

**Commerce 3MB3  
Consumer Behavior  
Fall 2023 Course Outline**

**Marketing Area  
DeGroote School of Business  
McMaster University**

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***COURSE OBJECTIVES***

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This course is designed to introduce you to key theoretical concepts in consumer behavior and build your ability to apply these concepts to real-world marketing problems.

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***INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION***

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<b>Tuesday 2:30-5:30</b>	<b>Thursday 11:30-2:30</b>	<b>Friday 11:30-2:30</b>
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**Instructor: Dr. Maureen Hupfer**

**Office: DSB 213**

**Contact Information: 905-525-9140, ext. 24101; [hupferm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hupferm@mcmaster.ca)**

**Office Hours: By appointment for in person or Zoom meeting**

Course website: This course has an Avenue learning website at <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>.

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***COURSE ELEMENTS***

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Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	Yes	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
Avenue:	Yes	Ethics:	Yes	Numeracy:	Yes	Written skills:	Yes
Participation:	Yes	Innovation:	Yes	Group work:	Yes	Oral skills:	Yes
Evidence-based:	Yes	Experiential:	Yes	Final Exam:	Yes	Guest speaker(s):	No

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## ***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

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### ***Theory, Business Application and Perspectives***

How does who do what and why? The field of consumer behavior attempts to explain and predict the ways in which consumers think and behave in given situations. How do consumers interpret advertising information? Why do people buy? Why not? Who and what are consumers relying upon for information? How can marketers predict behaviors from attitudes? How do consumers make decisions? How do we consume and dispose of products? To answer these questions, consumer behavior draws heavily on the disciplines of psychology, economics, sociology and anthropology. In this course, you will survey the relevant theory and learn how to apply these concepts to real world marketing situations. Class-time discussion of theory always will be supported with examples drawn from past and current business practices as well as consumers' everyday lives; we will be considering the social, ethical, regulatory, environmental and technological contexts in which consumers think and act. This course has a North American emphasis but we also will be comparing and contrasting international examples with consumer behavior in Canada and the United States.

This course stresses understanding, application, and generalization rather than memorization. In every field that you are studying, the body of accepted knowledge is growing and changing at an increasingly rapid rate. Because your success as a marketer will depend in part on your ability to find out about new knowledge and apply it to your own marketing problems, your performance in this course will be evaluated in terms of how well you are able to integrate textbook theory with business facts to arrive at explanations and recommendations.

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## ***COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES***

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Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- preparation for and participation in classroom discussion;
- successful group project management, including time management, organization, and positive group dynamic
- preparation/completion/delivery of the group presentation;
- demonstrate proficiency in oral presentation skills;
- demonstrate a mastery of course concepts through performance in exams and the group presentation

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## **COURSE LEARNING GOALS**

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Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- understand current psychological, sociological and anthropological theories that provide insight into consumer behavior;
- recognize which theoretical concepts are relevant to a particular decision-making context, demonstrate clearly how these principles apply, and provide responses that are supported with evidence;
- be able to apply theory to understand, analyze and address real world marketing problems.

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## **COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS**

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### ***Optional***

*Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having and Being*, 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Edition.  
Solomon, White and Dahl, Prentice-Hall.

This text is only recommended – not required – and the Bookstore has an e-version. You may find it helpful for background reading. You can shop with the Bookstore or look on Amazon. You also can look for older paper editions or even the American text on Amazon. Some of the chapters in paper versions will have different titles and older editions will have more chapters than newer editions.

However, the PPT material that will be posted on Avenue and covered in class provides comprehensive coverage of the theory and is supported with numerous examples to assist your learning in this course. All assignments and the final exam are based ONLY on the material in the PPT slides.

### ***Required***

*One of the three following texts will be required for your group presentation and will be assigned to your group. These three texts are meant to offer you perspectives that differ from or supplement the Consumer Behavior material that is covered in class. Note that you can purchase hard copy from the Bookstore or Amazon and share around with your group members. The following brief descriptions will give you an idea of the topics that are covered.*

*The text that your group will need is going to depend on the presentation date and order (e.g., first or second group of the day) that your group chooses. For example, if your group decides that you want to present right after the Thanksgiving break, the first group presenting on that day would be basing their presentation on Cialdini and the second group would use Dunn and Norton.*

Alternative 1) *Influence: Science and Practice*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Robert B. Cialdini, Pearson, 2009 (or any other older version/edition). This also is available from McMaster library as an e-book.

Amazon Books description: Written in a narrative style combined with scholarly research, Cialdini combines evidence from experimental work with the techniques and strategies he gathered while working as a salesperson, fundraiser, advertiser, and in other positions inside organizations that commonly use compliance tactics to get us to say “yes.” He organizes compliance techniques into six categories based on psychological principles that direct human behavior: reciprocity, consistency, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity.

Alternative 2) *Happy Money: The Science of Happier Spending*, Elizabeth Dunn and Michael I. Norton, Simon and Schuster, 2013.

Google Books description: Two professors combine their fascinating and cutting-edge research in behavioral science to explain how money can buy happiness—if you follow five core principles of smart spending. Most people recognize that they need professional advice on how to earn, save, and invest their money. When it comes to spending that money, most people just follow their intuitions. But scientific research shows that those intuitions are often wrong. *Happy Money* offers a tour of research on the science of spending, explaining how you can get more happiness for your money.

Alternative 3) *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

Amazon Books description: Two systems drive the way we think and make choices, Daniel Kahneman explains: System One is fast, intuitive, and emotional; System Two is slower, more deliberative, and more logical. Examining how both systems function within the mind, Kahneman exposes the extraordinary capabilities as well as the biases of fast thinking and the pervasive influence of intuitive impressions on our thoughts and our choices. He shows where we can trust our intuitions and how we can tap into the benefits of slow thinking, contrasting this two-system view of the mind with the standard model of the rational economic agent. Kahneman also offers practical and enlightening insights into how choices are made in both our business and personal lives--and how we can guard against the mental glitches that often get us into trouble.

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## ***COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT***

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Learning in this course results from class discussion/engagement as well as out-of-class reading, analysis, and preparation for exams and presentation. Your performance will be evaluated on both an individual (participation and exams) and a group basis (presentation). In addition, the group presentation marks are further broken down into individual and group elements. For the group

portion of the assessment, all team members will receive the same mark on the presentation, except where poor peer evaluations indicate otherwise.

*Extensions and rescheduling cannot be granted for the group presentation because groups are scheduled to run part of the class on their designated presentation date. If extraordinary circumstances prevail, a group may be considered for rescheduling if all group members can supply an approved MSAF.*

*Students who miss a midterm exam will be required to rewrite at a later date. Unless extraordinary circumstances apply, reweighting to another midterm or the final exam will not be considered.*

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Component	Group	Individual	%
2 Midterm Exams (25% each)		✓	50.0
Participation		✓	10.0
Group Presentation: Beyond the Textbook	✓		13.0
Group Presentation: Beyond the Textbook		✓	2.0
Final Exam		✓	25.0
Total			100.0

*NOTE: The use of a McMaster standard calculator is allowed during examinations in this course. See McMaster calculator policy.*

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to a letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme.

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	LETTER GRADE	PERCENT
A+	90 - 100	C+	67 - 69
A	85 - 89	C	63 - 66
A-	80 - 84	C-	60 - 62
B+	77 - 79	D+	57 - 59
B	73 - 76	D	53 - 56
B-	70 - 72	D-	50 - 52
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## ***COURSE DELIVERABLES***

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### ***Two Midterm Exams (25% each)***

Students will complete two two-hour midterm exams that apply textbook theory to real-world marketing situations. These exams are non-cumulative, open-book (you will be allowed to bring any printed course materials that you think would be helpful (i.e., a textbook, PPT notes, etc.) and will consist of multiple choice and written short answer questions.

### ***Group Presentation: Beyond the Textbook (15% total)***

The task here is very flexible and its primary purpose is to provide you with an incentive to read some portion of your group's assigned text by Cialdini, Dunn and Norton, or Kahneman. Your group is required to produce a 15-minute presentation for the class that links a concept (or concepts) from our consumer behavior class material with any concept from your assigned text. Your group might decide to put on a skit, create a quiz, develop a game show, etc. Further information about the specific content and expected format of this assignment will be posted on Avenue. In Week 3, once the add-drop date is over, I also will be going over a past presentation that used Cialdini so that you can see how this has been done before. Note that 13% of this mark will be allocated to the group's overall performance in developing the presentation and 2% will reflect the presentation skills of individual group members.

***You need to form a group of five people from your own section. You need to work with people from your own class because your group will be running part of the class on your chosen presentation time slot. Depending on final enrollment after the add/drop day is over, we may need a group of four or six. You need to use the Avenue group function to sign up for a group/presentation date/assigned text.***

### ***Participation (10%)***

Name cards and class pictures are used to help give credit for your participation. You must have a name card with your **first name and initial of your last name** clearly written and displayed in front of you for class. Use the first name that you prefer to be called; this is not necessarily your name on Mosaic or Avenue if you prefer a shortened or different version of your first name. **This is the name that you need to use throughout the term.** Since student involvement is an important component of this course, official McMaster student ID photographs will be used to ensure that each student is assessed accurately. I will use the photograph to ensure the accuracy of participation marks, group work, and for identifying students for grading purposes. If your ID photograph is not available on Mosaic, I will be asking you for one.

I will be assessing your participation throughout the term using a four-level grading scheme (0 = not present, 1 = present but very little or no involvement, 2 = moderate involvement, 3 = active, thoughtful commentary). Marks will be recorded on Avenue and you should be checking these postings to ensure that they are consistent with your own record of attendance and degree of

contribution. **I cannot guarantee that I will be able to assess your participation if you bring name cards with you that use different names from the ones that you supplied at the beginning of the term.**

**You need to attend your own section unless it is necessary to switch on occasion.** If you have a good reason for switching for a particular day (e.g. job interview, doctor or dentist appointment, you have missed a class because of illness and want to make it up), you should let me know in advance so that I will be prepared to adjust your attendance and participation. The order of content coverage in this class is Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and your participation marks after this weekly cycle is complete should be posted by the following Monday. ***Requests for review or changes to these grades must be made within a week of their posting.***

### ***Final Exam (25%)***

The final exam is two hours, non-cumulative and will be scheduled by the Registrar during the final exam period. The format is identical to the two midterms.

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## **COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK**

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Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants. All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

- ☐ *For Level 1 and Level 2 courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.*
- ☐ *For Level 3 courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.*

Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

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## **REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK**

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In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar [“Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”](#) and the link below;

<http://ug.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>



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## ***COURSE MODIFICATION***

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From time to time there may be a need to remove/add topics or to change the schedule or delivery format. If these are necessary, you will be given as much advance notice as possible.

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## ***GENERATIVE AI***

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Students may use generative AI for editing, translating, outlining, brainstorming and revising their work for the group presentation as long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following assignment citation instructions.

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## ***ACADEMIC INTEGRITY***

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You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.



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## ***AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION***

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*Some courses may* use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

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## ***COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT***

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*Some courses may* use on-line elements (e.g. email, Avenue to Learn (A2L), web pages, TopHat, MS Teams, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

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## ***ONLINE PROCTORING***

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*Some courses may* use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

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## **CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

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As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

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## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

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## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)**

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Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

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## ***COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING***

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Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

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## ***EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES***

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The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

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## ***RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS***

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All researchers conducting research that involves human participants, their records or their biological material are required to receive approval from one of McMaster's Research Ethics Boards before (a) they can recruit participants and (b) collect or access their data. Failure to comply with relevant policies is a research misconduct matter. Contact these boards for further information about your requirements and the application process.

McMaster Research Ethics Board (General board): <https://reo.mcmaster.ca/>  
Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (Medical board): <http://www.hireb.ca/>

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### ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES***

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Your enrolment in Commerce 3MB3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.