COURSE OVERVIEW

Morality, ethics and values are fundamental aspects of the human condition. Thus, it is not surprising that these notions also inform our thoughts, feelings, decisions and behaviors in the consumption domain. There has been growing interest in recent years in understanding when, how and why our values, morals and ethics affect and are, in turn, affected by our consumption behavior. In this seminar, our goals are to gain a critical sense for this understanding, become familiar with the conceptual perspectives informing it, and think about meaningful ways in which we can enhance this understanding.

We will do this through academic readings on different aspects of morality, ethics and their intersection with consumption behavior. These readings represent recent work from various behavioral disciplines. When you read each article, make sure you understand the boundaries, i.e., what are the questions that the paper seeks to address, and more importantly, what questions remain unanswered. Also pay specific attention to the methodologies employed by empirical papers in addressing the research objectives. Please come to class with your own ideas on each topic that we can discuss.

REQUIREMENTS

1. **Class participation (30%).**

   For every class session, three or four students will have the responsibility to present, briefly, one assigned paper. As the presenter, you will need to summarize, in one page, what was done in the paper as well as your critical assessment of it. We will rotate the presenters in each class, so that all students will present an approximately equal number of times. *Regardless of whether or not you are responsible for a paper, please read all the papers that have been assigned for each day.*

   Your class participation grade will be based on your:
   - active discussion of all assigned papers
   - presentation and critique of the papers you are responsible for

2. **A research proposal (40%).**

   Choose a research question of interest to you. In doing so, feel free to go beyond the topics that we discuss in class. (As you probably know, in this seminar we merely scratch the surface as far as breadth of topics as well as depth within a topic are concerned. I had to exercise severe restraint in deciding on topics and papers.) Your research paper should communicate not only an in-depth understanding of your chosen area, including research that is not discussed in class, but also a clear sense of how you would study the research question of interest to you.

   A brief outline of your research idea is due during the fifth week of class (3/6). There are two other deliverables: (1) a literature review of the area(s) underlying your research question, together with the basic propositions you seek to investigate (due 4/3); (2) a write-up of the design and methodology that you propose to employ to address your research question (due 4/24).
comprehensive proposal is due on the last day of class (5/16) when you will also present your proposal to the class.

You are not required to conduct any data collection or analyses for this project. However, you are required to develop a proposal that is detailed enough in terms of the proposed hypotheses, design, method and procedure so that I am able to assess the proposal meaningfully and give you constructive feedback (please see Appendix for some tips on writing a behavioral research paper).

3. **A final exam (30%).**

   The last component of your grade is an open-book final exam, in which you will be tested on several of the topics we discuss in class. More about this later.
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TENTATIVE READING LIST

JANUARY 30: COURSE INTRODUCTION


JBR editorial on anti-consumption

FEBRUARY 6: CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES


FEBRUARY 13: CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES (GUEST SPEAKER: JARED PEIFER)


FEBRUARY 20: MORAL TRADEOFFS


Paharia, N., K. Vohs, & R. Deshpandé (2013). Sweatshop labor is wrong unless the shoes are cute: Cognition can both hurt and help motivated moral reasoning. *Organizational Behavior and Human
**FEBRUARY 27: MORAL JUDGMENTS**


**MARCH 6: MORALITY AND EMOTIONS**


**MARCH 13: MORAL ANTECEDENTS**


**MARCH 27: MORAL LICENSING**


**APRIL 3: PROSOCIAL BEHAVIORS**


**APRIL 10: ETHICAL CONSUMPTION**


**APRIL 24: MORAL RESISTANCE**


**MAY 1: IMMORALITY**


**MAY 8: BOP**

