

Business 9834 – Consumer Behaviour Seminar

Winter 2025

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Date and Time: Thursdays, 8:30 – 11:30
Location: 2102
(12 Sessions)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a course on the fundamentals of experimental design couched within a marketing and consumer behavior/psychology paradigm, intended for graduate students planning a research career. The course will enable students to (1) understand and review experiments presented in academic journals, and (2) design and conduct experiments as part of research projects intended for publication in good marketing and consumer behavior/psychology journals. There are no pre-requisites for the course but it is a good idea to have passed graduate-level courses on research methods and statistics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To understand the scientific rationale of experimentation.
- To master the facets of validity for causal inference.
- To place experiments in the larger context of research.
- To understand concepts, methods, and statistics related to experiments.

MATERIALS

- Gary W. Oehlert (2010) A First Course in Design and Analysis of Experiments, available at <http://users.stat.umn.edu/~gary/book/fcdae.pdf>.
- Andrew F. Hayes (2022) Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis. (I am assigning chapters based on the 3rd edition but as far as I can tell there is not much change from the 2nd edition which you can purchase used for ~\$30).
- Other PDF readings.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Class Contribution	60%	Throughout the term
Paper Presentation	10%	March 27
Final Paper Review	30%	11:59 pm April 9, 2025
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	100%	

CLASS CONTRIBUTION (60%)

This course is a seminar, a format that requires you to prepare ahead of time and to speak. I evaluate your contribution two ways. First, I evaluate the quality and quantity of what you contribute to class discussions. Did you show evidence that you have thought about the readings and that you are well prepared for the session? Did you ask good questions or provide thoughtful answers or excellent commentary etc?

Second, throughout the semester students will lead the discussion of assigned readings by talking about and ‘teaching’ the important content of the reading in whatever manner you think will be most effective. Every time you lead the discussion, you should also distribute a hard-copy handout (no more than a page, double-sided) that summarizes, explains etc... When you lead the discussion, you may use powerpoint, but do not have to (I leave this to you). However, no reading from notes. You have to make the determination of what is important and focus on that. Get into the details where appropriate - remember this is a course on experimental design so that should always be the focus (e.g., not critiquing the theories embedded in empirical papers...).

If you are assigned an empirical research paper (as opposed to a chapter summary, for example) you must: (a) provide a detailed conceptual model (either an overall one for simpler papers or sets of models where the papers are more complicated) and (b) present the details of the experimental design (i.e. what is manipulated? How? What are the manipulation checks? What is the measure of process (if any)? Etc...). Once enrolment is finalized, I will assign readings and send out an updated syllabus.

PAPER PRESENTATION (10%)

You will present your paper idea on March 27th during class. This will take the form of a typical conference presentation with all the associated structure and formality. The presentation will be about 15 minutes long (this will be determined in part by the number of students registered), it will include motivation, contribution, research question, presentation of background literature and an explicit theoretical model (this is critical), formulation of hypotheses and a detailed explanation of your experimental design. You may not use any notes during your presentation, which must be engaging and polished.

The class and I will give you feedback after your presentation – your final paper (below) should be responsive to this feedback (especially mine – it might be helpful to think of me as the editor and the other students as reviewers).

PAPER (30%)

Find a topic: do not start with a data set, a method or some idea you have already developed elsewhere. Rather, start with a problem that is new to you that also meets the following criteria:

- Is interesting? (i.e. Would a paper addressing this problem be received with interest at the good journals in your field? Is the topic important and relevant?)
- Has enough conceptual richness that you can formulate a research question around it and develop several novel hypotheses informed by academic literature.
- Implicates a ‘consequential dependent measure’. This means it “requires participants to (a) invest a resource, such as money, time, or effort; or (b) experience a real outcome, such as receiving their chosen option” ([Inman et al. 2018](#)).

Then, write a paper about it. Since the course is only a few months long, I do not expect you to collect data. The paper must be *de novo* (e.g. independent of other current or past coursework or workplace efforts). I want this to be your work exclusively, so please do not get help conceptualizing or developing the paper. So, for example, it is not permissible to have anyone read or provide feedback on a draft of the paper prior to handing it in and it is not permissible to use any form of copy editor or assistance in writing the paper. It must represent your own work and nobody else’s. The paper must be hypothesis driven (present 2-4 hypotheses), include a conceptual model, and it must demonstrate a good grasp of the literature; it must attempt to make a contribution and put theory front and centre:

- Title Page (title, author name, and abstract).
- Statement of Contribution (see <http://www.ejcr.org/contribution-statement.htm> or <https://www.ama.org/submission-guidelines-journal-of-marketing/> under “Statement of Intended Contribution”). One page.
- Introduction section (e.g. Position paper. Why is it important? What is the contribution? What is the general approach of the paper? What is the paper’s goal? What is the motivating problem?...). This section must include a succinct and precise representation of your research question. Use examples and be clear about the nature of the motivating problem.
- Literature review and hypotheses development: derived from and supports your research question.
- Study Design: Based on an experimental framework, provide a detailed overview of your proposed experiment(s). Include your instrument(s) as an appendix. Present the details of one or two experiments.
- What specifically are your expected results? If you do not have data (I do not expect you to, but if you have it, feel free to use it), provide (mock-ups of) your results (figures, tables etc...).
- Discussion. Assume the hypotheses are supported. So what? Where do we go from here? What did you contribute? What are the limitations of this approach etc...
- You must include an explicit conceptual model. That is, there must be a theoretical figure, a picture of how you conceptualize the relationships among your core variables.
- References: must be accurate and complete.

Due: The paper is due by 11:59pm on April 9, 2025. You will upload the paper to Learn in the assignment submission space entitled, Final Paper, but please email me a PDF as a backup. I will also submit the paper to Turn It In.com. I am limiting you to 10 pages of text (not including references, tables and figures, title page and statement of contribution). Develop your ideas logically and clearly. I value depth over breadth. You are free to hand the paper in early but you may only hand it in once (I tend to grade these as I receive them).

Formatting: typed, 1.5 spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman. Use section headings and subheadings and page numbers. For other formatting issues (e.g. references, tables/figures...), adopt a style used by *Journal of Marketing* or *Journal of Consumer Research*.

COURSE RULES

I will not accept late assignments except by prior written arrangement or unless I receive what I judge to be unambiguous evidence of extenuating circumstances in which cases it is at my discretion how to handle grading. Otherwise, late assignments will earn an automatic grade of zero. Assignments that exceed page limits will receive no less than a 25% penalty.

I expect you to attend all classes and I expect you to be on time and prepared. If you plan to be absent or late, email me ahead of time. You are responsible for consulting your classmates to determine what you missed. I will not meet to provide an overview of the missing session. If you miss three or more classes, you may not hand in the final paper.

Pay attention to the quality of your writing/arguments (well-organized and articulated; specific and clear meanings; perfect formatting, etc.). Communicate in such a manner that you cannot possibly be misunderstood. Moreover, poor writing and grammar takes away from your intended contribution. I will be much harsher on poorly-written submissions.

I use Turnitin for all written assignments; “*All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com(<http://www.turnitin.com>).*” See also <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/> and https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.

ENROLLMENT RESTRICTIONS

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Ivey PhD Program, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student’s home program.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES: PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COURSE SYLLABUS

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

USE OF GENERATIVE AI

I will be explicitly clear on this issue: use of any generative AI in this course is NOT ALLOWED. Do NOT use any AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT or others) when writing your paper. I consider this an academic offence. AI checkers will be used for all papers. Moreover, I strongly suggest NOT using generative AI tools to prepare for class sessions. They severely over-simplify and will not adequately prepare you for our discussion. The class and I will ask questions and AI use for preparation becomes very clear.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. See <https://www.uwo.ca/health>. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Additionally, students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director or program coordinator.

ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION WESTERN

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

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DETAILED SESSION SCHEDULE

Session 1: Introduction (January 9)

- Oehlert Chapter 1
- Hayes Chapter 1
- Hayes Chapter 2
- Kardes (1996), "In Defense of Experimental Consumer Psychology," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 5(3), 279-296.
- Lehmann, McAlister and Staelin (2011), "Sophistication in Research in Marketing," *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4), 155-165.
- Lynch, Alba, Krishna, Morwitz and Gurhan-Canli (2012), "Knowledge Creation in Consumer Research: Multiple Routes, Multiple Criteria," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22(4), 473-485.

Session 2: Measuring Outcomes (January 16)

- Calder and Malhotra (2003), "The Behavioral Score Approach to Dependent Variables," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13(4), 387-394.
- Morales, Amir, and Lee (2017), "Keeping it Real in Experimental Research – Understanding When, Where, and How to Enhance Realism and Measure Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(2), 465-476.
- Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares (2015), "Stability and Change in Consumer Traits: Evidence From a 12-year Longitudinal Study, 2002–2013." *Journal of Marketing Research*, 52(3), 287-308.
- Wong, Rindfleisch, and Burroughs (2003), "Do Reverse-Worded Items Confound Measures in Cross-Cultural Consumer Research? The Case of the Material Values Scale," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30(1), 72-91.
- Weijters, Cabooter, and Schillewaert (2010), "The Effect of Rating Scale Format on Response Styles: The Number of Response Categories and Response Category Labels," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 27(3), 236-247.

Session 3: Validity (January 23)

- Calder, Phillips, and Tybout (1982), "The Concept of External Validity," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(3), 240-244.
- Lynch (1982), "On the External Validity of Experiments in Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(3), 225-239.
- Winer (1999), "Experimentation in the 21st Century: The Importance of External Validity," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27, 349-358.
- Lynch (1999), "Theory and External Validity," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27, 367-376.
- Albert and Thomson (2024), "Epistemological Jangle and Jingle Fallacies in the Consumer-Brand Relationship Subfield: A Call to Action," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 51(2), 383-407. (make sure you read Web Appendix H too).

Session 4: Randomization, Placebos and Control (January 30)

- Oehlert Chapter 2
- Oehlert Chapter 3
- Campbell, Cook and Shadish Chapter 8
- McFerran, Dahl, Fitzsimmons and Morales (2010), "I'll Have What She's Having: Effects of Social Influence and Body Type on the Food Choices of Others," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(6), 915-929.
- Yzerbyt, Muller and Judd (2004), "Adjusting Researchers Approach to Adjustment: On the Use of Covariates When Testing Interactions," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 40(3), 424-431.
- Shiv, Carmon and Ariely (2005), "Placebo Effects of Marketing Actions: Consumer May Get What They Pay For," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 42(4), 383-393.

Session 5: Sample Size, Power and Effect Sizes (February 6)

- Oehlert Chapter 7
- Cohen (1992), "Statistical Power Analysis," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 1(3), 98-101
- Ellis, Chapter 1 (Introduction to Effect Sizes)
- Maxwell, Kelley, and Rausch (2008), "Sample Size Planning for Statistical Power and Accuracy in Parameter Estimation," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 59(1), 537-563.
- Meyvis and Van Osselaer (2018), "Increasing the Power of Your Study by Increasing the Effect Size," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(5), 1157-1173.
- van der Sluis, Helen, Adriana Samper, Kirk Kristofferson, and Terri Hlava (2024), "How Do Physical Disability Cues Influence Assumptions about Consumer Tastes? Unpacking the Disability Preference Stereotype," *Journal of Consumer Research*.

Reference: Kelley and Preacher (2012), "On Effect Size," *Psychological Methods*, 17(2), 137.

Download G*Power (power calculator) at: <https://www.psychologie.bbu.de/arbeitsgruppen/allgemeine-psychologie-und-arbeitspsychologie/gpower.html>.

Session 6: Factorial Designs (February 13)

- Oehlert Chapters 8 and 9

Each student will find a recent article from JCR/JCP/JM/JMR/JAMS that uses a factorial design. Distribute the article electronically to the class no less than 24 hours before the session. Prepare a one-page handout based on what you think is the most interesting (Best? Worst?) experiment in that paper. This should include:

- (1) conceptual model for that experiment (draw it);
- (2) detailed description of the factors (details about manipulations);
- (3) provide (if possible) or describe (if not provided) and evaluate the evidence the paper presents to support the success of the manipulations;
- (4) assess the evidence – do the analysis and evidence match (1) and (2) and support the conclusions made in that study?

Session 7: Mediation (February 20)

- Hayes Chapter 3
- Hayes Chapter 4
- Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010), “Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and Truths about Mediation Analysis,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(2), 197-206.
- Bullock, Green and Ha (2010), “Yes, But What’s the Mechanism? (Don’t Expect an Easy Answer),” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(4), 550.
- Pieters (2017), “Meaningful Mediation Analysis: Plausible Causal Inference and Informative Communication,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(3), 692-716.
- Reich, Campbell, and Madrigal (2019), “Who Deserves Faulty Products? How Blaming the Victim Prevents Consumer Punitive Actions,” *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 30(1), 60-76.

Session 8: Moderation (March 6)

- Hayes Chapter 7
- Hayes Chapter 8
- Spencer, Zanna and Fong (2005), “Establishing a Causal Chain: Why Experiments Are Often More Effective than Mediational Analyses in Examining Psychological Processes,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89(6), 845.
- You, Yang, Wang and Deng (2020), “When and Why Saying ‘Thank You’ is Better...,” *Journal of Marketing*, 84(2), 133-150.
- Winterich, Reczek and Irwin (2017), “Keeping the Memory but Not the Possession: Memory Preservation Mitigates Identity Loss from Product Disposition,” *Journal of Marketing*, 81(5), 104-120.

Session 9: Practicum on Interactions (March 13)

- Hayes Chapters 5, 11, and 12

I have provided a file “Practicum Data” that you’ll need to have on your computer. You also need to install PROCESS 4.2 (<https://baskayne.ucalgary.ca/CCRAM/resource-hub>) before class. There are versions for SPSS, SAS and R. I’ll be using SPSS but feel free to use whatever software you are comfortable with. Bring your laptop to class.

Session 10: Natural Experiments (March 20)

- Goldfarb, Tucker, and Wang (2022) “Conducting Research in Marketing with Quasi-Experiments,” *Journal of Marketing*, 86(3), 1-20.
- Grosz, Ayaita, Arslan, Buecker, Ebert, Hünermund, ... and Rohrer (2024). “Natural Experiments: Missed Opportunities for Causal Inference in Psychology,” *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, 7(1).
- Seiler, Yao, and Wang (2017), “Does Online Word of Mouth Increase Demand? (and how?) Evidence from a Natural Experiment,” *Marketing Science*, 36(6), 838-861.
- Proserpio and Zervas (2017), “Online Reputation Management: Estimating the Impact of Management Responses on Consumer Reviews,” *Marketing Science*, 36(5), 645-665.

Session 11: Paper Presentations (March 27)

Session 12: Field Experiments (April 3)

- Gneezy (2017), “Field Experimentation in Marketing Research,” *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(1), 140-143.
- White and Simpson (2013), “When Do (and Don’t) Normative Appeals Influence Sustainable Consumer Behaviors?,” *Journal of Marketing*, 77(2), 78-95.
- White, Katherine, Rhiannon MacDonnell, and Darren W. Dahl (2011), “It’s the Mind-Set That Matters: The Role of Construal Level and Message Framing in Influencing Consumer Efficacy and Conservation Behaviors,” *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48(3), 472-485.
- Johnson, Lewis and Nubbermeyer (2017), “Ghost Ads: Improving the Economics of Measuring Online Ad Effectiveness,” *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(6), 867-884.
- Goldstein, Cialdini, and Griskevicius (2008), “A Room with a Viewpoint: Using Social Norms to Motivate Environmental Conservation in Hotels,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(3), 472-482.
- Bohner and Schluter (2014), “A Room with a Viewpoint Revisited...” *PloS one*, 9(8).

Reference: West, Biesanz and Pitts (2000), “Casual Inference and Generalization in Field Settings,” *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs*.

Paper Due April 9, 2025