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

You need to come to each session prepared to discuss each article in depth and to present your thoughts about the major ideas, contributions, and shortcomings of each article. You need to also comment on and critique the research ideas of the other students, as described next.

As noted above, you will also generate an idea for a study each week, starting the second week. You will be responsible for writing up an approximately one-page (double-spaced) note for each class that describes an idea for a study based on the week’s readings, e.g., a new study or studies designed to extend a particular paper, build a bridge between two or more papers, or investigate a real-world phenomenon that relates in some way to the papers for that week. In your write-up, please specify the research question, why it is important, your predictions, and a brief overview of the proposed design (e.g., the independent and dependent variables). Plan on presenting your ideas in class.

Finally, you will take one of your idea papers and develop it into a full-blown research proposal (approx.
10 - 15 pages). If you absolutely must, you can develop a completely new idea for this proposal as well; please discuss with me. You will make a brief presentation of your research proposal in the final session of the class. The final paper will be due two weeks after your presentation.

The proposal will be based on in-depth reading in your selected areas and going beyond papers discussed in class. Your proposal should have the following structure: objective/introduction, theoretical development/ hypotheses, methodology and analysis:

**Introduction:** This section motivates the research by briefly discussing the general importance of the topic, and the likely contribution/s of the proposed research.

**Theoretical development:** This section integrates relevant past research, which, along with logic and argumentation, leads up to testable hypotheses.

**Methodology:** This section includes details about experimental design, subjects, procedure, measurement of variables, instructions to subjects, manipulation checks etc.
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


SESSON 5: MORAL JUDGMENTS 1


SESSON 6: MORAL JUDGMENTS 2


SESSON 7: MORALITY AND EMOTIONS


SESSON 8: MORAL LICENSING


SESSON 9: ETHICAL CONSUMPTION (April 6)

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.

SESSION 14: PRESENTATIONS