



CONSCI 2910: Consumer Problems (3 units)
Semester, Year
Week Days, Times
Building, Room

Instructor Information

Course Description. Study of common imperfections in the market which manifest themselves in safety, fairness, quality, information and education concerns for consumers.

Course Objectives. Following successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Recognize consumer problems and link them to potential private and public solutions.
- Apply lessons from history of consumer culture to current consumer problems.
- Articulate the rights and responsibilities of consumers and the political journey to establishing and preserving these rights.
- Understand the role of consumer driven solutions in improving the quality of the consumer/producer exchange, namely the roles and influences of social responsibility, fair trade, green strategies, and sustainability.

CON SCI 2910 fulfills the GE category Social Science: Organizations and Politics

Goals: Students understand the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of organizations and politics.
2. Students understand the formation and durability of political, economic, and social organizing principles and their differences and similarities across contexts.
3. Students comprehend and assess the nature and values of organizations and politics and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

CONSCI 2910 satisfies the expected learning outcomes through analysis of the changing role of the consumer in society and examination of consumer issues, including identification of consumer interest, decision-making, and the role of policy and government. Students will understand theories pertaining to consumer decision-making and behavioral economics. They will learn how consumer protection laws and government regulations have developed and their effect on consumers.

Required Course Materials. Suggested readings will be posted on Carmen throughout the semester. You are encouraged to spend some time reviewing these materials as they will reinforce concepts discussed during class. All assigned readings will be covered in the exams.

Rules/Policies for Exams. There will be three examinations during the term. All examinations cover only "untested" material, no examination is cumulative. Examinations typically will be multiple-choice with answers placed on a Scantron™ form; however, the instructor reserves the option to use short answer/essay questions if deemed appropriate. Examination questions will come from lectures and assigned readings.

Examinations are given **only** during the scheduled time—there are no exceptions. Students arriving for an examination after the first student has finished will not be allowed to take the examination. When appealing how a question was graded, the appeal must be made within 7 calendar days after a scheduled examination is taken.

In Class Assignments. We will have four in-class assignments during the quarter. You must be present in order to earn points for the assignments. There are no exceptions. Each assignment will be worth 15 points.

Paper. You will have one paper due during the semester. Your paper should be of high quality (no spelling or grammatical errors), and must be at least two pages, double-spaced. The paper is on fraud and details for the paper will be available on Carmen. Your paper will be worth 40 points.

Research Project and Group Presentation. During the second week of the semester, you will be assigned to a group for the purposes of completing a research project and preparing a class presentation based upon your findings. Requirements for the project include a project plan, PowerPoint presentation, review questions and bibliography. Each group is then responsible for an in-class presentation, approximately 15 minutes in length. The research project is worth a total of 100 points, with the project plan worth 20 of those points. Grading details will be provided on Carmen.

Classroom Policies. Students are expected to be respectful in their conduct during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave. If asked to leave, any argumentative comments from the student will result in an automatic zero for the next exam.

Course Requirements and Grading

Course Requirement	Points	Percent of final grade
Exam #1	100 points	20%
Exam #2	100 points	20%
Exam #3	100 points	20%
Group Project	100 points	20%
Paper	40 points	8%
In-Class Assignments	60 points	12%
Total	500 points	100%

Final grades will be based on a student's weighted average using the following scale:

Grade	Weighted Average	Grade	Weighted Average	Grade	Weighted Average	Grade	Weighted Average
A	93-100%	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%
A-	90-92%	B	83-88%	C	73-76%	D	60-66%
		B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	E	59% or less

Academic Misconduct The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Course accommodations Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. The Office of Disability Services is relied upon for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 (V) or 614-292-0901 (TDD) in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>

Grievances and Solving Problems According to University Policies, available from the Division of Student Affairs, if you have a problem with this class, "You should seek to resolve a grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by *speaking first with the instructor or professor*: then, if necessary, with the department chairperson, college dean, and provost, in that order. Specific procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-7-23, which is available from the Office of Student Life, 208 Ohio Union."

Statement on Diversity The Department of Consumer Sciences affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Changes: This syllabus is subject to change if deemed necessary by the instructor.

Tentative Schedule for Course Topics and Readings

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Week 1	Overview of Semester/ Introduction to Consumer Problems		
Week 1	Consumer Problems	Carmen: (1) Consumer Confidence Index (2) Survey of Consumers (3) Carmen: Consumer Bill of Rights	
Week 2	Fraud, Scams, Rip-offs and Illegal Activities	Carmen: (1) Hello, Sucker (Money Magazine) (2) Top Ten Scams of 2011	
Week 2	Fraud, Scams, Rip-offs and Illegal Activities	Carmen: NYT: Madoff Sentencing	
Week 3	Government Regulation		Fraud Paper Due
Week 3	No formal class – Group Meetings		
Week 4	Policy Overview	Carmen: OECD Consumer Policy Toolkit	Group Project Plan Due
Week 4	Policy Overview (cont'd)		
Week 5	Exam #1		Exam #1
Week 5	No formal class - Group Meetings		
Week 6	Economic Concepts	Carmen: Economic Concepts Critical to Consumer Success	
Week 6	Economic Concepts (cont'd)		
Week 7	Economics of Education	The Atlantic: Is Google Making us Stupid? The Atlantic: What is Wrong with the American University System?	
Week 7	Economics of Education	n+1: Bad Education	
Week 8	Economics of Food		
Week 8	Economics of Food		
Week 9	Decision Making	Carmen: Nudge Biases and Blunders, pp. 17 – 31 (stop at Optimism and Overconfidence)	
Week 9	Decision Making (cont'd)		
Week 10	Behavioral Economics	Carmen: Nudge Biases and Blunders, pp. 31 (Optimism/Overconfidence) - end	
Week 10	Behavioral Economics (cont'd)		
Week 11	Exam #2		Exam #2
Week 11	Group Presentations	Health Problems, Health Care in US, Health Care for Elderly, Health Care for	
Week 12	Group Presentations	Food Safety, Product Safety	
Week 12	Group Presentations	Housing Issues, Banking Crisis	
Week 13	Group Presentations	Consumer Debt, Credit Cards, Investment, Insurance	
Week 13	Group Presentations	Student Financial Aid, State Lotteries, Low- Income, Telemarketing	
Week 14	Group Presentations	Privacy, Laws that Protect Consumers	
Week 14	Group Presentations & Review	Careers in Consumer Affairs	
Examination Period: Exam #3 (online) Due by date and time			