



<b>Semester:</b> Spring 2026	<b>Class Day/Time:</b> Wed 6:15-7:45p	<b>Location:</b> <a href="#">Zoom</a>
<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Gizem Ceylan	<b>E-mail:</b> Ceylan.7@osu.edu	
<b>Office Location:</b> Fisher 524	<b>Office Hours:</b> Tuesday 4-5pm	<b>Location:</b> <a href="#">Zoom</a>

**Course Description:**

Every day, we make countless decisions as consumers—what to buy, how much to spend, which brands to trust, and when to act on impulse. But what drives these decisions? This course explores the psychological, social, and cognitive processes that shape consumer behavior. Through a combination of foundational concepts and real-world case discussions, we will examine how consumers think, feel, and make decisions—and how marketers can use these insights to create more effective strategies. Topics include motivation, perception, attention, memory, decision-making heuristics and biases, social influence, habit formation, and the role of AI and algorithms in shaping the modern consumer experience. By the end of the course, students will be equipped with frameworks to analyze consumer behavior, diagnose marketing challenges, and design strategies grounded in how consumers actually think and behave.

Each week pairs a core concept with a case discussion, allowing you to connect theory to practice. You will learn to recognize psychological principles at work in everyday marketing—from pricing and product design to digital personalization and social media influence—and develop the analytical skills to apply these insights in your own career.

The course structure pairs case discussions during our synchronous Wednesday meetings with conceptual lecture material delivered asynchronously each week. Asynchronous content covers the core concepts; synchronous sessions focus on applying those concepts through case analysis and discussion.

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

<https://osu.zoom.us/j/93384059112?pwd=i3pD0D9Q6R1ZV3kXzQxIElcnvc9H9a.1>

**Pre-Requirements:** BUSML 7202 or equivalent

**Course Format:** Wednesday lectures will take place synchronously on Zoom from 6:15-7:45pm. All lectures will be recorded and posted to Carmen. Asynchronous content can be consumed at a time that is convenient for you each week.

**Office Hours:** Available by appointment. Please email Ceylan.7@osu.edu to schedule a time. Please clarify whether you would like to meet in-person in Fisher 524 (OSU main campus) or virtually.

**Required Texts/Materials:** A course pack with Harvard Business Publishing Education including cases for synchronous discussions. The link and cost details will be shared on Carmen before the first class.

**Evaluation Criteria**

The table below details all graded components, their point values, deadlines, and collaboration requirements.

Category	Assignment	Points	% Grade	Deadline	Type
<b>TEAM PROJECT</b>	Deliverable 1: Defining a Brand Problem and Collecting Consumer Insights	20	10%	Before class on 3/25	C
	Deliverable 2: Brand Association Map and Ad Testing	20	10%	Before class on 4/8	C
	Deliverable 3: Decision Environment & Social Influence	20	10%	Before class on 4/15	C

	Final Presentation (8 min + 2 min Q&A)	50	24%	In class on 4/22	C
	Final Paper (5–7 pages)	10	5%	11:59 pm on 4/22	C
<b>IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION</b>	Case discussion participation (Weeks 1–6, 15 pts each)	90	43%	Weekly during class	N
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Type	Requirements
<b>N (Non-collaborative)</b>	Non-collaborative, original comments and individual participation.
<b>C (Collaboration Required)</b>	An explicit expectation for collaboration among students (i.e., group work). All submitted work must reflect the team's collective effort.

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### Learning Goals and Objectives

- Understand the psychological, social, and cognitive processes that drive consumer decisions
- Apply key frameworks including goal systems framework, decision-making models, and behavioral economics principles to real business problems
- Analyze how perception, attention, and memory shape consumer responses to marketing stimuli
- Identify how heuristics, biases, and choice architecture influence consumer decision-making and can be leveraged in marketing strategy
- Evaluate the role of social influences, word-of-mouth, and persuasion in shaping consumer attitudes and behavior
- Understand how habits form, persist, and can be disrupted—and the implications for brand loyalty and product adoption
- Critically assess how AI, algorithms, and digital personalization are reshaping the consumer experience
- Develop the ability to diagnose consumer behavior challenges and recommend evidence-based marketing strategies through case analysis

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### Graded Component Details

**Team Project (120 points):** Teams of 5 students will select a brand in Week 1 and build a cumulative consumer behavior analysis throughout the course. The project consists of three deliverables, a final presentation, and a final paper:

**Deliverable 1: Defining a Brand Problem and Collecting Consumer Insights (20 points)** — Due March 25. Covers Weeks 1–2 concepts. Conduct a consumer insight exercise and apply the Goal Systems framework to diagnose why consumers do or don't engage with the brand.

**Deliverable 2: Brand Association Map and Ad Testing (20 points)** — Due April 8. Covers Weeks 3–4 concepts. Analyze how consumers perceive, attend to, and remember the brand. Develop 2 ads and test them by using LLMs.

**Deliverable 3: Decision Environment Design and Social Influence (20 points)** — Due April 15. Covers Weeks 5–6 concepts. Identify heuristics and biases at play, propose choice architecture improvements, and recommend a social influence strategy. Map the decision journey for the category.

**Final Presentation (50 points)** — April 22 (extended session 6:15–8:30pm). Each team presents an 8-minute synthesis of their consumer behavior analysis followed by 2 minutes of Q&A.

**Final Paper (10 points)** — Due April 22. A 5–7 page written synthesis that compiles and integrates all three deliverables into a cohesive consumer behavior strategy document.

**In-Class Participation (90 points).** This is an upper-level course such that many of you will be entering the business world in a matter of weeks (if not already doing so!), where you will be expected to actively participate. Your participation score will consist of your attendance and your participation during case discussions during the semester.

**Case Discussions:** Sharing insights and viewpoints in class is essential for learning in this course. All students are expected to contribute to class discussions. Students should be prepared to comment during sessions and may be randomly cold called during discussions. Completing the required readings and cases for each session is the best way to prepare for class discussion. Evaluation of class participation is based on the quality, rather than the quantity, of comments. Each synchronous session is worth 15 points (Weeks 1–6). You have the ability to ‘make up’ one session during the semester that you either missed or performed poorly on. Please contact Professor Ceylan (Ceylan.7@osu.edu) if you would like a make-up assignment for a case discussion.

### Course Schedule

The table below outlines what to complete before each class session (asynchronous preparation), what happens during class (synchronous activity), and what is due or recommended after class. Deadlines marked with ⚠️ are graded deliverables.

Week	Date	Topic	Before Class (Asynchronous)	In Class (Synchronous Wed 6:15p)	After Class
Week 1	March 4	<b>Introduction to Consumer Behavior</b>	Watch asynchronous lecture: What is consumer behavior? Research methods and consumer insights	Case Discussion: Boston Beer	Form teams, select brand for team project
Week 2	March 11	<b>Motivation and Goals</b>	Watch asynchronous lecture: Needs, goals, and the Goal Systems framework Read Peloton case	Case Discussion: Peloton	Begin working on Deliverable 1
<b>SPRING BREAK — No Class</b>					
Week 3	March 25	<b>Perception, Attention, and Memory</b>	Watch asynchronous lecture: How consumers process, attend to, and remember marketing stimuli Read “Marketing at the Speed of Culture” case	Case Discussion: Marketing at the Speed of Culture ⚠️ <b>Deliverable 1 due before class</b>	Begin working on Deliverable 2
Week 4	April 1	<b>Consumer Decision Making + Habits</b>	Watch asynchronous lecture: Decision rules, high vs. low effort decisions, habit formation Read Duolingo case	Case Discussion: Duolingo — On a Streak	Continue working on Deliverable 2
Week 5	April 8	<b>Heuristics, Biases, and Choice Architecture</b>	Watch asynchronous lecture: Behavioral economics, nudges, context effects, and framing	Guest Speaker: Shalena Srna Shelley (VP Design Strategy & Research, JP Morgan Chase)	Begin working on Deliverable 3

				⚠ <b>Deliverable 2 due before class</b>	
<b>Week 6</b>	April 15	<b>Social Influences and Persuasion</b>	Watch asynchronous lecture: Word-of-mouth, social proof, influence tactics, and persuasion principles	Guest Speaker: Matthew Burns (Managing Director, Rethink Social)  ⚠ <b>Deliverable 3 due before class</b>	Begin preparing final presentation and paper
<b>Week 7</b>	April 22	<b>Final Presentations</b>	Finalize presentation and paper ⚠ <b>Final Presentation due in class</b>	Team Presentations (8 min + 2 min Q&A) Extended session: 6:15–8:30 pm	⚠ <b>Final Paper due by 11:59 pm on 4/22</b>

Note: March 16–20 is Spring Break (no class).

### Grading Scale

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
93–100%	90–92%	87–89%	83–86%	80–82%	77–79%	73–76%	70–72%	67–69%	60–66%	0–59%

Note: Above percentages are % of overall points earned.

### Additional Policies

**Late Submission Policy:** Deliverables are due before the start of class on the dates indicated. Late submissions will receive a 10% penalty per day. Extensions may be granted in extreme circumstances (e.g., medical emergencies) with proper documentation. Please contact Professor Ceylan (Ceylan.7@osu.edu) as soon as you know of a potential problem or conflict with a deadline.

**Attendance / Participation Expectations:** Any student who fails to attend without giving prior notification to the instructor will be dis-enrolled after the third instructional day of the term, or the second scheduled class meeting of the course, whichever occurs first, per OSU policy. Missing case discussions will result in a lower class participation score.

**Communication:** I will use the Carmen email system and Buckeye Mail to contact you about the class. It is your responsibility to check official emails. However, if you are looking to get in touch with me please email me at Ceylan.7@osu.edu rather than through the Carmen system as I check this email much more frequently.

**Academic Conduct:** If a student is suspected of, or reported to have committed, academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to COAM. If you have questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me. See OSU Prohibited Conduct — Section 3335-23-04(A).

**Course-specific Copyright Policy:** Material provided by the instructor may not be re-posted anywhere without the explicit permission of instructor. See University Copyright Policy.

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately at the beginning of the semester to discuss your accommodations. The Office for Disability Services can be contacted: (614) 292-3307; slds@osu.edu; and to schedule exam accommodations: slds-exam@osu.edu.

**University Policies, Services and Resources:** go.osu.edu/UPolicies