	Mindless Eating and Slim by Design Book: Wansink: Chapters 1-2 Optional: <i>Mindless Eating</i>



The Final Project was renamed “Integrative Assignment” and moved to the middle of the semester. They have to work a lot harder early on in the course, but the quality goes up, and their Finals Week stress level goes down.

You can get the most from a guest speaker’s visit if – before class -- you require students to read something written and published about the guest speaker. (It also makes the guest speaker more of a celebrity). On the day they speak, I will usually show a short Youtube clip of them before introducing them.

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Nov 8	The Story Telling Method of Insight Generation -- <u>Assignment Due</u> Article: The Story Telling Method
Nov 13	In-Class Exercise (Extra credit)
Nov 15	Slim By Design Blueprints <i>Book:</i> Wansink: Chapters 3-7 Book Quiz and Application
Nov 20	The Myths of Consumer Behavior: <i>Article:</i> Eat Less From Mindless Eating to Mindlessly Eating Better
Nov 23	No Class -- Thanksgiving
Nov 27	The Power of One
Nov 29	Last day of class <u>Take-home exam Due:</u> Two copies at the beginning of class The Two Biggest Lessons

Rather than totally cancel the class before Thanksgiving, I set up it up as "in-class feedback on the take-home exam." They can bring their draft of their take-home exam and I give them suggestions for improvement (about 6-8 or 5% usually show up). I put "No Class" on the syllabus so the super diligent students won't be tempted to change travel plans because of Fear of Missing Out.

I love this course and I want the last day of the semester to be valuable. After they turn in their exam and their course evaluations, I give them the option to leave. For those who stay, I tell them stories of two big lessons I learned in life (the hard way), and how they can deal with challenges in the future. It's a unusual way to end the class, but it always ends it on a high and memorable note.