



COMM 5300: CONSUMER & AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR

*Communications Department
Austin Peay State University*

Course Description

The course provides an understanding of the behaviors of consumers and audiences in response to persuasive messages and includes discussions of persuasive and psychological theories and their application to marketing problems of issue management.

Course objectives – You should be able to:

- Discuss your awareness of and appreciation for the value of knowing about consumer and audience behavior within the context of issue and communications management.
- Apply a managerial understanding of current theories, concepts, and practices related to consumer and audience behavior.
- Track and research current issues related to consumer and audience behavior.
- Relate theories, concepts, and practices to your own experiences as and with consumers and audiences.
- Think independently and collaboratively and communicate critically and creatively about issues related to consumer and audience behavior.
- Discuss the realm of socially responsible decisions related to issues and communication management.

Teaching/Learning Methodologies

Active, independent & collaborative learning
Literature reviews, reflections, stories and writing assignments
Interpersonal communications using web-based technology

Course Requirements & Learning Resources

- (1) Read *Consumer Behavior*, Hawkins, Best, & Coney, Irwin-McGraw-Hill Inc., edition 11 (note web resources at www.mhhe.com/hawkins11 - student edition) and other web-based & library materials as assigned or selected (note assignments).
- (2) Observe current communication practices as seen in a variety of popular culture mediums and personal experience.
- (3) Practice "Netiquette" as discussed at www.apsu/online/orientation.edu

(4) Earn up to 400 points:

1. Prepare a news report on a current trend in consumer and audience behavior (Project I) (60 points)
2. Prepare a review of an article in a current issue of **The Journal of Consumer Research** (60 points) (note "External Links" for direct connection to this journal. (Project II)
3. Complete homework assignments. (40 points)
4. Participate in weekly on-line class discussions (40 points)
5. Pass a mid-term and final exam (100 points each, total = 200 points)

Grade Distribution

A = 360-400 points **B** = 320-359 **C** = 280-319 **D** = 240-279

About the Two Exams – 100 points each

The exams will be of a discussion format and will focus on the topics discussed during the segment of the course immediately preceding the test. The purpose of the test will be to assess your ability to recall current issues, best practices, concepts, and theories as they relate to a recommendation/solution to a mini case or scenario. The exam questions will be available on line for 3 days.

Please note that knowledge about communications strategy has been drawn from a wide range of scientific research and observations of consumer and audience practices and knowledge and strategies change overtime. There is some diversity in terms of word usage, interpretation and practices of theories and concepts, and related research findings. Your own experiences have shaped how you think and communicate about these topics. The tests and projects will provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate and document your awareness of and ability to evaluate and apply both a personal and global perspective of the subject and related language.

About Project I: Trend Tracking – The Current Industry “Street Buzz” on Consumer Behavior– 60 points

The purpose of this project is to expose you to the current news and best practices relevant to consumer and audience behavior. The focus will include the hot topics and best practices as noted in selected and current **popular culture/trade literature**. You will be assigned an article to read, summarize, and share with the class via the discussion board. In your one-page report, you must include complete references (author(s) names, title of article, publications (or website), publishing company, date, and page numbers) but are encouraged to be creative in your delivery of the news report. (See additional details under “Assignments”).

About Project II: Current Evidenced Based Research on Consumer Behavior – 60 points (Single Article Review)

The purpose of this project is to provide you with samples of the **current research** on consumer behavior and to give you practice in reading and reviewing academic journals appropriate to graduate studies. You are to select an article from the 2009 available articles from **The Journal of Consumer Research** and write and post (to the discussion Board) a critical review of the article. As indicated in Project I, you must include complete references.

Characteristics of an A+ Project

Completed as scheduled and instructed
Creative, interesting, easy for readers and listeners to understand
Correct usage of spelling and grammar

Direct quotes are to be footnoted and all references are included using APA style

About Homework Assignments - 40 points

Assignments will be made which will require you to solve short problems, take virtual tours, or evaluate current practices.

About on-line class discussions and reading assignments – 40 points

You need to read the chapter and review my notes under "Course Documents" prior to the discussion each day. I will ask if you have any questions or comments about what you have read, will add any noteworthy news items that I have found, and will pose questions for you to discuss. Your discussion should reflect a good effort to address the issue. Answers such as, "I agree" or "Good Post" are unacceptable. You should respond to at least two other student's comments. I will read your discussions but may not always reply to your individual comments. At least twice during the semester I will post a grade for your participation in these discussions.

Hardware and Software Requirements

APSU D2L, www.apsu.edu/online, will provide announcements, notes, other class materials, discussion questions, tests, and grades for this course. Note

http://www.apsu.edu/ext_ed/distant_ed/StudentinfoFiles/requirements.htm for the minimum hardware requirements. Specific software requirements for this course include Microsoft Office (Word) to be used for Project II.

Instructor Information

Instructor information is provided as a separate item. The information includes office hours and contact information as well as a profile.

Students with Disabilities

Austin Peay State University abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which stipulates that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education "solely by reason of a handicap". Disabilities covered by law include, but are not limited to, learning disabilities and hearing, sight, or mobility impairments. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require reasonable accommodations, communicate with the instructor or Disabilities Services in Clement 140, 931-221-6230 or 931-221-6278 (V/TTY), so that such reasonable accommodations may be arranged.

Syllabus Changes

I reserve the right to make changes as necessary to this syllabus. If changes are necessitated during the term of the course, I will immediately notify you of such changes during the next class session and/or by individual email communication and posting both notification and nature of change(s) on the course bulletin board.

Technical Support

If you are having trouble logging into your course, timing out of your course, using your course web site tools, or other technical problems, please contact the APSU Help Desk by calling 931-221-4257 or go to the APSU Help Desk website at <http://www.apsu.edu/helpdesk/>.

Course Schedule*

June 8-July 31, 2009

Week 1, June 8-12

- ◆First, let's get acquainted with the course and each other
- ◆Learn how an understanding of consumer and audience behavior relates to communications management and what model is useful in understanding consumer and audience behavior – Chapter 1
- ◆Learn about a framework for understanding cross-cultural variations in consumer and audience behavior – Chapter 2

Week 2, June 15-19

- ◆Learn about a framework for understanding changing American values and the ethical issues related to changing values – Chapter 3
- ◆Participate in a class discussion and complete homework assignments.
- ◆Learn about the changing demographics and social stratification of the *American society* – Chapter 4
- ◆Learn about the ethnic, religious, and regional subcultures in the American society – Chapter 5

Week 3, June 22-26

- ◆Learn about American families and households – Chapters 6
- ◆Learn about the nature and process of group influence on consumer behavior – Chapter 7
- ◆Participate in a class discussion and complete homework assignments.
- ◆**Post Project I reports-June 26**
- ◆Read the Project I reports of other students

Week 4, June 29-July 2

- ◆Learn about perceptual processes as they relate to communications management – Chapter 8
- ◆Learn about theories of learning and memory as they relate to communicating brand image and product positioning – Chapter 9
- ◆**Complete the mid-term to cover Chapters 1-9 by July 5**
- ☺ **Enjoy July 3 as a preview to July 4**

Week 5, July 6-10

- ◆Learn about the issues of motivation, personality, and emotions as related to consumer behavior – Chapter 10
- ◆Learn about the concepts of attitudes and processes for changing consumer attitudes - Chapter 11
- ◆Participate in a class discussion and complete homework assignments.
- ◆Learn about the issues of self-concept and lifestyle and the systems for analyzing the American and global markets – Chapter 12

Week 6, July 13-17

- ◆Learn about the nature and characteristics of situational influences on consumer behavior – Chapter 13

- ◆ Learn about the consumer decision and problem recognition processes – Chapter 14
- ◆ Learn about the nature of information search and related ethics and communication strategies – Chapter 15
- ◆ Participate in a class discussion and complete homework assignments.

Week 7, July 20-24

- ◆ Learn how consumers make choices – Chapter 16
- ◆ Learn how consumers select the purchase outlet and the role of Internet and in-store communications – Chapter 17
- ◆ Participate in a class discussion and complete homework assignments
- ◆ Learn about the post purchase attitudes and behaviors and role of communication in developing consumer satisfaction and commitment – Chapter 18

Week 8, July 27-31

◆ *Post Project II reports – July 29*

- ◆ Read Project II reports of other students
- ◆ Learn about the issue of communicating with organizational buyers – Chapter 19
- ◆ Learn about regulation and marketing to children & adults – Chapter 20
- ◆ *Final Exam – Chapters 10-20 to be completed by July 31.*

August 1, relax and have fun😊😊

