

THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING  
**MARK 1230 Consumerism and Happiness**  
**(Spring Semester 2019-20)**

**INSTRUCTOR AND INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT**

**Professor Joseph SALVACRUZ**

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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.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Our class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00 n – 1:20 p.m. at LSK 1005.

Based on the Academic Arrangements for the Spring Term issued on January 30, 2020, we will be conducting classes using live interactive on-line mode (Zoom) with the possibility of switching to mixed mode as soon as situation allows (In the mixed mode delivery, classes will be conducted face-to-face in the scheduled classrooms and class time, with students off-campus or under quarantine joining simultaneously via live interactive platform).

You will receive a Zoom invitation for each class, accessible through CANVAS.

### **Coursework components**

The coursework requirements for this course are listed below:

<b>Coursework</b>	<b>Weighting (%)</b>	<b>Nature of Activity</b>
Short Quizzes/ Attendance	10	Individual
Case Analysis/ Topical Report	8	Group (peer-assessed)
Group Project – Presentation (10) – Written Report (15)	25	Group (peer-assessed)
Term Test 1	25	Individual
Term Test 2	25	Individual
Personal Reflection	5	Individual
Research Credit	2	Individual

\*Group Project will be peer-assessed to reflect individual contributions to the group effort.

Scores on each of the above components will be summed to arrive at an overall score for each student. Based on this overall score, grades will be assigned as per a relative grading system.

### **Class Format and Preparation**

Class meetings will revolve around lectures, video presentations, case discussions, and exercises. In order to get the most out of class sessions, it is important that you prepare for each class and actively participate in discussions and exercises.

While class meetings will take place through live interactive online sessions (using Zoom as the platform), students can raise hands to ask questions and do project presentations to the whole class. We can also run breakout discussion groups without the need for students to move physically.

In each class, the lecture and discussion will expand on concepts covered in the assigned reading, explore their implications, and examine how they affect us professionally and personally. It is required that you read the assigned book chapter(s)/ article(s)/ case before “zooming in.” The lectures and case discussions are based on the assumption that you are familiar with the material from the reading and will serve to supplement the basic theory introduced in the text. Notes for each lecture will be posted on the class website before the class meeting. Classroom Etiquette Attendance is a must. Your online attendance (logins and logouts) are duly recorded in the Zoom platform.

Please adhere to the following rules when zooming-in:

- You must zoom-in in a quiet environment (i.e., never in a busy café or restaurant).
- Login a few minutes before the class is scheduled to commence.
- You must activate your video so the professor can see you on his screen.
- Mute your microphone unless you have been acknowledged by the professor after raising your hand to ask a question or to make comments.
- Once you are online, leave the class only when absolutely necessary. You will be penalized for late arrival or early logouts; it will be reflected in your attendance score.

### **IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES/ ATTENDANCE**

Some time may be allocated to in-class group exercises. These exercises will be in the form of small caselets (written or video), or discussion questions that will be handed out in class. Each group of students will then get some time (a few minutes) to discuss the exercise with one another, after which, one group may be asked to provide the solution to the exercise. Group discussions will be conducted using the break-out room feature of Zoom.

Group participation points (In-class exercise points) will only be given to members of the group who are present for the discussion. All members of the same group will receive the same marks for the in-class exercises.

### **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 four or five members each. You will be informed of your group membership by March 12, 11:59 p.m.

Groups may decide on the most efficient way of meeting online for group assignment and project preparation. You may initiate your own meetings using the free version of Zoom (maximum of 40 minutes per session) or you may use other chat platforms like Skype, Messenger, and WhatsApp, amongst others.

#### **CASE ANALYSIS/ TOPICAL PRESENTATION**

The professor will assign each group a particular case, article, or topic during the semester. Unless otherwise indicated by a URL reference, the relevant materials will be provided by the professor to the assigned group two weeks in advance of the scheduled presentation. 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 based on their research. The group is required to make a 20-minute (max) presentation before the class. The reporting group should upload the presentation file on CANVAS not later than one hour before the class starts.

Presentations are to be conducted using the online (Zoom) platform.

#### **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/ social marketing program

Students create ads and formulate an integrated promotion program 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
- Others.....

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

#### **Oral presentation**

Each group will make an oral presentation of the report in class, using the online Zoom platform. All group members must present, but the same group grade will be given to all members. Individual scores will be determined by factoring in the Peer Assessment scores for the project.

Each presentation should take about 12 minutes and a further 3 minutes for a question-answer session. Attendance is mandatory at all presentations, and every group may be required to comment on every 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.

#### **Written report**

Based on the feedback in your oral presentation, you should finalize your written report and upload the final report on CANVAS by the date specified on the timetable. Limit your final report to 15 pages excluding appendices, with 1-inch border on all sides. This limit is to be strictly followed.

#### **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
- Quality of input/ work done
- Volume of work contributed
- Overall contribution to the group deliverable

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**

There will be 2 tests at various points during the semester. The quizzes will consist of a varying number of multiple-choice questions and a few essay-type and/or analytical questions. All the questions will be based exclusively on class lectures, discussions, and assignments.

Tests will be conducted online (through the CANVAS platform) during the scheduled class hour. There will typically be no carryover of substantive topics for the tests. However, it should be kept in mind that most topics in the course are interrelated; thus, answering questions relating to a particular topic may require some knowledge of topics discussed earlier.

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

The purpose of this short essay is to provide evidence of your learning and personal development through the semester. Briefly discuss what you have learned in the course and how your learning might influence your attitude and behaviour as a consumer.

The essay should have a maximum length of two pages, using 1.5 spacing and an 11-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides.

Your personal reflection should be uploaded on CANVAS not later than 11:59 p.m. on May 4.

### **RESEARCH CREDIT**

Students enrolled in this class are expected to earn 2 research credits – conducted online-- (worth 2% of the grade). This can be done through participation in 2 *marketing experiments* (of 1 hour each) OR by completing 2 *research assignments*.

*Marketing experiments* will be scheduled throughout the semester and students can sign up for these experiments. Instructions on how to sign up will be given to you once the add/drop period is over. You will receive an email giving you the instruction. Instructions will also be posted on your course website. (It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the procedures so you are notified of experiments when they are posted). Note that all research experiments begin on time and if you are late, you will miss your chance. If you sign up and then fail to show up (and this occurs several times), you might be blocked from further participation.

*Note that the department requires that students earn 2 research credits for each marketing elective that they are enrolled in. Given that a few of you are enrolled in multiple marketing electives, the department has placed a cap on the number of research credits (experiments/assignments) you have to do. The maximum that each student does is 4 experiments/assignments. Thus, if you are enrolled in three marketing classes, you do NOT have to do 6 experiments or 6 assignments.*

## 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/vpaa/integrity/>

**MARK 1230 SCHEDULE - TENTATIVE TIMETABLE**

Week	Date	Topics	Selected Readings/ References Notes and Comments (to be updated as the course progresses)*
1	Feb 20	Course Introduction	Syllabus
2	Feb 25	Marketing and Consumer Behavior	
	Feb 27		
3	Mar 3	Historical Perspectives on Consumerism	<b>Documentary Video: Pyramids of Waste</b>
	Mar 5		
4	Mar 10	What is Happiness?	Group membership announced 11:59 p.m.
	Mar 12		"Consumption- The Happiness of Pursuit," Harvard Business Press.
5	Mar 17	Group project meeting (No class)	Project Topic due 11:59 p.m.
	Mar 19	Economic Perspectives on Consumerism	"Genuine Progress Indicator," by Redefining Progress <a href="https://gnhusa.org/genuine-progress-indicator/">https://gnhusa.org/genuine-progress-indicator/</a> <a href="http://www.converge.org.nz/pirm/genuine.htm">http://www.converge.org.nz/pirm/genuine.htm</a> <a href="http://folk.uio.no/roberan/docs/GPI%20summary%20report.pdf">http://folk.uio.no/roberan/docs/GPI%20summary%20report.pdf</a>
6	Mar 24	<b>Test 1*</b>	
	Mar 26	Money, Materialism and Happiness	<b>Grp 1 Presentation:</b> <i>CASE: Laurence Longren: End Game</i>  <b>26 Mar</b> (12:00 n)- iPeer Assessment for Case/ Topical Presentation opens (i.e. for the group that has already presented. iPeer Assessment interface remains open for this activity to accommodate future presentation of other groups).
7	Mar 31	Money, Materialism and Happiness	<b>Grp 2 Presentation:</b> <i>"Estimated Prevalence of Compulsive Buying Behavior in the United States," American Journal of Psychiatry 163:1806-1812 (October 2006) by Koran, et al. (online)</i> <a href="http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/article.aspx?articleID=97146">http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/article.aspx?articleID=97146</a>
	Apr 2	Money, Materialism and Happiness	<b>Grp 3 Presentation:</b> <i>TBA</i>



8	Apr 7	Money, Materialism and Happiness	<b>Grp 4 Presentation:</b> <i>CASE: Clust.com: Dream More and Pay Less</i>
	Apr 9	Religious Perspectives on Consumerism	<b>Grp 5 Presentation:</b> Northeast Christian Church Worship Service 05 January 2020. "Significant: The American Demise" <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIH8llaQIQ&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIH8llaQIQ&amp;feature=youtu.be</a> (message starts at the 32:00 mark)  CILE (The Research Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics) Public Lecture "Consumerism from Environmental and Ethical Perspectives" 06/01/2014 <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gx17GtW9srl">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gx17GtW9srl</a>
9	Apr 14	Managing Consumerism	<b>Grp 6 Presentation:</b> <i>Lean Consumption</i>  <b>Grp 7 Presentation:</b> <i>Affluenza</i>
	Apr 16	Consumerism and Public Policy	<b>Grp 8 Presentation:</b> <i>Doing Business in a Post Growth Society</i>
10	Apr 21	Lifestyle Choices and Personal Goals	<b>Grp 9 Presentation:</b> <i>CASE: Patagonia's Sustainability Strategy- Don't Buy Our Products</i>
	<b>Apr 23</b>	<b>Test 2*</b>	
11	Apr 28	Special Topics	<b>Grp 10 Presentation:</b> <i>TBA</i>
	<b>Apr 30</b>	<b>Holiday</b>	
12	May 5	Final Briefing on Presentations	Presentation slides due 11:59 p.m.
	May 7	Group Presentations	
13	May 12	Group Presentations	
	May 14	Group Presentations	
14	May 19	Group Presentations	<b>21 May</b> (11:59 p.m.)- Final (written) report due  <b>22 May</b> (12:01 a.m.)- iPeer Assessment opens.  <b>23 May</b> (5:00 p.m.)- iPeer Assessment closes.  <b>26 May</b> (5:00 p.m.)- Individual peer assessment scores for two events released on CANVAS.  <b>28 May</b> (5:00 p.m.)- cut-off for any queries regarding iPeer scores

\*Reference materials and cases will be provided by the professor to the assigned group(s) unless otherwise indicated as available through the web (URL provided)