

**Course description**

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|--------------------------------|---|--------------|------------|
| <b>Course</b>                  | Consumer Behaviour  |              |            |
| <b>Subject</b>                 | Consumer Behaviour  |              |            |
| <b>Module</b>                  | Marketing and Communication   |              |            |
| <b>Programme</b>               | International Semester in Commerce  |              |            |
| <b>Plan</b>                    | 902   | <b>Code</b>  | 75016      |
| <b>Teaching Period</b>         | Second Semester   | <b>Type</b>  | Compulsory |
| <b>Cycle</b>                   | Degree  | <b>Level</b> | 1º         |
| <b>ECTS Credits</b>            | 6   |              |            |
| <b>Language of instruction</b> | English   |              |            |
| <b>Responsible Teachers</b>    | Siro Bayón Calvo<br>Miguel Varela Rodríguez   |              |            |
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| <b>Tutorial timetable</b>      | See Online Campus for details (Campus Virtual UVA)  |              |            |
| <b>Department</b>              | Sociology and Social Work   |              |            |



## 1. Context/ justification

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### 1.1 Context

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The Consumer Behaviour subject is a sociological approach to the variety of individual and collective behaviours related to consumption. The subject provides an explanatory framework and descriptive resources for the behaviours that are part of the purchase, use and enjoyment of goods and services.

The subject provides an analytical and regulatory focus and is clearly orientated towards the analysis of the social and psychosocial mechanisms that explain the behaviour of consumption. In a complementary way, it also provides guidance related to promoting behaviour that are in line with the social needs and values of the society.

The subject explains consumption based on two analytical frameworks: First, at macro level, describing the structural dimensions of society that generate widespread consumer behaviour patterns that are in line with a certain social and production system. Second, at micro level, describing the phenomena that directly and immediately affect the behaviour of each player at marketplace. The first focus is linked to the different macrosociological theories whereas the second one is connected to a more psycho-sociology approach.

### 1.2 Relationship with other subjects

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The Consumer Behaviour subject is autonomous in terms of contents, and it is strongly inspired in the Spanish version subject *Comportamiento del Consumidor* that is part of the Degree in Commerce. Despite this, it is complementary to the other subjects of the International Semester in Commerce, such as International Trade or Human Resources and Sales Force Management. Moreover, it is also linked to the rest of the subjects that are given by the Sociology area in the Degree in Commerce such as *Urbanismo Comercial* (Commercial Town Planning), or *Comunicación Intercultural* (Intercultural Communication) and *Técnicas de Comunicación* (Negotiation techniques).

### 1.3 Requirements

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The Consumer Behaviour subject does not require previous knowledge from other courses or study programmes.



## 2. Contribution to skills development

### 2.1 General skills

G1/G2/G3/G4/G5/G6.

### 2.2 Specific skills

E16.

## 3. General aims of the subject

The aim of the subject is to develop skills that make it possible to interpret, predict and intervene in aspects related to the behaviour of consumers. In doing so, the following specific aims are:

- Preparing students to understand and handle concepts related to the description and constraints of consumer behaviour.
- Preparing students to apply scientific methods of description and analysis of consumer behaviour, developing research skills and a scientific attitude of rigorous and objective analysis of consumption phenomena.
- Providing knowledge of the general patterns of consumption behaviour and their recent trends.
- Preparing students to carry out actions in order to change consumer behaviour, oriented towards both commercial activity interests as well as principles of a fair, sustainable and equitable society.



## 5. Contents and Structure

### Block 1: Introduction to the study of consumer behaviour

Dedication in ECTS credits: 1.6

#### a. Context

This block provides the basic concepts, methods and fundamental framework of the subject. This block prepares students to apply social research techniques to consumption research.

#### b. Learning goals

To understand basic concepts and theoretical frameworks regarding consumer behaviour.

#### c. Contents

Topic 1. Introduction to consumer behaviour as a science: Consumer behaviour – people in the marketplace. Consumer behaviour as a field of study. Key thinkers on consumption. Handicaps of social sciences in the field of consumption.

Topic 2. Methods and techniques of consumer behaviour: Introduction. Methods and techniques. Consumer Culture Theory. Research ethics.

#### d. Teaching methods

See section 5 for more details.

#### e. Work plan

Week 1 - 4.

#### f. Assessment

See section “7. Assessment” for more details.

#### g. Basic References

See section 8 for more details.

#### h. Complementary references

See section 8 for more details.

#### i. Resources

The resources needed for the study and completion of the tasks will be posted on the Online Campus.



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**Block 2: Macro aspects of consumption behaviour. Players, social processes and contemporary changes of consumption society.**

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Dedication in ECTS credits:

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**a. Context**

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This block provides deep knowledge of social aspects that determine consumption behaviour and patterns. Moreover, this block provides a forward-looking approach by analysing the main changes in consumption and social changes that affect consumer behaviour from a sociological approach.

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**b. Learning goals**

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To understand the connection between social dynamics and consumption dynamics.

To be able to make rigorous forecasts of consumption behaviour accordingly to social factors and constraints.

To understand contemporary consumption context and change of social patterns that affects consumption behaviour.

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**c. Contents**

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Topic 3. Culture and cultural influences on consumer behaviour. Concept of culture. Components of culture. Myths and rituals. Subcultures of consumption. Cultural change and consumption change.

Topic 4. The social construction of taste. Concept of taste. Why we like the things we like? The cycles of fashion.

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**d. Teaching methods**

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See section 5 for more details.

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**e. Work plan**

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Week 5 - 10.

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**f. Assessment**

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See section "7. Assessment" for more details.

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**g. Basic References**

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See section 8 for more details.

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**h. Complementary references**

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See section 8 for more details.

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**i. Resources**

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**Block 3: Micro aspects of consumption behaviour. Personality, desire and need at the marketplace**

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Dedication in ECTS credits:

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**a. Context**

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This block provides a micro-sociological and psychosocial approach to consumption behaviour, as can be explained by the immediate conditioning factors that affect consumers and that are present in their immediate behavioural context. Many of these factors are present at a micro-level and are related to psychosocial phenomena.

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**b. Learning goals**

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To understand the nature of the interaction between psychosocial factors and consumption behaviour.

To be able to identify and prepare strategies in order to intervene or change these factors.

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**c. Contents**

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Topic 5. Personality and attitude as consumption factors. Personality: Concept and theories. Personality and marketing. Lifestyles and consumption. Psychosocial pathologies of consumption. Attitude and consumption.

Topic 6. Desire and need. The social construction of need. Luxury and need. Need and desire. The economy of desire.

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**d. Teaching methods**

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See section 5 for more details.

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**e. Work plan**

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Week 11 - 14.

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**f. Assessment**

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See section "7. Assessment" for more details.

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**g. Basic References**

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See section 8 for more details.

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**h. Complementary references**

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See section 8 for more details.

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### **i. Resources**

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## **Block 4: Innovation, modification and change in consumption behaviour and critical analysis of consumption behaviour**

Dedication in ECTS credits:

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### **a. Context**

The critical approach is one of the pillars of university education, as well as innovation. This block provides information on how to assess consumer behaviour patterns and gives space to critical thinking on consumer society and consumption as a social interaction.

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### **b. Learning goals**

- To develop critical thinking in the field of consumer behaviour.
- To concern about the position of consumption in our society.
- To be able to identify and design innovations in consumption behaviour.

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### **c. Contents**

Topic 7. The limits of consumption: Innovation and the impact of consumption in society: General principles of behavioural change. Tools for modifying behaviour. Defending consumer interests. Assessing the social impact of consumption.

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### **d. Teaching methods**

See section 5 for more details.

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### **e. Work plan**

Week 15.

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### **f. Assessment**

See section "7. Assessment" for more details.

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### **g. Basic References**

See section 8 for more details.

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### **h. Complementary references**



See section 8 for more details.

## i. Resources

The resources needed for the study and completion of the tasks will be posted on the Online Campus.

### Timeline

| Block   | ECTS Load | Planned period |
|---------|-----------|----------------|
| Block 1 | 1.6       | Weeks 1-4      |
| Block 2 | 2.4       | Weeks 5-10     |
| Block 3 | 1.6       | Weeks 11-14    |
| Block 4 | 0.4       | Week 15        |

## 5. Teaching methods and methodological principles

- Lectures on theoretical contents.
- Practical activities based on readings, texts, videos, databases, among others.
- Individual work and teamwork, with oral presentations by the students.

## 6. Dedication

| In-class activities | Hours     | Non-presential activities                  | Hours     |
|---------------------|-----------|--|-----------|
| Theoretical classes | 30        | Independent study of theoretical contents  | 15        |
| Practical classes   | 30        | Independent work on practical contents     | 20        |
|                     |           | Preparation of work, reports, essays, etc. | 30        |
|                     |           | Preparation for exams                      | 25        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>60</b> | <b>Total</b>                               | <b>90</b> |

## 7. Assessment

### 7.1. Ordinary call (normal period of examination)

The assessment of the subject in the ordinary call is based on continuous assessment (up to 50% of the mark) about activities done throughout the academic course, and on an exam that constitutes at least 50% of the mark. Hence, final mark is a weighted average of the



two types of assessment. Globally, it is necessary to obtain 5 point out of 10 in the final mark (weighted average of both continuous assessment and exam) to pass the subject. Despite this, there is a specific and mandatory requirement to pass the subject: A minimum of 3.5 points of out 10 is required in the exam. In case of having less than this mark in the exam, the mark of the continuous assessment part will not be considered and the final mark will only be the weighted part of the exam.

| Type                  | Weight in final mark | Description  |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--|
| Continuous assessment | Up to 50%            | Assessment of activities done in class and outside of class.   |
| Exam                  | At least 50%         | Students must take an exam that will be at least 50% of the final mark of the subject. A minimum of 3.5 out of 10 points is required to calculate the average with the continuous assessment part. |

## 7.2. Extraordinary call

The extraordinary call is available for those students who do not pass the ordinary call of the subject.

By default, the extraordinary call has the same characteristics of the ordinary call (keeping the mark of the continuous assessment obtained in ordinary call). Only in those cases of students that want to take an exam that constitutes 100% of the mark, students must send an email to the responsible teacher before the date of the extraordinary call exam specifying the will of taking this option.

## 8. References

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Warde, A. (2017). *Consumption: A Sociological approach*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

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