CRS 721: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN APPAREL AND RETAILING
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER, APPAREL AND RETAIL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
SPRING 2016
WEDNESDAYS; 6 – 8:50 P.M.
217 STONE BUILDING

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Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Current theories and approaches to research in consumer behavior. Application of consumer behavior models to apparel, apparel-related products, and retailing through individualized research projects.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Describe trends within consumer behavior research as a whole and specifically as applied to apparel and retailing.
- Define the philosophical foundations of consumer behavior research.
- Evaluate and discuss the use of theoretical and conceptual models within the framework of consumer behavior research.
- Apply knowledge and understanding of the different methodologies used and their appropriate applications within research on consumer behavior.
- Assess the diverse research techniques and topics within contemporary consumer behavior research.

CONTENT OUTLINE:
The course is focused on understanding current research in consumer behavior. Concepts important to the design and implementation of research in consumer behavior form the foundation for material covered throughout the semester. You will be expected to glean from the readings the key components of designing, implementing, and theorizing about contemporary research in consumer behavior, and to then apply and synthesize such knowledge through an in-depth investigation of a conceptual framework that can be used in consumer behavior research and is pertinent to your particular research topic/interest.

EVALUATION:
Participation
The course is conducted in seminar format, with several content related readings assigned for discussion each week. Learning is emergent, in that it is the result of reading and discussing the ideas and concepts that surface within the articles. It is therefore expected that ALL students will contribute to the discussion each night. Do not underestimate the impact that lack of participation has not just on one’s grade, but on the overall learning outcomes that one gains from being actively engaged in discussion. A note on reading: it is best to read the articles in the order listed on the syllabus. Readings are not only assigned relative to the topic for the week, but relative to other readings within the week.
Discussion Leadership
Each student will be assigned discussion leadership for two weeks of readings. This involves presenting the key issues pertaining to the consumer behavior concept(s) dealt with during the assigned weeks. These issues should be presented in summary form and based on research using source material outside of the readings assigned for the week. This also involves developing discussion questions to lead the discussion and facilitate dialogue about the assigned readings. CB textbooks can be borrowed from the professor in order to locate background information on the topic. At the end of the class period for which the student is discussion leader, he or she will be expected to **hand in a 2-3 page summary of background research (along with reference list) on the topic as well as the discussion questions that he or she developed for each reading.**

Reaction Papers
All students are expected to submit a weekly reaction paper (3 pages maximum) in preparation for each discussion. Due at the end of the class period, reaction papers must address all of the readings covered for the week, and should consist of more than just a summary of the readings. Reaction papers should be based on thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas (and can be organized as a “thematic interpretation” of reading content—analysis and synthesis—rather than an annotated bibliography). Paper content should indicate a thorough and critical reading of each article and thoughtful preparation for the week’s discussion. Paper content should NOT consist of simply “I like this paper/I hate this paper/This paper was hard,” or similarly lame and superficial comments. **A total of 7 reaction papers will be submitted.** There are a total of 10 weeks of discussion. A reaction paper is not required for the two weeks that you are discussion leader (you will hand in your summary instead—see above point). You therefore have one week “off,” wherein you do not have to hand in a reaction paper. Use it wisely. However, you must still be prepared for and participate in the discussion for that week.

Term Paper and Presentation
A term paper that investigates in-depth a conceptual framework for use in consumer behavior research is required. This paper will be evaluated based on depth of perspective and insight into the framework as well as integration of relevant concepts covered during the course. **APA guidelines must be followed in the preparation of the paper and an abstract must be included.** A succinct, professional presentation of the topic during class time is also required. Each student will work with the Professor to determine an appropriate topic for the paper. Presentations will occur during the final class meeting. Guidelines for the paper requirements are provided during the first week of the semester. The breakdown for evaluation is as follows:

- 100 points (20%) Discussion participation
- 130 points (25%) Discussion leadership (including 2-3 page summary and questions; 65 points x 2 weeks = 120 total)
- 70 points (15%) Reaction papers (10 points per paper)
- 200 points (40%) Term paper and presentation

For a total of 500 points. Grades are assigned on a scale of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and F. **As this is a doctoral core course, late work will not be accepted, regardless of reason.** There is no final exam.

The UNCG Academic Honor Code and Integrity Policy will be followed. Students are expected to be informed of the guidelines of the **UNCG Academic Integrity Policy** and will be required to sign their names indicating their adherence to the stated guidelines on all major work submitted. Students are expected to follow APA guidelines for referencing ideas taken from published work.
**TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:**

**Week One: January 13**
- Introductions
- Course overview
- Topic Assignments
- Discussion: What, exactly, is a conceptual framework?

*Required Reading:*

**Week Two: January 20**

*Topics:*
- Identity, the Self and Society: Understanding the Consumer

*Required Readings:*

**Week Three: January 27**

*Topics:*
- Consumer Groups:
  - Demographics
  - Psychographics
- Cross-Cultural Consumer Research

*Required Readings:*
Week Four: February 3

Topics:
- Motivation
- Values
- Involvement

Required Readings:

Week Five: February 10

Individual meetings for Term Paper

Week Six: February 17

Topics:
- Attitudes
- Intentions
- Behavior

Required Readings:
**Week Seven: February 24**

**Topics:**
- Consumer decision-making

**Required Readings:**


**Week Eight: March 2**

**DUE: Abstract of Term Paper—DRAFT**

**Topics:**
- Innovation and Diffusion
- Impulse Buying

**Required Readings:**


**Week Nine: March 9**

**No Class: Spring Break**
**Week Ten: March 16**

*Topics: Doing Consumer Research*

- Focus on Data Collection Techniques:
  - Surveys
  - Experiments
  - Observation

*Required Readings:*


**Week Eleven: March 23**

*Topics: Doing Consumer Research*

- Focus on Data Collection Techniques:
  - Focus Groups
  - Interviews

- The Internet and Consumer Research

*Required Readings:*


**Week Twelve: March 30**

No Class
Week Thirteen: April 6
Topics: Doing Consumer Research
- Data Analysis Fundamentals

Required Readings:

Week Fourteen: April 13
Topics:
- Issues in consumer research
- Synthesis

Required Readings:

Week Fifteen: April 20
- DUE: Term Paper Presentations
- Wrap-up

Friday April 29th: Final Term Paper Due by 5:00 p.m.