Course Objectives

The success of many companies and nonprofit organizations—whether they be Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble, Samsung, BMW, Apple, Disney, or the Metropolitan Opera—lies in genuine insights into the minds, hearts, and behaviors of consumers. Which product is going to be a hit? Which one is going to “flop”? Which aging brand can be revived? Which one is doomed to die? Which product positioning is going to work? What price will consumers be willing to pay? What’s the next big market trend? How does a business become more relevant to consumers? These are just a few of the many questions that businesses constantly face and that require genuine consumer insights. While it is tempting to rely on intuition to answer these questions—are we all consumers, after all?—history has taught us that intuitions about consumers are often mistaken.

The purpose of this course is therefore to help students become disciplined and astute discoverers of strategic consumer insights. The course provides a rigorous coverage of a broad range of theories, frameworks, concepts, and tools to truly get into the hearts and minds of consumers and uncover insights that are relevant for business and policy. Topics include: 1) how consumers make decisions; (2) why and how consumers shop; (3) how to uncover consumers’ true motivations, needs, and wants; (4) unconscious drivers on consumer behavior (e.g., cultural archetypes and evolutionary forces); (5) feelings and emotions in consumer behavior; (6) an introduction to qualitative market research for consumer insight; (7) how consumers’ minds work (e.g., how to attract their attention, how consumers perceive things, how to influence their memory); and (8) social and cultural determinants of consumer behavior.

The course is targeted at intellectually motivated students interested in pursuing careers in general management, consulting, marketing, entrepreneurship, media and advertising, or consumer-oriented nonprofit organizations. An important part of the course is a real-life consumer insight project for a client company. Past clients include Coca-Cola, Macy’s, Novartis, Best Buy, Rolodex, ESPN, Men’s Health, Wrigley, Ann Taylor, Perry Ellis/Original Penguin, Verizon, and Wyndham hotels. This Fall 2016, the clients will be Home Depot and Constellation Brands (owner of beer, wine and spirit brands such as Corona, Negra Modelo, Mondavi,
Estancia, etc.). The course also includes a variety of in-class and out-of-class exercises, in addition to standard lectures, readings, and case analyses.

**Deliverables and Grading**

Final grades will be determined as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation (including in-class exercises)</td>
<td>20% (Individual)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Case Surveys</td>
<td>20% (Individual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Assignments</td>
<td>10% (Group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Field Project</td>
<td>50% (Group – with possible adjustment for individual contribution)</td>
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*Class Participation:* Because each of us brings to the classroom a unique set of knowledge and experiences about consumers, a significant part of the learning will come from tapping into this collective knowledge and experience. We will devote a significant portion of class time to discussions, analyzing cases, and various in-class exercises. It is therefore essential that you come fully prepared for case discussions and participate actively to the discussions and various in-class exercises and activities. This means that you need to have read the assigned material (e.g., cases) before the class session. Effective participation includes: (1) sharing relevant experiences; (2) being on point and moving the discussion forward; (3) being able to clearly articulate and justify particular points of view; (4) asking insightful questions that help clarify concepts and benefit the rest of the class; and (5) relating examples and experiences to course concepts and case discussions, including those covered in earlier classes. (Note that while class attendance is not mandatory, it will be reflected in the overall participation grade since one cannot participate if one is not there. Excessive absences may result in an overall failing grade for the entire course.)

*Online Surveys.* To facilitate in-class discussions, especially of cases, students will be asked to complete a series of short online surveys pertaining to the cases and other session materials to be discussed in class. All surveys should be completed individually on Canvas. To receive full credit, responses to the survey questions do not need to lengthy—typically 2-3 sentences per questions will suffice. However, the responses have to be thoughtful. Completing a survey can help compensate for necessary class absences. However, in order to receive full credit, a survey entry must be submitted by 8:00 AM on the day of the session. Entries submitted after that will receive no credit.

*Group Assignments.* In addition to a various in-class exercises throughout the term, a series of more formal workshops will be conducted, mostly in relation to the project. Two of these will be the subject of written assignments to be submitted as a group the Friday following the workshop. Their due dates are marked on the course schedule and reproduced below. Detailed instructions will be provided later in the term.

A1. Emotional Planning Analysis based on Workshop 2 is due on Friday, Oct. 14
A2. Hierarchical Value Mapping Analysis based on Workshop 3 is on Friday, Nov. 18

*Company Field Project:* The field project is a hands-on opportunity to analyze and address specific issues about consumers that are of particular interest to an existing company. Early in the semester (during the third class), the client companies will describe their projects. Students will work in groups of *four to five* on their projects throughout the course of the semester. The
groups should be formed and the project chosen by Class 4 (Sep. 27). Responsibility for forming the groups is left to the students. A project proposal based on the first workshop is due on Friday, Sep. 30. A progress report, to be reviewed by the client, should be submitted by Class 7 (Nov. 1). The project should go beyond standard library research and involve the collection and analysis of primary data (e.g., in-depth interviews, focus groups, online surveys). When making recommendations, students should engage in “big-picture” yet analytically sound thinking, taking into account both the pros and cons of alternative solutions, as well as short-term and long-term implications of the proposed recommendations. At the end of the course, each group will summarize its investigation, findings, and recommendations in a report to be presented in the final class on Dec. 13 with the clients in attendance. Final written reports are to be submitted to the professor and the clients on Monday, Dec. 19 at 9:00AM (to ensure a timely evaluation and submission of the overall course grades).

Field projects will be evaluated based on (a) the breadth and depth of the research, (b) appropriate application of consumer behavior tools and concepts, (c) logical development of conclusions and implications, (d) originality of consumer insights, (e) quality of business recommendation; and (f) quality of the written report and oral presentation. (Input from the client company will be incorporated into these evaluations.) More details on the project will be provided later in the term.

Note that groups are responsible for managing their own dynamics and ensuring that every team member contributes positively to the project and carries their fair share of the work. At the end of the term, all students will be asked to assess the relative contribution of each of their teammates to the overall project, and, if necessary, individual students’ grades for the company project may be adjusted accordingly.

Course Materials

Lecture Notes. As lecture notes, hardcopies of most of the slides will be distributed at the beginning of each session. Use these lecture notes as a support for your own note taking, not as a substitute for it. If you are unable to attend a session, please have a classmate collect a set for you. While the lecture notes will be posted on Canvas after each session, they will not be sent individually.

Required Readings. Two types of readings will be made available. The first are a variety of consumer-focused business cases, which students are expected to prepare prior to the relevant sessions and complete a short survey before the class discussion. Most of these cases will be distributed as a packet in hardcopy. Thorough preparation of these cases will be reflected in the class participation grade. The second type of readings are various consumer-behavior-related articles culled from various sources including industry reports, academic journals, business news, and popular press. These will be posted (in electronic form) on Canvas. Although students will not be explicitly quizzed on these latter readings, in-class lectures and discussions will generally assume that these readings were completed.

Suggested Additional Readings. Students who are interested in additional background on consumer behavior or wish to go deeper into certain topics may also find the following books useful:

1. Consumer Behavior (5th Edition) by Wayne D. Hoyer and Deborah J. Maclnnis, South-Western, 2008. This is an excellent, if somewhat encyclopedic, text on consumer
behavior. It covers many of the topics and concepts that will be covered in class. Several copies are available on reserve in the Business School’s Watson Library in Uris.

2. *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (Revised Edition) by Robert B. Cialdini, Collins Business, 2006. This is a short but classic reference on the science of persuasion. It was named by the *Journal of Marketing Research* one the most important books written for marketers.


Contact

Whenever possible, I prefer real-time, in person communication over e-mail (to which I may not be able to respond promptly). If you have any questions regarding the class, please come to speak to me after class, or drop by my office (515 Uris) or call me (212-854-3472) during my office hours. If you can’t visit or call during these hours, please schedule an appointment.

Canvas

Course-relevant materials and additional important information (about readings, assignments, etc.) will be posted on the school’s CANVAS system. Because some of the readings are provided by an external site, please use Mozilla’s Firefox to access the course materials on Canvas, as Microsoft’s Internet Explorer tends to create problems when accessing external sites. Please consult the course’s site regularly (at least twice a week) because important announcements may be posted. It will be assumed that any announcement that has been posted at least 24 hours prior to a class (e.g., on Sunday night) has been read prior to that class (on Wednesday).

Logistics and Course Conduct

- Time is a very precious commodity for all of us. Please help us ensure that classes start and finish on time by being punctual.
- In addition, as a courtesy for everybody and to avoid distraction (of yourself, your neighbors, and the instructor), please put away your laptops, cell phones, and other mobile devices when the class is in session.
- So that I can remember who is who and address you properly, please always have your name card in front of you. (If you forget to bring it, just make a temporary one.) In addition to facilitating classroom discussions, having your name in front of you will ensure that your class participation is recorded properly.
Preparation for the First Class

- Download and prepare the Segway case. (See discussion questions on Canvas.)
- Fill out Survey 1 (regarding Segway case) by 8:00AM
- Complete the readings
- Remember to bring your name card
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| 1 Sep. 6 | • Introduction to Strategic Consumer Insight: What Is Consumer Insight?                     | • Review syllabus                                                           | • What is Consumer Behavior?  
• "Stories That Deliver Business Insights”                                                                 |
|         | • Case 1: Segway                                                                            | • Complete Survey 1                                                         |                                                                                                        |
| 2 Sep. 13 | • How Consumers Make Decisions (I)                                                          | • Review project brief                                                      | • The Consumer Decision Making Process  
• Are You Ignoring Trends that Could Shake Up Your Business?                                          |
|         | • Case 2: Microsoft Office: Insight into the Life of a College Student                      | • Complete Survey 2                                                         |                                                                                                        |
|         | • o Marketing, Wyndham Hotel                                                                |                                                                              |                                                                                                        |
| 3 Sep. 20 | • How Consumers Make Decisions (II) & Consumer Behavior                                    | • Complete Survey 3                                                         | • Get Closer to Your Customers by Understanding How they Make Choices                                  |
|         | • Client Companies’ Presentations of Projects                                              |                                                                              |                                                                                                        |
|         | • o Brendan Baby, Director of Customer Strategy, Home Depot                                 |                                                                              |                                                                                                        |
|         | • o Yvonne Louis Prescott, Consumer Insight, Constellation Brands                          |                                                                              |                                                                                                        |
| 4 Sep. 27 | • Qualitative Market Research for Consumer Insight                                          | • Submit Project Choice and Group Composition                                | • The Research Process  
• Developing and Using Information about Consumer Behavior                                               |
|         | • Project Planning Workshop 1                                                              | • Submit Project Proposal by Friday, Sep. 30 at 8:00PM                       |                                                                                                        |
| 5 Oct. 4 | • Understanding the Role of Feelings & Emotions in Consumer Behavior                        | • Complete Survey 4                                                         | • Emotional Cue that Work Magic on Customers  
• Product Emotions  
• The New Science of Customer Emotions                                                                    |
| 6 Oct. 11 | • Project Planning & Customer Insight Workshop 2                                             | • Submit Group Assignment 1 by Friday, Oct. 14 at 8:00PM                     |                                                                                                        |
|         | • Guest Speaker: Hayes Roth, H.A. Roth Consulting, former CMO of Landor                     |                                                                              |                                                                                                        |

Study Day & Exam Week (No class on October 18 & 25)
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| 7 Nov. 1 | ▪ Understanding and Analyzing Consumer Motivations (I)  
▪ Case 4: Saxonville Sausage | ▪ Complete Survey 5  
▪ Submit Progress Report on Field Project | ▪ A Theory of Human Motivation  
▪ Laddering Theory, Method, Analysis, and Interpretation  
▪ Individual Differences: Tools for Theory Testing and … |
| 8 Nov. 15 | ▪ Understanding and Analyzing Consumer Motivations (II)  
▪ Case 5: Diamonds are Forever  
▪ Project Planning & Customer Insight Workshop 3 | ▪ Complete Survey 6  
▪ Submit Group Assignment 2 by Friday, Nov. 18 at 8:00pm | ▪ Excerpts from Dichter’s Handbook of Consumer Motivation  
▪ Does the Smell of Coffee Remind you of your Mother  
▪ The Culture Code  
▪ The Hero and the Outlaw |
| 9 Nov. 22 | ▪ Understanding Shopping Behavior  
▪ Guest Speaker: Robert Tomei, President, Consumer & Shopper Marketing, IRI |  | ▪ Why Do People Shop  
▪ The Science of Shopping |
| 10 Nov. 29 | ▪ Understanding Consumer Culture  
▪ Case 6: Harley Davidson | ▪ Complete Survey 7 | ▪ The Globalization of Markets  
▪ Values and Culture  
▪ Getting Brand Communities Right |
| 11 Dec. 6 | ▪ More on Consumer Culture: Evolutionary Drivers of Consumer Behavior  
▪ Project Customer Insight Workshop 3  
▪ Course Conclusion | ▪ Complete Survey 8 | ▪ Consumers Born and Made |
| 12 Dec. 13 | ▪ Project Presentations to Clients | ▪ Upload presentations by 11:00AM | |

Monday, Dec. 19: Submit Final Reports for Field Project by 9:00AM
Michel Tuan Pham is the Kravis Professor of Business in Marketing at Columbia Business School, whose faculty he joined more than 20 years ago. At Columbia he teaches in the MBA, EMBA, Ph.D., and Executive Education programs. He is also the Research Director of the Columbia Center on Global Brand Leadership and Co-Director of Columbia's Brand Leadership program for executives. Professor Pham has a Licenciate degree in Applied Economics from the Catholic University of Louvain-Mons, Belgium and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Business-Administration/Marketing from the University of Florida. He has held visiting professorships at various international institutions, including the University of Chicago, where he was the Ford Foundation Visiting Professor of Marketing, the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, the China Europe International Business School in Shanghai, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Singapore Management University, and the Institut d'Administration des Entreprises (IAE) of the University of Paris I - Sorbonne.

Professor Pham’s business expertise and consulting activities are in the areas of marketing strategy and management, branding strategy, consumer psychology, trademark psychology, and the psychology of decision making. He has worked on these issues with companies from a variety of industries. An acclaimed executive teacher, he has also taught these subjects to executives and companies around the world. Recent training and consulting clients include Bayer Healthcare, Adidas, Brighton Collectibles, The Walt Disney Company, Bath & Body Work, Federal Home Loan Bank of New York, Nike, Converse, Coca-Cola, DNAinfo, Gucci, Singapore Airlines, and Lonza. His comments on current business issues have been widely publicized, including in the New York Times, Forbes, Wall Street Journal, AdWeek, BBC’s World Business Report, and CNN’s Headline News.

His current research focuses on the role of affect (moods, feelings, and emotions) in judgment and decision-making and consumer self-regulation. His numerous scientific articles are widely cited, have received several awards and have appeared in many leading academic journals in marketing, management, and psychology, including the Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing Research, Psychological Science, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Review of General Psychology, Personality and Social Psychological Review, Psychology and Marketing, Marketing Letters, Journal of Economic Psychology, and Recherche et Application en Marketing. He is a scientific advisor for numerous academic journals, and serves or has served on the Editorial Boards of Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Consumer Psychology, International Journal of Research in Marketing, and Recherche et Application en Marketing. He is a past President of the Society for Consumer Psychology, the leading professional organization for the advancement of the psychological science of the consumer. In 2015 he was inducted as a lifetime Fellow of the Society for “Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Consumer Psychology.”

On the personal front, Professor Pham is an avid traveler, curious reader, happy eater, foreign movie admirer, former judo competitor, and wine lover (not necessarily in that order). He is a Belgian citizen of Vietnamese descent, permanent resident of the US, who was born in Congo. He lives in Manhattan, with his wife, a Taiwanese citizen (whom he married in Spain), and their two children, both US citizens.