



20FQ MKTG 4910: CONSUMPTION & HAPPINESS

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Sec. 01: T, Th, 3:45 am-5:50 pm (Zoom)

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. Of course, we would be remiss if we did not also consider the short- and long-term effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on both consumption and happiness. 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 (i.e., by *passing* 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 happiness
- 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, 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, handouts, cases, etc.) for this course can be found under "Modules" in the corresponding week of CANVAS and will be updated throughout the quarter.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Given the public health challenges presented by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, my course will involve “synchronous” learning this quarter rather than face-to-face instruction. Synchronous means we’ll all be together at the same time, and we’ll be doing that using Zoom. It can work really well if we have the bandwidth and quiet space. This is my preferred approach as it helps me get to know you, as well as allowing for an easy switch between whole-group and small-group discussions. We’ll also take breaks: we get tired more quickly using the Zoom format compared to a face-to-face class. Students and faculty have reported a more engaging class experience when using video on Zoom. We know not everyone has the ability to have their camera on all the time, for a variety of reasons. If you aren’t able to do so, be sure to stay connected in other ways (in chat or vocally).

I will regularly ask for your feedback on how the class format is working for you. Expect there to be a few changes as the quarter progresses; in any changes, I will be putting your learning first.

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 (60%)
 - Final Exam (20%)
 - Midterm Exam (20%)
 - Spending Diary and Reflection Paper (5%)
 - Core Happiness Exercises and Reflection Paper (5%)
 - Attendance, Professionalism, and Participation (10%)
- Team Components (40%)
 - Class Discussion Facilitation (10%)
 - Journal Club Article Review (5%)
 - Happiness Index Analysis (5%)
 - Happiness Marketing Plan Project and Presentation (20%)

INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS (60% OF COURSE GRADE)

Final Exam (20% of course grade)

The final exam is an open-book, online exam. The final will be a multiple choice/short-answer exam based on lectures, readings, cases, 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 (20% of course grade)

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

Spending Diary and Reflection Paper (5% of course grade)

The spending diary involves recording every dollar you spend for four weeks (exact dates to be specified). 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 (5% 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. Please complete each exercise by the date specified in the course schedule. Towards the end of the quarter, you will be asked to write 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 our virtual 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, watch the assigned videos, 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, etc.

Participation. All students are asked to participate in class discussions by providing substantive, well-formulated comments. 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. 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” prior to our second class meeting. Before our third class meeting, I will ask you to upload an introductory video on CANVAS, which I call the “Video Six-Word Story.” More details about this video assignment will be provided in class. Halfway through the quarter, I will ask you to complete a “Mid-Quarter Feedback Form.” Failing to complete the video assignment or these two forms will negatively impact your participation grade. Impromptu quizzes and extra assignments may be given during the quarter to ensure that students are “keeping up” with class readings and lectures.

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. 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 (40% OF COURSE GRADE)

Students will be grouped into teams (of ~2 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 should submit a single Statement of Work (approved 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 30-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 will be provided in class throughout the quarter.

Journal Club Article Review (5% of course grade)

Each team will be assigned to facilitate a 20-minute class discussion on a brief academic journal article. Facilitation may include a brief overview of the article, but must involve class participation (in the form of an exercise or discussion) and should be both creative and informative. Each team is expected to submit a one-page summary of the article (in Word), which I may share with all students, and a copy of all presentation materials (in PowerPoint). More details about the journal club article review assignment will be provided in class throughout the quarter.

Happiness Index Analysis (5% 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 will be responsible for reviewing a Happiness Index survey created by the Happiness Alliance and will have the opportunity to analyze a dataset of completed survey responses. 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 Project Presentation (20% 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' primary goals are to mobilize potential donors, to increase donor frequency, and to identify promotions that will be effective even during COVID-19. In addition to helping Bloodworks meet these goals, your efforts should also increase donors' well-being (i.e., short-term and long-term happiness among donors). Note that your

recommendations should be mutually beneficial. In other words, both potential donors and the organization (including employees) should benefit from your proposed marketing efforts. More details about Bloodworks and the specific project deliverables will be provided in class throughout the quarter.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

My goal is to create a learning environment in which you can be successful and feel supported. I will work hard to create and improve the learning environment throughout the quarter based on my own observations of the course and your feedback on what would help you learn more. In return, I ask and encourage you to make the most of this learning opportunity. As we are using a remote learning format, you may find that some of your previously successful strategies in face-to-face and on-campus settings are less suited to this environment. I encourage you to explore the services below and to work on the assumption that in this quarter, you'll be developing some new strategies that will help you become a more flexible learner.

- Support for Remote Learning: Remember to review the online tutorial that our Center for Digital Learning and Innovation has created to support your remote learning experience: (<https://seattleu.instructure.com/courses/1563070>)
- Borrow a Chromebook or an Internet Hotspot from the library: If you are having difficulty with remote learning because your laptop is older or your internet access is patchy, the Library is currently loaning out Chromebooks and internet hotspots. You can submit a request at the following link: https://seattleu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9Bjo8RxYefZVeJv
- Library and Learning Commons (<http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/>): Includes Learning Assistance Programs, Research [Library] Services, Writing Center, Math Lab
- Academic Integrity Tutorial (<https://www.seattleu.edu/academic-integrity/resources-for-students/>)

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Be sure that you understand the following university academic policies, posted on the Registrar's website: <https://www.seattleu.edu/redhawk-axis/academic-policies/>

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Grading Grievance Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy (only for those professional programs to which it applies)

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Seattle University values diverse types of learners and is committed to ensuring that each student is afforded an equal opportunity to participate in learning experiences. For disability and other learning-related needs and accommodations that you have already arranged via Disability Services, please communicate with me during the first week of class through email or Zoom. Should concerns arise at any point in the quarter, please let me know as soon as possible.

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, but have not yet arranged support services and/or accommodations, I encourage you to do so through Disability Services staff at DS@seattleu.edu or (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process. I am committed to working with you, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

NOTICE ON RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

It is the policy of Seattle University to reasonably accommodate students who, due to the observance of religious holidays, expect to be absent or endure a significant hardship during certain days of their academic course or program. Please see, Policy on Religious Accommodations for Students (<https://www.seattleu.edu/media/policies/Policy-on-Religious-Accommodations-for-Students---FINAL.PDF>).

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: oie@seattleu.edu; phone: 206.296.2824) University Resources and Policies.