

THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING  
**MARK 1230 Consumerism and Happiness**  
**(Spring Semester 2018-19)**

**INSTRUCTOR AND INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Historical, cultural, psychological and economic perspectives on consumerism; The role of advertising and branding in influencing self-identity and consumerism; Money, materialism, and happiness.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course examines consumerism and personal happiness from historical, cultural, sociological, and psychological perspectives. The course will cover a variety of societal and personal issues such as advertising and branding, impulsive buying and luxury consumption, personal finances. The course is designed to help students develop an understanding and be able to think critically about the various societal and personal issues related to consumerism and material possessions, which in turn will make them become better decision makers when it comes to consumption and personal finances. The course overall objectives align with the common core objectives on social analysis and healthy lifestyles.

More specifically, students in this course are expected to:

1. Have an understanding of key societal and behavioral issues related to consumerism
2. Have an understanding of consumerism from different social scientific approaches
3. Be able to analyze and make self-relevant decisions related to material possessions and money

**LEARNING RESOURCES**

There is no prescribed textbook in the course. Short reading articles, cases and online articles will be assigned by the professor from time to time. Video clips will also be shown in class to serve as bases for discussion.

**COURSE DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT**

**Teaching approach**

This course is primarily delivered through interactive lecture-discussion sessions.

Case analyses and reading articles will be conducted to provide illustrations and applications of topics/ concepts discussed in class, and to provide an opportunity to develop and/or improve the students' analytical and presentation skills.

A central requirement of the course is the “Group Project.” Details are presented in the following sections of this syllabus.

Students enrolled in MARK1230 are also required to participate in 2 marketing experiments (of 1 hour each) OR by completing 2 research assignments. This provides the students with a hand-on experience of marketing research that will reinforce their understanding of the role it plays in marketing decision making. This coursework requirement is administered by the departmental Marketing Experiment Coordinator.

**Coursework components**

The coursework requirements for this course are listed below:

<b>Coursework</b>	<b>Weighting (%)</b>	<b>Nature of Activity</b>
Case Analysis/ Topical Report	10	Group (peer-assessed)
Group Project - Presentation (10) - Written Report (10)	20	Group (peer-assessed)
Term Test 1	18	Individual
Term Test 2	20	Individual
Term Test 3	20	
Class Participation, In-class Exercises, Attendance	10	Individual
Research Experiment/ Participation	2	Individual

Grades will be assigned based on the School’s grade distribution policy.

**GROUP PROJECT(S)/ACTIVITIES**

There are two coursework components that require working in groups: *Case Analysis/ Article Presentation* and a *Group Project*.

Students will be assigned into groups consisting of either 5 or 6 members each. No group swapping is allowed. You are also expected to manage your group activities effectively and efficiently.

**CASE ANALYSIS/ TOPICAL PRESENTATION**

Each group will be assigned either one case or one topic during the semester. The assigned group needs to read and analyse the issues in the case or discuss the assigned topic using a major reading article or combination of articles provided in the reading list. The group is required to make a 20-minute (max) presentation before the class. The assigned topic(s) will be the subject of class discussion on the specified dates, thus everyone should have read the relevant reading materials/ articles even if their group has not been assigned that particular paper/ material/ topic. Reporting groups should submit a hard copy of the presentation file to the professor before the class starts.

**GROUP PROJECT**

Each group is to work on a project that highlights the impact of consumerism on society, economy, or the environment. Possible options include (but is not limited to) the following:

1. Spending Diary

The spending diary involves recording every dollar you spend from now until April 3. Each week’s spending should be separate. It is not necessary to list every item you purchase separately – you may design expenditure categories.

You should probably have at least 10 categories but you can have as many as you want. The categories should be a reflection of your spending behavior. They should be detailed in areas where your spending is most prevalent. For example, if you buy a lot of recreational equipment you might want to have this as a spending category. You might also want to create categories for different hobbies. For example, if you spend a significant amount of money on CDs or downloading music, you might want to designate this as a separate category.

An important part of the assignment is to consider several issues related to your purchases. Examples of these issues may include (but are not limited to):

- About what percent of your expenditures do you consider to be for “necessities”? (Note that how you define necessities is up to you.)
- Do you buy anything you can’t really afford right now? How much of your expenditures are made using credit cards, and will you pay off the balance at the end of the next billing cycle?
- Which expenditures do you think you could have gone without? What alternatives may have existed for your purchases, such as buying a cheaper brand or a used item?
- How many of your expenses do you think are influenced by advertising or other social pressures? How many of your purchases would you classify as status items?
- What do you think is the overall environmental impact of your purchases? Which purchases do you think cause the most environmental damage?
- What social impacts do you think your purchases have? For example, how do your purchases influence workers’ wages and conditions around the world?
- Which purchases provide you with the most satisfaction? Do you buy anything that you regret buying?

Feel free to add any insights you got from your diary and how it relates to any of the course material.

## 2. Counter-Advertisement

Students create ads that either

- counteract the messages of mainstream advertising, or
- influence a change in behaviour/ attitude (i.e. to discourage consumerism as a way of life).

Print ads are acceptable, but groups may also create a video ad or music video.

## 3. Research/ Discussion paper

Students can explore current issues/ developments that have an impact on the status of consumerism and happiness on society. Examples of these topics are:

- Social Media and Consumerism
- Impact of online marketing on consumerism/ happiness/ satisfaction
- Etc.

Each group is required to submit a written report **and** to make an oral presentation before the class.

### Written report

The written report should have a maximum length of 10 pages and should be uploaded on CANVAS on the date specified on the timetable at the end of this syllabus. Late submissions will not be accepted.

### **Oral presentation**

Each group will be given a maximum of 15 minutes to present its project before the class. Presentation guidelines will be provided close to the scheduled presentation dates, and will be posted on CANVAS. A 5-minute Q&A session will be allocated for each presentation. Your presentation deck (Powerpoint) should be uploaded on CANVAS on the date specified at the end of this syllabus (see Timetable). No further changes or modifications will be allowed once the file has been uploaded. You don't need to submit a hard copy of your presentation deck.

### **PEER ASSESSMENT**

To ensure equal participation in and contribution to team-based activities, a peer assessment system will be in place. Each student is required to evaluate his/ her team members' performance/contribution to the team via the *iPeer* system. The student will also conduct self-evaluation, although the self-evaluation score will not contribute towards the calculation of the student's average evaluation score.

Evaluation criteria include:

- Attendance during team meetings/ activities
- Contribution of useful ideas
- Quality of work done
- Quantity/ volume of work done
- Overall contribution

Each student is required to participate in this exercise for two events:

- Case Analysis/ Topical Presentation
- Group Project

Evaluators should include qualitative comments/ evaluation for extreme scores assigned to the member being evaluated. All iPeer events will close at the date and time specified on the timetable. **A student who fails to submit his/her peer assessment on time will automatically earn significant score deduction in that particular coursework component.**

Individual peer assessment scores will be released on CANVAS by 5:00 p.m. within two days of the closing date. Students have until 5:00 p.m. two days after the release of the scores to consult with the professor in case there are questions about his/ her peer assessment score. No queries or challenges will be entertained after that date.

### **TERM TESTS**

Three term tests will be administered during the semester. These will test your understanding of the materials covered in class, as well as assigned supplementary materials. The tests will be "closed book" and will be administered on optical scan sheets and conventional writing pads, so you should bring HB pencils, an eraser, and a pen (blue or black ink only).

The tests will be administered **in-class** (Check the timetable at the end of this syllabus for the exact dates).

**IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES/ CLASS PARTICIPATION/ ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to participate in class discussion and exercises so they can learn from each other. Active involvement in learning increases what is remembered, how well it is assimilated, and how the learning is used in new situations. In making statements to peers about their own thoughts on a class topic, students must articulate those thoughts and also submit them to constructive examination by others. In listening to their peers, students hear different ways of interpreting and applying class material, and thus are able to integrate many examples of how to use the information.

Participation will be graded on a scale from 0 (lowest) through 4 (highest points), using the criteria below. The criteria focus on what you demonstrate and do not presume to guess at what you know but do not demonstrate.

<b>Points</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Absent.</li></ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present, not disruptive.</li><li>• Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much.</li><li>• Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.</li></ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic case or reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them.</li><li>• Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class).</li><li>• Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on.</li><li>• Demonstrates sporadic involvement.</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates good preparation: knows case or reading facts well, has thought through implications of them.</li><li>• Offers interpretations and analysis of case material (more than just facts)</li><li>• Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion.</li><li>• Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.</li></ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed case exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material (e.g., readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.).</li><li>• Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of case material, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further.</li><li>• Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.</li><li>• Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.</li></ul>

**RESEARCH PARTICIPATION**

Several research studies will be conducted during the course of the semester by faculty members in the Department of Marketing. In a typical research study, you will be asked to view/read an advertisement or study a product and then answer one or more research questionnaires. If you wish to participate in a particular study, you should sign up for a session in advance and ensure that you reach the site of the study a few minutes in advance of the scheduled time. Make sure that you understand the procedures explained to you by the researcher and complete all questionnaires fully. Participation in at least 2 studies is compulsory. Guidelines and procedures are available on CANVAS.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is a critical value of the university community. Integrity violations destroy the fabric of a learning community and the spirit of inquiry that is vital to the effectiveness the University. I have absolutely no tolerance for cheating and there are no acceptable excuses. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing in any form will fail the class. Plagiarism is copying anything from another source without citing that source.

Assignments identified as individual tasks must be completed without the assistance of others. For assignments identified as group work, it is expected that all members of the group will have contributed to the final output, and that only members of the group will have contributed to that output. A group may not collaborate with a group from another section of the course.

Extreme care must be taken to avoid passing of other's work as one's own. You are required to provide appropriate citations when you use ideas and arguments or otherwise draw on others' work.

Quizzes and tests are to be written without the assistance of notes, other material, or the help of others during the exercise.

In general, any student who violates academic integrity, through such activities as duplication of another students' work in whole or in part, plagiarism, etc. or other means of cheating, will receive an F for the course. There is no honor in taking someone's work as your own.

The HKUST Academic Integrity site can be accessed at <http://www.ust.hk/vpao/integrity/>

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Your professor makes strong efforts to make the class a comfortable and productive experience for everyone. Students are expected to do their part in maintaining such pleasant classroom environment.

- Please arrive on time. If you must be late, please minimize disturbance by arriving quietly.
- Please avoid leaving the classroom unless the class is finished.
- Switch off your mobile phones, or put them on silent mode. No calls may be taken or made in the classroom.
- Observe courtesy to your classmates and to your professor during class.
- Since wireless connection to the internet is available in the classroom, you are expected not to connect to the internet except for the purpose of downloading course-related materials (i.e., CANVAS course materials).

**MARK 1230 SCHEDULE - TENTATIVE TIMETABLE (VERSION 2019 JAN 27)**

<b>Wks</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Selected Readings Notes and Comments</b>
1 2	30 Jan (W) 04 Feb (M) <i>06 Feb (W)</i> 11 Feb (M) 13 Feb (W)	Course Introduction A Brief Primer on Marketing and Consumer Behavior <b>Holiday (Lunar New Year 5-7 February)</b>	"The Elements of Value: Measuring- and Delivering- What Consumers Really Want," Harvard Business Review, September 2016.  "Consumption- The Happiness of Pursuit," Harvard Business Press.*
	18 Feb (M) 20 Feb (W) 25 Feb (M) 27 Feb (W)	Psychological Perspectives on Consumerism  Economic Perspectives on Consumerism	<b>18 Feb- Groups decide on their topical presentation (Schedule consultation with the professor)</b>  <i>How Concepts Affect Consumption *</i>  "Genuine Progress Indicator," by Redefining Progress (online)  <b>Documentary Video: Pyramids of Waste</b>  <b>27 February- Project Topic due</b>
	<b>04 Mar (M)</b>	<b>TEST 1</b>	
5 6 7 8	06 Mar (W) 11 Mar (M) 13 Mar (W) 18 Mar (M) 20 Mar (W) 25 Mar (M) 27 Mar (W)	Money, Materialism and Happiness	"The Roots of Happiness: Of Compassion and Community," Chapter 8 of <i>American Mania</i> by Peter C. Whybrow*  "Sexism and Sexuality in Advertising," Chapter 4 of <i>Marketing Madness</i> by Michael F. Jacobson and Laurie Ann Mazur (on Library Reserve)  <i>Consumer Credit: The Next Crisis *</i>  "Estimated Prevalence of Compulsive Buying Behavior in the United States," <i>American Journal of Psychiatry</i> 163:1806-1812 (October 2006) by Koran, et al. (online) <a href="http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/article.aspx?articleID=97146">http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/article.aspx?articleID=97146</a>  <u>CASES:</u> <i>Laurence Longren: End Game *</i>  <i>Patagonia's Sustainability Strategy- Don't Buy Our Products*</i>  <i>SK Telecom- Pursuing Happiness Through CSR*</i>  <b>Documentary Video: Affluenza</b>  <b>Documentary Video: The Overspent American</b>

9 10	<b>01 Apr (M)</b>	<b>TEST 2</b>	
	03 Apr (W)	Managing Consumerism	<i>Lean Consumption *</i>
	08 Apr (M)	Consumerism and Public Policy	<i>Doing Business in a Post Growth Society *</i>
	10 Apr (W)	Lifestyle Choices and Personal Goals	<u>CASES:</u> <i>Clust.com: Dream More and Pay Less *</i>  <i>A Crack in the Mug- Can Starbucks Mend It?*</i>  <b>Documentary Video: The Persuaders</b>
11	15 Apr (M)	Final Project: Group Presentations	
	17 Apr (W)		
12	<b>22 Apr (M)</b>	<b>Mid Term Break (18-23 April)</b>	
	24 Apr (W)	Final Project: Group Presentations	
	<b>29 Apr (M)</b>	<b>TEST 3</b>	
	<b>01 May (W)</b>	<b>Holiday (Labour Day)</b>	
13	06 May (M)	OPEN	
	08 May (W)	OPEN	

*\*MARK 1230 folder on 2-hour check-out from the Department of Marketing (Rm 4018). Reading List is partial and tentative. A final version of the reading list will be published after the Add-Drop Period on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February.*