

Department	International College of Liberal Arts		
Semester	Fall 2026	Year Offered (Odd/Even/Every Year)	Every Year
Course Number	BUSN390		
Course Title	Sustainability and Consumer Behavior		
Prerequisites	BUSN235 Foundation of Marketing OR ECON260 Marketing, AND BUSN/DATA271 Marketing Research and Analytics		
Course Instructor	LI Jiamin	Year Available (Grade Level)	3
Subject Area	Global Business & Economics	Number of Credits	3
Class Style	Lecture	Language of instruction	English

(NOTE 1) Depending on the class size and the capacity of the facility, we may not be able to accommodate all students who wish to register for the course

Course Description	<p>"Why do convenience stores charge for plastic bags now?" "Adidas' new sneakers are made from recycled ocean plastics but why do they cost more?" "I care about the environment, but how do my choices really matter?"</p> <p>This course explores these everyday questions through the lens of marketing and consumer behavior. Building on foundational marketing knowledge, we dive into the psychology, challenges, and strategies behind promoting sustainable consumption. You will learn why some consumers choose green products, and why many don't, even when they care. We'll look at how companies position, price, and promote eco-friendly offerings, and how digital tools and behavioral science can nudge people toward better choices for the planet.</p> <p>Through real-world case studies from brands like Patagonia, Tesla, Coca-Cola, and Olio, we connect theory to practice and uncover what it really takes to drive sustainable behavior in the marketplace. Whether you dream of working in sustainability, marketing, or simply want to become a more informed citizen, this course will give you a toolkit to understand and influence eco-friendly consumer behavior.</p>
Class plan based on course evaluation from previous academic year	N/A
Course related to the instructor's practical experience (Summary of experience)	This course is taught by an instructor with practical experience. I will apply my research expertise of consumer behavior and sustainability to the course, providing students with real-world context for how companies are contributing to sustainable environment while maintaining business competitiveness.
Learning Goals	The main goal of this course is to understand why people want to be eco-friendly but often find it hard to actually buy "green" products. You will learn how brands can build a strong bond with their customers by being honest and making a real difference in the world. Instead of just selling items, you'll see how a brand can become a tool that helps people express who they are and what they care about to their friends and community. By the end of the term, you will know how to use simple design changes and clear storytelling to make the sustainable choice the easiest and most popular one for everyone.

iCLA Diploma Policy	DP1/DP2/DP3/DP4
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iCLA Diploma Policy

- (DP1) To Value Knowledge – Having high oral and written communication skills to be able to both comprehend and transfer knowledge
- (DP2) To Be Able to Adapt to a Changing World – Having critical, creative, problem-solving, intercultural skills, global and independent mindset to adopt to a changing world
- (DP3) To Believe in Collaboration – Having a disposition to work effectively and inclusively in teams
- (DP4) To Act from a Sense of Personal and Social Responsibility – Having good ethical and moral values to make positive impacts in the world

Active Learning Methods	Problem-Based Learning/Discussion, Debate/Group Work/Presentation/Workshop, Fieldwork				
More details/supplemental information on Active Learning Methods	This course is built on Problem-Based Learning where you and your Group Work team act like a real marketing department for a sustainable brand. Instead of just listening to a teacher, you will spend every week in a Workshop or doing Fieldwork. For example, you might grab a physical snack bar or a bottled drink from a store to “reverse-engineer” it by looking at why its wrapper is green, why it costs more than a candy bar, and why it sits on the “healthy” shelf to figure out the company’s plan to attract buyers. You will engage in constant Discussion and Debate with other teams to figure out how a “green” brand can win against cheaper rivals that are less ethical. By the end of the term, you will deliver two major Presentations where you must stand up and defend your plan for turning a window shopper into a loyal and eco-friendly customer.				
Use of ICT	Videos and interactive polls will be used during class.				
Contents of class preparation and review	To help you get ready for each class, you will spend 5 hours a week working on your own. For Class Preparation (2 hours), you will read the class slides and Chapter 19 of Principles of Marketing to understand how “Sustainable Marketing” is a new way of doing business that focuses on the planet as much as profit. This reading helps you see the big picture before we start our team tasks. For Class Review (3 hours), you will spend time as a “digital detective” observing green brands on social media to see how they differ from regular brands. For example, you might look at how a sustainable soap brand posts about clean water while a regular brand only talks about its low price. By spotting these differences, you will learn how to turn simple social media posts into a clear plan that helps a brand grow.	Hours expected to be spent preparing for class (hours per week)	2 hours	Hours expected to be spent on class review (hours per week)	3 hours
Feedback Methods	To help you feel confident in the world of green marketing, we will use a few ways to check your progress as we go. During Class Discussions, I will give you instant feedback on your team’s ideas to make sure your brand’s message actually reaches the right eco-conscious buyers. After our Workshops, we will look at your product audits together to ensure you are correctly identifying how a brand builds trust through its packaging and pricing. Finally, think of Office Hours as a “Strategy Consultation” where you can get one-on-one advice on your team’s roadmap or your final report so you are ready to stand up and pitch your plan like a pro.				

Grading Criteria		
Grading Methods	Grading Weights	Grading Content
Quizzes & Assignments	30%	Understanding of Green Theories and Case Studies
Final Group Presentation	50%	Sustainable Marketing Strategy
Active Participation	20%	Weekly workshops, debates, and case analysis

Required Textbook(s)	Chapter 19, Principles of Marketing, https://openstax.org/details/books/principles-marketing
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Other Reading Materials/URL	N/A
Plagiarism Policy	Academic integrity is a core value of this course and any form of plagiarism is strictly prohibited. This includes submitting AI-generated reports without proper citation for your reports or "borrowing" others' creative ideas without any notice. Whether you are working on your short individual assignments or your final team project, all data and marketing plans must be your own original work. If a student is caught using fake metrics or recycling projects from other classes, it will result in an automatic failing grade (F) for the assignment or the entire course. Every violation is reported to the University for a formal review to ensure that all students are held to the same professional standards.
Other Additional Notes (Outline crucial policies and info not mentioned above)	<p>Using AI Wisely Modern marketers use AI every day, and we will too. You are welcome to use tools like ChatGPT to help brainstorm your brand strategies or draft your final presentations, but you must show your "workings." Always include your specific prompts as an appendix so we can see how you are training the AI to find a brand's unique voice rather than just accepting a generic answer. This helps us learn how to use technology to solve real environmental and business problems.</p> <p>Share Your Voice Sustainable marketing is a conversation about our future. I want to hear about the "green" ads you see on your feed or the brands you think are doing a great job (or a terrible one) on social media. Please jump in anytime to ask a question or challenge an idea during our debates. Your personal curiosity and the examples you find in the real world are what will help your team figure out how to turn a regular shopper into a loyal, eco-friendly customer.</p>

(NOTE 2) Class schedule is subject to change

Class Schedule	
Class Number	Content
Class 1	<p>Helping People and the Planet Why modern companies need to care about their impact on the world to keep their customers' trust.</p>
Class 2	<p>Setting Clear Goals How a brand's main mission helps it stay focused on doing good/"green" things, even when things get difficult.</p>
Class 3	<p>What Influences Our Choices? How our personal beliefs and the people around us shape the "green" products we decide to buy.</p>
Class 4	<p>Brands as a Badge of Honor How buying from an ethical brand helps people show the world what they stand for.</p>
Class 5	<p>The Gap Between Thinking and Buying Why we often want to buy sustainable items but end up picking the easiest or cheapest option instead.</p>
Class 6	<p>Making Sustainability the Best Choice How brands like Tesla make eco-friendly products so good that people choose them for their quality, not just for the planet.</p>
Class 7	<p>Finding the Right Audience How to find and talk to the specific groups of people who are most likely to support ethical brands.</p>
Class 8	<p>Different Ages, Different Views Looking at how students versus older generations think about shopping and the environment.</p>

Class 9	<p>Building Long-Term Trust Why being honest is a brand's most important tool for keeping customers happy over many years.</p>
Class 10	<p>Finding a Unique Spot in the Market How a brand can stand out by being both high-quality and truly helpful to the environment.</p>
Class 11	<p>Products That Last and Return Learning how to design things so they can be fixed or recycled instead of thrown away.</p>
Class 12	<p>Smart Packaging Choices Why the box or bottle a product comes in is the first thing people look at to see if a brand is being honest.</p>
Class 13	<p>Working Together to Recycle How brands and customers can work as a team to make sure old products are handled properly.</p>
Class 14	<p>Being Open About the Journey Why telling the true story of how a product is made is a great way to win over customers.</p>
Class 15	<p>Encouraging Action, Not Guilt How to talk about the planet in a way that makes people feel positive and ready to help.</p>
Class 16	<p>Avoiding False Promises Looking at what happens when brands lie about being "green" and how it destroys their reputation.</p>
Class 17	<p>Making "Green" Look Good on Social Media Using apps like TikTok and Instagram to show that living sustainably is a popular and modern choice.</p>
Class 18	<p>Stories of Positive Change How to create videos and posts that show a better, more helpful way of living.</p>
Class 19	<p>Hearing What Customers Really Think Using online comments to find out if people believe a brand's environmental promises.</p>
Class 20	<p>Learning from Feedback How to use customer suggestions to make a brand's environmental plan even better.</p>
Class 21	<p>Small Changes, Big Results How simple shifts in how a store or website is set up can help people pick the best option for the planet.</p>

Class 22	<p>Making "Green" the Easiest Path Why making the eco-friendly choice the automatic one is the best way to help people build better habits.</p>
Class 23	<p>Learning from the Pros (TBD) A guest speaker shares the real-world challenges of running a business that puts the planet first.</p>
Class 24	<p>Dealing with Higher Costs How to talk to customers when making a product the right way makes it a little more expensive.</p>
Class 25	<p>Being Fair and Ethical Discussing how to help people make good choices without being pushy or dishonest.</p>
Class 26	<p>Winning Back Trust How a brand can fix its reputation if it has made mistakes in the past.</p>
Class 27	<p>Renting and Sharing Exploring new ways to get what we need without everyone having to own every single thing.</p>
Class 28	<p>Technology That Helps Us Shop Better How AI and new apps can help us track our impact and find the best brands for our values.</p>
Class 29	<p>Planning for the Future Reviewing the whole course to see how to build a business that is good for people, the planet, and profit.</p>
Class 30	<p>Final Strategy Review A final check of your team's plan to make sure it is clear, honest, and ready to go.</p>