ResEcon162
THE CONSUMER IN OUR SOCIETY
T, Th: 10:00-11:15 a.m., Integrative Learning Center, S240
Fall 2016

Resec 162 is a 4 credit General Education course with a Social and Behavioral Science designation.

Professor: Dr. Sheila Mammen
Office: 309 Stockbridge Hall
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2:30 – 3:30 pm or by appointment
Telephone: (413) 545-2470
E-mail: smammen@resecon.umass.edu

CLASS OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Class Objectives:

Res econ 162 provides an analysis of the crucial role that consumers play in society including their market and non-market consumption activities as well as their decision-making. An interdisciplinary perspective will be used in this general education course with a Social and Behavioral Science designation. Research findings from a variety of disciplines (economics, behavioral economics, sociology, psychology, social psychology, political science, anthropology, and ecology) will be applied on human and social as well as cognitive and emotional factors to better understand consumers’ economic decisions. Critical thinking skills will be used to examine a variety of contemporary consumer economic issues in addition to topics such as consumer rights and responsibilities, the impact of advertising, use of consumer credit, product safety, consumer fraud, and legal protections available to consumers.

Having successfully completed this course, you should:

(1) Be familiar with the complexities of the American economic system;
(2) Understand how the consumer functions in the marketplace and be able to identify the economic, social, psychological, and political forces that shape consumer demand;
(3) Be able to utilize economic concepts critical to consumer success;
(4) Be able to analyze current issues and problems, from a broad, multidisciplinary perspective, as they affect the individual consumer, the household as a consuming unit, and society at large;
(5) Understand the impact of globalization on the consumer;
(6) Recognize frauds and misrepresentations in the marketplace;
(7) Be able to examine the roles played by local, state, and federal consumer protection agencies;
(8) Become aware of the many decisions that are made by governments and others in the name of consumers; and
(9) Learn the opportunities and challenges of working collaboratively in a group.

Text and Other Reading Materials:

Class Policies:

- Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken and will be used in determining your final grade. Please note: The more lectures you miss, the more likely you are to do poorly in the course.

- The following code of conduct “The respectful classroom” will be used in this course:

  The respectful classroom
  We are all responsible for creating a respectful classroom environment. All students have the right to hear the lecture without being interrupted by other students. The professor has the right to teach without disruptions. In order to achieve a respectful learning environment, we will keep the following in mind:
  1. We are on time for class. **Class will begin promptly at 10:00 a.m.**
  2. We do not pack up to leave before the class is dismissed.
  3. We do not engage in uncivil behavior during the lecture such as talking to classmates, walking out of the class, or working on something else.
  4. We do not use any electronic devices during class time (unless to take class notes).
  5. We follow the Academic Honesty Policy. For information, see http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/
  6. We avoid negative language.
  7. We will treat each other (fellow students and the professor) with mutual respect.

Course Exams and Assignments:

The weights making up your final grade will be % of Final Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three exams♠ (textbook, notes, slides)</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer economic issue project♥</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis &amp; analysis of current consumer news events♦</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summaries for extra credit – short paragraphs written in class*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

♠ Make-up exams will be given only if you have a legitimate reason and if you notify me BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EXAM.

♥ Consumer economic issue project: Working in a group of 3 or 4 students, you are required to select a consumer economics issue and to provide an in-depth analysis of both sides of this issue. A written report and oral presentation are due at the end of the semester. Further instructions will be given in class on October 13. This is a group project.

♦ Synopsis and analysis of current consumer news events: This assignment includes one oral presentation per group and submission of written synopsis & analysis on Moodle by all students. In other words, this is both a group (selecting news event, presenting in class, posting it on Moodle) and an individual (written synopsis & analysis) effort. **Please note: If you are not in class, you will forfeit your right to write the synopsis & analysis on the news stories presented that day i.e. you will not receive a grade for these.** Further instructions will be given in class on Thursday, September 8.

* Extra credit in-class summaries: There may be impromptu summaries written in class throughout the semester or as time permits. These will be done during the first 5-10 minutes of class. This assignment is for extra credit. There will be no make-up if you are late or absent.

**Please note: The two assignments (consumer economic issue project and synopsis/analysis of current consumer news events) as well as the extra credit in-class summaries are designed to assist you to do well in the course. There will not be any other extra credit activities for the course.**
Grade Policy: Your final grade will be based on the points you have received for the 3 exams, consumer economic issue project, analyses of current consumer news events, and summary papers as a percentage of total points achievable. The following grade percentage cutoff will be used to assign your letter grade: A = 94%, A- = 90%, B+ = 87%, B = 83%, B- = 80%, C+ = 77%, C = 73%, C- = 70%, D+ = 65%, F = < 60%. Class attendance will be considered in the final determination of your letter grade – this will be explained in class.

♦ Examples of the types and variety of news stories which are acceptable for the current news events assignment (sources could include Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Money, Fortune, Financial Times, CNN Money, Bloomberg, Business Week, other newspapers, government documents, internet & television/radio, etc.):

1. Volkswagen Supplier Played Key Role in Cheating, Court papers say

2. Middle-Income Jobs Finally Show Signs of a Rebound

3. Wall St. Follows Oil Prices Down
   Our Favorite Banana May Be Doomed

4. Apple Hits Roadblocks in Cutting Watch Ties to iPhone

5. Uber’s First Self-Driving Fleet Arrives in Pittsburgh This Month
   http://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2016-08-18/uber-s-first-self-driving-fleet-arrives-in-pittsburgh-this-month-is06r7on

6. Unfazed by Market Turmoil, Starbucks Plans China Expansion

7. U.S. Sets Higher Fuel-Efficiency Standards

8. Consumer Confidence in U.S. Increases More than Forecast

9. Target Cheaper than Wal-Mart as Gap Widest in Two Years

10. Student Loans: Do College Student Borrow Too Much-Or Not Enough?
    http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/aea/jep/2012/00000026/00000001/art00008

11. Rules to double U.S. fuel economy to 54.5 by 2024

CLASS SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading (textbook)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T, 9/6</td>
<td>The American economic system</td>
<td>Chapter 1 pp. 2-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th, 9/8</td>
<td>The American economic system</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T, 9/13</td>
<td>The American economic system Consumer demand &amp; seller supply</td>
<td>Chapter 1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th, 9/15</td>
<td>The American economic system Consumer demand &amp; seller supply</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T, 9/20</td>
<td>Consumer demand &amp; seller supply Consumers: leading &amp; following</td>
<td>Chapter 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th, 9/22</td>
<td>Consumers: leading &amp; following Consumer freedoms &amp; restrictions</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T, 9/27</td>
<td>Consumer freedoms &amp; restrictions Customs &amp; consumption, funeral industry</td>
<td>Chapters 4, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th, 9/29</td>
<td>Customs &amp; consumption Funeral industry</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T, 10/4</td>
<td>Funeral industry Impact of advertising on consumers</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUMMARY 3 DUE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THURSDAY, 10/6</td>
<td>TEST 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUESDAY, 10/11</td>
<td>No class – Monday’s class schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th, 10/13</td>
<td>Consumer issues assignment Impact of advertising on consumers</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T, 10/18</td>
<td>Impact of advertising on consumers The marketing &amp; pricing process</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th, 10/20</td>
<td>The marketing &amp; pricing process Consumer credit &amp; debt</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T, 10/25</td>
<td>The marketing &amp; pricing process Consumer credit &amp; debt</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUMMARY 5 DUE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Th, 10/27  Consumer credit and debt  Chapter 11
T, 11/1  Consumer credit & debt
Consumer decision-making & buying  Chapter 15

SUMMARY 6 DUE

Th, 11/3  Consumer credit & debt
Consumer decision-making & buying  Chapter 15
T, 11/8  Consumer fraud
History of the consumer movement  Chapter 5

SUMMARY 7 DUE

Th, 11/10  Consumer fraud
History of the consumer movement  Chapter 5
T, 11/15  Consumer fraud
History of the consumer movement  Chapter 5

SUMMARY 8 DUE

THURSDAY, 11/17  TEST 2

NOVEMBER 20-27  THANKSGIVING BREAK

T, 11/29  History of the consumer movement
Consumer laws  Chapter 16
Th, 12/1  History of the consumer movement
Consumer laws  Chapter 16

T, 12/6  Consumer laws
Consumer protection: sellers’ efforts  Chapters 16, 17

SUMMARY 9 DUE

Th, 12/8  Consumer laws
Consumer protection: sellers’ efforts  Chapters 16, 17
T, 12/13  Consumer protection: federal/state gov.
Consumer economic issues  Chapters 18, 19

SUMMARY 10 DUE

T, 12/20  TEST 3: 10:30-12:30, S240 ILC