COURSE OVERVIEW

Morality, ethics and values are fundamental elements 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.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives for this course are for you to (1) gain substantive knowledge and think critically about the psychology of morality and ethics (2) deepen your understanding of the role and applications of morality to the consumption domain, (3) learn how to conduct and effectively communicate research in this domain, and (4) develop your ability to generate and examine, both qualitatively and quantitatively, interesting and important research questions.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Class participation (35%).

   For every class session, three 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. Research proposals (45%).

   You will need to turn in three five-page (maximum) research proposals during the course of the
semester. 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 might suspect, 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 soon after the fourth class session. There are two other deliverables: (1) a literature review of the area(s) underlying your research question, together with the basic predictions you seek to investigate (2) a comprehensive proposal is due at the end of the course.

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. **Research Presentation (20%).**

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.
## TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

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TENTATIVE READING LIST

SESSION 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION

Campbell, M. & K. Winterich (2017), Editorial, JCP Special Issue on Marketplace Morality


SESSION 2: CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES


SESSION 3: MORAL ANTECEDENTS


SESSION 4: MORAL TradeOFFS


SESSION 5: MORAL JUDGMENTS 1


SESSION 6: MORAL JUDGMENTS 2


SESSION 7: MORALITY AND EMOTIONS


SESSION 8: MORAL LICENSING


SESSION 9: ETHICAL CONSUMPTION

SESSION 10: MORAL RESISTANCE


SESSION 11: IMMORALITY


SESSION 12: PROSOCIAL BEHAVIORS


SESSION 13: JCP SPECIAL ISSUE ON MORALITY (2018)

In this session, you will pick a paper that you really like from the JCP Special Issue on Marketplace Morality and discuss the paper and why you think it is good.