

# 18FQ MKTG 4910-01: CONSUMPTION AND HAPPINESS



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M, W, 3:40 – 5:45 pm

Classroom: Pigott 101

Office Hours: Before class or by appt. (Pigott 401)

CANVAS: <https://seattleu.instructure.com/login>

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to explore the link between consumption and *happiness*, or subjective assessments of well-being. Specifically, we will examine definitions and measures of happiness and discuss/critique contemporary research relating happiness to different types of consumption practices, including collaborative consumption, compensatory consumption, overconsumption, consumption of material goods versus experiences, and consumption for the self versus for others. The most important goal of this course is to provide students with tools to increase their own personal happiness levels by exposing them to recent advances in behavioral science (primarily from the fields of psychology, marketing, and behavioral economics) on the determinants of a fulfilling and happy life. This course is an undergraduate elective at Albers designed for Marketing majors (MKTG 3500 is a prerequisite).

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

It is expected that upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Explain how economic and subjective well-being has been historically conceptualized and measured
- Articulate the bi-directional link between different types of consumption and subjective well-being
- Understand how the actions of marketers can enhance short-term and long-term happiness levels among consumers
- Develop a marketing plan that has the potential to enhance a target segment's short-term and long-term happiness, while still fulfilling organizational goals
- Describe tools and techniques that may increase personal happiness levels, according to recent research findings from psychology, marketing, and behavioral economics
- Enhance your teamwork and verbal/written communication skills

## COURSE MATERIALS

You will need the required text. All other course-related material will be available on CANVAS or distributed in class, unless otherwise specified.

- Raghunathan, Raj, *If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You Happy?* (2016), Portfolio/Penguin (available for purchase at the SU Bookstore; also available for purchase online)
- Other materials (e.g., links to videos, additional readings, cases, etc.) for this course can be found in the "Resources" section of CANVAS and will be updated throughout the quarter – unless specified, students are responsible for printing out additional readings/cases and keeping up with the reading throughout the quarter.

## LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Your performance will be evaluated based on individual assignments, team assignments, and class participation. Your grade in this course will be determined based on your performance on the following components, both in absolute terms and relative to your peers (i.e., other MKTG 4910 students):

- Individual Components (65%)
  - Final Exam (20%)
  - Midterm Exam (15%)
  - Spending Diary and Reflection Paper (10%)
  - Core Happiness Exercises and Reflection Paper (10%)
  - Attendance, Professionalism, and Participation (10%)
- Team Components (35%)
  - Class Discussion Facilitation (10%)
  - Happiness Index Analysis (10%)
  - Happiness Marketing Plan Project and Presentation (15%)

### **INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS (65% OF COURSE GRADE)**

#### **Final Exam (20% of course grade)**

The final exam is a comprehensive closed-book, in-class exam. The final will be a multiple choice/short-answer exam based on lectures, readings, videos, and in-class discussion. Please anticipate conflicts and let me know if you need to take the final exam early (no late exams will be administered).

#### **Midterm Exam (15% of course grade)**

The midterm exam is a take-home exam that will be distributed in class one week before it is due. The midterm will be a short-answer exam based on lectures, readings, videos, and in-class discussion.

#### **Spending Diary and Reflection Paper (10% of course grade)**

The spending diary involves recording every dollar you spend for one full month (exact dates to be specified). Each month's spending should be listed separately. It is not necessary to list every item you purchase separately – you may design expenditure categories. You should probably have at least 10 categories but you can have as many as you want. The categories should be a reflection of your spending behavior. They should be detailed in areas where your spending is most prevalent. For example, if you buy a lot of recreational equipment, you might want to have this as a spending category. You might also want to create categories for different hobbies. For example, if you spend a significant amount of money streaming music, you might want to designate this as a separate category. An important part of the assignment is to reflect on several aspects of your purchases. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Which of your expenses do you think are influenced by advertising or other social pressures?
- Which of your purchases would you classify as status items?
- Which purchases provide you with the most happiness (be sure to specify what type of happiness you are referring to)?
- Did you buy anything that you regret buying? Why?

In addition to submitting an organized summary of your spending diary, you will be asked to include a brief reflection paper where you provide answers to questions like those listed above and add any insights you gleaned from your diary about the link between consumption and happiness. More details about the spending diary and the reflection paper will be provided in class throughout the quarter.

**Core Happiness Exercises and Reflection Paper (10% of course grade)**

During the quarter, you will be asked to complete seven “happiness exercises,” which relate to the seven “deadly happiness sins” and seven “habits of the highly happy” that are discussed in the book. It is important to be open-minded about the exercises and to take them as seriously as you can, even if you feel skeptical about their validity. You should complete each of seven core happiness exercises online at <https://www.happysmarts.com/happiness-exercises/>, where you will find a link that takes you to a password-protected online journal template. Please complete each exercise by the date specified in the course schedule. When you have completed each of the seven exercises, you will be given the option to download a report or receive a summary email for the exercise, as a PDF file. Please save the completed report for each exercise in your email or on your desktop. Towards the end of the quarter, you will be asked to submit the seven reports in CANVAS all at once after combining them into a single file and appending a brief reflection paper where you retrospectively assess the value of the various exercises. More details about the exercises and the reflection paper will be provided in class.

**Attendance, Professionalism, and Participation (10% of course grade)**

*Attendance.* Class attendance is mandatory. It is strongly recommended that you attend all sessions and remain in the classroom for the duration of class. If you must miss all or part of a class due to unavoidable circumstances, please inform me beforehand by clicking on the “Notifications” link in CANVAS (sending me an email to inform me about your absence is not necessary).

*Professionalism.* I expect students to complete the assigned readings, to be on time for class, and to be respectful to me and to each other. To provide an optimal learning experience, please refrain from activities that may distract others. Such activities include arriving late, participating in side conversations, and using electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, tablets, etc.) in class.

*Participation.* All students are asked to participate in class discussions by providing substantive, well-formulated comments. Students should prepare for class by completing all assigned readings and watching the assigned videos. In addition to the ~20-minute TED talks that you will be watching prior to most class sessions, you will be asked to watch the hour-long movie “Happy” (Director: Roko Belic), which is available on Netflix or rentable on iTunes for \$2.99. Additionally, I would like you to complete a brief “Student Goal Form” after our first class meeting. Halfway through the quarter, I will ask you to complete a “Mid-Quarter Feedback Form.” Failing to complete these two forms may negatively impact your participation grade. Impromptu quizzes and extra assignments/readings may be given during the quarter to ensure that students are “keeping up” with class readings and lectures. Keep in mind that you obviously cannot participate in a class when you are not present, even if the absence is excused. While the participation grade is subjective, it will not be arbitrary and will primarily reflect the quality (not quantity) of your in-class comments.

*Optional Contributions.* In this course, we will spend time discussing happiness/subjective well-being in the context of consumption and marketing. To fuel this discussion, you are welcome to post recent articles or video clips about marketing to the designated discussion board in CANVAS. These submissions, which are completely optional, should be relevant to a topic being covered in class. Your sources of information may include print and online newspapers and periodicals or academic journals. In addition to posting the content or link, you should briefly describe why the submission is relevant to this class. Please post no more than one relevant article/video per week. However, you are encouraged to comment on any/all posts that other students provide. I will tweet particularly interesting and relevant

articles or video links (@mathisaac) that I receive with the hash tag #mktghappy. If you post or comment on an article or video clip, you may be asked to present it during class and explain its relevance, which can potentially impact your participation grade.

### **TEAM COMPONENTS (35% OF COURSE GRADE)**

Students will be grouped into teams (of ~3-4 students per team) by the second week of class. You should expect to spend time outside of class working on team assignments. Individual contributions to team assignments are considered an integral aspect of the course. To ensure equal participation, each team must submit a single hard-copy Statement of Work (signed by all team members) along with each team assignment describing the specific contributions made by each member and quantifying relative performance of each member. Scores of individual team members may be adjusted to reflect uneven contributions.

#### **Class Discussion Facilitation (10% of course grade)**

Each team will be assigned to facilitate a 20-minute class discussion about an expanded set of videos and articles (not assigned to the entire class). Facilitation may include a brief presentation of the videos and articles, but must involve class participation (in the form of an exercise or game) and should be both creative and informative. Each team is expected to submit a detailed summary of their assigned videos and readings (in Word), which I may share with all students, and a copy of all presentation materials (in PowerPoint). More details about the class discussion facilitation assignment, and assignments of team to specific dates, videos, and articles will be provided in class throughout the quarter.

#### **Happiness Index Analysis (10% of course grade)**

Students will be working with the Happiness Alliance, a grassroots nonprofit organization that was formed to increase happiness levels at the individual and community level. Each team member will be responsible for completing a Happiness Index survey, and each team will then have the opportunity to analyze a dataset of completed survey responses at a community and/or city-level. Each team will generate insights from this data and present a brief report to the class and to a representative from the Happiness Alliance.

#### **Happiness Marketing Plan Project and Presentation (15% of course grade)**

Students will be assigned to work on an actual marketing project for Bloodworks Northwest (<http://www.bloodworksnw.org/about>), a non-profit organization. Bloodworks collects, tests, and distributes blood to nearly 90 hospitals in the Pacific Northwest. Bloodworks relies on blood donors and has recently launched an app designed to make it easier and more rewarding for donors to schedule and donate blood. This assignment is designed to help you, a future marketer, apply readings, class discussions and your own reflections to a real organizational setting. The primary goal of your plan is to enhance Bloodworks donors' well-being (i.e., to increase short-term and long-term happiness among donors), focusing specifically on current and potential app users. Note that the implementation of the plan should be mutually beneficial. In other words, both potential donors and the organization (including employees) should benefit from your proposed marketing efforts. In your plan, you may cover the following content: introduce the service and its present marketing mix strategies; sketch the profile of the target Bloodworks app user and explain their motivation(s); pinpoint the marketing problem(s) or challenge(s) to the organization (e.g., increase app downloads, increase app usage, increase donation frequency, etc.); present your happiness marketing ideas (including communication and promotional tactics) as specifically as possible; refer to relevant course content and justify how your

recommendations can enhance donors' well-being and benefit Bloodworks; analyze your plan's potential challenges, and the risks and benefits to Bloodworks; outline the steps to implement your plan (include potential costs and benefit). More details about Bloodworks and the specific project deliverables will be provided in class throughout the quarter.

### **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

Academic policies are detailed on the Registrar website (<https://www.seattleu.edu/redhawk-axis/academic-policies/>). These include the Academic Grading Grievance Policy and the Academic Integrity Policy. An Academic Integrity Tutorial can be found on Canvas and SU Online. Please keep in mind that academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense against the academic community. If you are not sure if a particular action is acceptable according to the Academic Integrity Policy, you should check with me before engaging in it.

In addition to the Academic Integrity Policy, the following rules apply to this class:

- Team projects are to be discussed and prepared by team members only.
- All individual quizzes and exams should be solely your own, completed individually, and discussed with no one.
- Solutions to quizzes and exams should never be discussed with students that may potentially enroll in later sections of this course.

### **DISABILITY SERVICES**

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an 'invisible disability' such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.

### **OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. This prohibition includes sexual misconduct, which encompasses sexual harassment and sexual violence. Seattle U remains committed to providing a safe and equitable learning, living, and working environment. Seattle U offers emergency, medical, and other support resources, as well as assistance with safety and support measures, to community members who have experienced or been impacted by sexual misconduct.

Seattle U requires all faculty and staff to notify the University's Title IX Coordinator if they become aware of any incident of sexual misconduct experienced by a student.

For more information, please visit <https://www.seattleu.edu/equity/>. If you have any questions or concerns, you may also directly contact the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Equity (email: [oi@seattleu.edu](mailto:oi@seattleu.edu); phone: 206.296.2824) University Resources and Policies.