



UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

## COURSE SYLLABUS

Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics

### **AREC 348: Food Economics and Consumer Behaviour**

Term 1, 2023-24 (Fall)

Instructor: Dr. Jill E. Hobbs

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Office: 3E68

Office hours: by appointment

Class Time: Tues/Thurs 10am-11.20am

Room: Agriculture 1E85

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course covers topical issues in food economics and consumer behaviour, the drivers of consumer food choices, and implications for food and agribusinesses. Insights from behavioural economics and marketing are used to explore different models of consumer behaviour, along with methods to measure and evaluate consumer preferences, attitudes, and choice behaviours. Topical issues in differentiated consumer food markets are examined, for example, sustainability, animal welfare, health and nutrition, local foods, and consumer responses to new technologies. Key questions include: what drives consumer behaviours and preferences, what tools are available to measure and evaluate these behaviours and preferences, and what are the implications for the food and agribusiness sector.

**Prerequisites:** AREC 272.3 or ECON 211.3

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Explain the factors influencing consumer behaviour and preferences in food markets
2. Explain the implications for food and agribusiness firms of changes in consumer behaviour and preferences
3. Show how information affects consumer decisions and discuss the implications for food and agribusiness firms
4. Compare alternative methodologies for evaluating consumer attitudes toward product attributes
5. Evaluate topical issues in food economics and consumer behaviour from firm, industry, and societal perspectives

### **ASSESSMENT:**

The course uses a mixture of assessments, including individual assignments, a group project, midterm and final exams. The grade distribution, along with tentative due dates, is provided below. Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due by midnight on the day stated.

*Late assignments will be penalized 10% of their grade for each day late (midnight being the cut off time for each late day).*

**Assignments (30%)**

The assignments (3) are designed to keep you on track with the course material and provide opportunities to apply concepts from the class. They will feature a combination of short-written answer (true/false/uncertain) questions, data analysis and calculation questions, and written analysis. Unless otherwise explicitly stated, all assignments should be completed individually.

**Group term project (20%)**

Completed in groups of up to four students. For the group term project, you will research a current consumer food market trend, applying concepts learned in class, designing a consumer survey, and preparing a report.

**Midterm exam (20%)**

The midterm exam will be held in class on October 24. It will consist of a mixture of short-written answer, calculation, and long-written answer questions.

**Final exam (30%)**

The final exam will be a take-home exam scheduled during the final exam period (December 9-23 2023) and comprises 30% of the final course grade. You should avoid making prior travel, employment, or other commitments for the entire final exam period (December 9-23). If you are unable to complete an exam through no fault of your own for medical or other valid reasons, documentation must be provided and an opportunity to complete the missed exam may be given. In accordance with University of Saskatchewan policies, students are required to write the final examination to pass the class. You are encouraged to review all examination policies and procedures: <http://students.usask.ca/academics/exams.php>

<b>GRADING SCHEME*</b>	<b>% of final grade</b>	<b>Assigned**</b>	<b>Due**</b>
<i>Assignments (30%)</i>			
Assignment 1	10%	October 5	October 13
Assignment 2	10%	November 2	November 17
Assignment 3	10%	November 30	December 8
<i>Group term project (20%)</i>	20%	September 12	
Outline due			October 4
Final reports due			December 1
<i>Exams (50%)</i>			
Midterm Exam	20%		October 24
Final Exam	30%		Scheduled by registrar

\*\* dates are subject to change

*Generative Artificial intelligence tools are not permitted to be used in any assessments for this course. Any use of such tools will be considered academic misconduct in this course*

## COURSE OVERVIEW

The course is organized into six modules. Each module is approximately two weeks in length (with the exception of Module 6). Topics and timings are provided below. Dates and provisional and are subject to change.

**In class lectures and readings:** The course is taught in-person, lectures will not be recorded, and attendance in class is necessary to benefit fully from the class. Readings (journal articles, book chapters) and additional learning materials such as video clips and blog posts will be made available on Canvas. There is no required textbook for this course. Students are responsible for reviewing all of the learning materials provided in each module, including the readings.

DATES	TOPICS	READINGS
MODULE 1 (Sept 7-21)	<b>Introduction to food economics and trends in food markets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consumer trends</li> <li>- Behavioural models</li> <li>- Attribute mapping</li> </ul>	Chapter 12 <b>Consumer Behavior and Research</b> in Norwood, B. and Lusk, J. (2008). <i>Agricultural Marketing and Price Analysis</i> , New Jersey: Pearson. pp329-364.  Just, D.R. (2022). <b>Behavioral Economics, Policy Interventions and Food.</b> <u>Chapter 9</u> in Roosen and Hobbs (Eds). <i>A Modern Guide to Food Economics</i> . Edward Elgar Publishing: Cheltenham, pp.193-214
MODULE 2 (Sept 26-Oct 5)	<b>Health and Nutrition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Obesity and diet-related diseases</li> <li>- Insights from behavioural economics</li> <li>- Policy interventions</li> </ul>	Just, D.R. (2011) <b>Behavioral economics and the food consumer.</b> Chapter 4 in Lusk, J., Roosen, J. and Shogren, J. (Eds). <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy</i> . Oxford University Press, pp99-118  Hobbs, J.E. & Roosen, J. (2022) <b>Health-oriented nutrition policies.</b> Chapter 6 in Roosen, J. and Hobbs, J.E. (Eds). <i>A Modern Guide to Food Economics</i> . Edward Elgar Publishing: Cheltenham, pp. 113-143.
MODULE 3 (Oct 10-24)	<b>Ethical preferences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality attributes and labelling</li> <li>- Willingness to pay and contingent valuation</li> <li>- Discrete choice experiments</li> </ul>	Caswell and Anders (2011). <b>Private versus Third Party versus Government Labelling.</b> Chapter 18 in Lusk, J., Roosen, J., and Shogren, J. <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Food Policy</i> , Oxford University Press, pp.472-498.

		<p>pp.364-370 of Chapter 12 'Consumer Behavior and Research' in Norwood and Lusk (2008).</p> <p>Lusk, J.L. and Hudson, D. (2004). <b>Willingness-to-Pay Estimates and Their Relevance to Agribusiness Decision Making</b>, <i>Review of Agricultural Economics</i>, 26(2):152-169</p>
<p>MODULE 4 (Oct 26-Nov 16)</p>	<p><b>Novel foods and technologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Controversial technologies</li> <li>- Values and neophobia</li> <li>- Plant-based proteins</li> </ul>	<p>Marette, S. and Roosen, J. (2011). <b>Bans and labels with controversial food technologies</b>. In Lusk, J., Roosen, J., and Shogren, J. (Eds). <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food consumption and Policy</i>, Oxford University Press, pp.499-519</p> <p>Goddard, E., Muringai, V. and Boaitay, A. (2018). <b>Food integrity and food technology concerns in Canada: Evidence from two public surveys</b>. <i>Journal of Food Quality</i> Article: 2163526.</p>
<p>MODULE 5 (Nov 21-30)</p>	<p><b>Food safety, traceability, &amp; authenticity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food safety and market failures</li> <li>- Risk perceptions</li> <li>- Traceability</li> <li>- Experimental auctions</li> </ul>	<p>Hoffman, S., Ashton, L. and Ahn, J.-W. (2021) <b>Food safety: A policy history and introduction to avenues for economic research</b>. <i>Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy</i> 43(2):680-700.</p> <p>Mitchell, J., Shulz, L., Tonsor, G. (2022). <b>Food safety and traceability</b>. Chapter 8 in Roosen, J. and Hobbs, J.E. <i>A Modern Guide to Food Economics</i>, Edward Elgar Publishing, pp.170-191.</p> <p>pp.368-370 of Chapter 12 'Consumer Behavior and Research' in Norwood, B. and Lusk, J. (2008).</p>
<p>MODULE 6 (Dec 5 &amp; 7)</p>	<p><b>Wrap-up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Future food trends</li> <li>- Group project presentations</li> </ul>	<p>Readings may be assigned</p>

**INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY**

I have an open door policy, so please feel free to stop by my office if you have questions about the course material. I can be reached by email or phone if you'd like to set up an appointment. See the front page of this course outline for my contact information.

**CANVAS**

Course materials (readings, supplementary resource material, assignments, group projects) will be made available through Canvas. Please check the 'Notifications' settings for this course in Canvas to ensure that you receive all instructor announcements, deadline reminders, etc.

If you have technical issues, please contact Canvas help when logged into [canvas.usask.ca](https://canvas.usask.ca) via the Help menu. You can make a phone call, start a live chat, or report a problem. Also, let me know if you are having difficulties accessing any of the learning materials in Canvas.

**COPYRIGHT**

Course materials are provided to you based on your registration in this class, and anything created by your professor is their intellectual property and cannot be shared without written permission. This includes PowerPoint slides, reading and resource material, assessments, and exams. All course materials developed for this course, including the PowerPoint slides are the intellectual property of the instructor.

Additionally, other copyright-protected materials created by textbook publishers, journals, and authors may be provided to you based on license terms and educational exceptions in the Canadian Copyright Act. These materials are for your personal use only. **It is NOT permitted to post any of the course materials to online forums or to share these materials beyond this course.** Inappropriate sharing of course materials will be considered academic misconduct.

**STUDENT FEEDBACK**

Your feedback on the course is important to me. Please take the time to complete the course evaluation at the end of the semester, as well as the midterm evaluation surveys. I also welcome any informal feedback as the course progresses.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The University of Saskatchewan is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and The University of Saskatchewan is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity. <https://academic-integrity.usask.ca/>

Students are urged to read the [Regulations on Academic Misconduct](#) and to avoid any behaviours that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence.

For help developing the skills for meeting academic integrity expectations, see: <https://academic-integrity.usask.ca/students.php>

Students are encouraged to ask their instructors for clarification on academic integrity requirements.

***Generative Artificial intelligence tools are not permitted to be used in any assessments for this course. Any use of such tools will be considered academic misconduct in this course.***

**ACCESS AND EQUITY SERVICES (AES)**

Access and Equity Services (AES) is available to provide support to students who require accommodations due to disability, family status, and religious observances.

Students who have disabilities (learning, medical, physical, or mental health) are strongly encouraged to register with Access and Equity Services (AES) if they have not already done so. Students who suspect

they may have disabilities should contact AES for advice and referrals at any time. Those students who are registered with AES with mental health disabilities and who anticipate that they may have responses to certain course materials or topics, should discuss course content with their instructors prior to course add / drop dates.

Students who require accommodations for pregnancy or substantial parental/family duties should contact AES to discuss their situations and potentially register with that office.

Students who require accommodations due to religious practices that prohibit the writing of exams on religious holidays should contact AES to self-declare and determine which accommodations are appropriate. In general, students who are unable to write an exam due to a religious conflict do not register with AES but instead submit an exam conflict form through their PAWS account to arrange accommodations.

Any student registered with AES, as well as those who require accommodations on religious grounds, may request alternative arrangements for mid-term and final examinations by submitting a request to AES by the stated deadliness. Instructors shall provide the examinations for students who are being accommodated by the deadlines established by AES.

For more information or advice, visit <https://students.usask.ca/health/centres/access-equity-services.php>, or contact AES at 306-966-7273 (Voice/TTY 1-306-966-7276) or email [aes@usask.ca](mailto:aes@usask.ca).

## **STUDENT SUPPORTS**

### **Academic Help for Students**

Visit the [University Library](#) and [Learning Hub](#) to find supports for undergraduate and graduate students with first-year experience, study skills, learning strategies, research, writing, math and statistics. Students can attend [workshops](#), access [online resources and research guides](#), book [1-1 appointments](#) or hire a [subject tutor](#) through the [USask Tutoring Network](#)

Connect with library staff through the [AskUs](#) chat service or visit various [library locations](#) on campus. Enrolled in an online course? Explore the [Online Learning Readiness Tutorial](#).

### **Teaching, Learning and Student Experience**

Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (TLSE) provides developmental and support services and programs to students and the university community. For more information, see the students' web site <http://students.usask.ca>.

### **Financial Support**

Any student who faces unexpected challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact Student Central <https://students.usask.ca/student-central.php>.

### **Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre**

The Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre) is dedicated to supporting Indigenous student academic and personal success. The Centre offers personal, social, cultural and some academic supports to Métis, First Nations, and Inuit students. The Centre is an intercultural gathering space that brings Indigenous and non-Indigenous students together to learn from, with and about one another in a respectful, inclusive, and safe environment. Visit <https://students.usask.ca/indigenous/index.php> or students are encouraged to visit the ASC's website <https://students.usask.ca/indigenous/gorbosc.php>

### **International Student and Study Abroad Centre**

The International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC) supports student success and facilitates international education experiences at USask and abroad. ISSAC is here to assist all international undergraduate, graduate, exchange, and English as a Second Language students in their transition to the University of Saskatchewan and to life in Canada. ISSAC offers advising and support on matters that affect international students and their families and on matters related to studying abroad as University of Saskatchewan students. Visit <https://students.usask.ca/international/issac.php> for more information.

### **College Supports (Agbio)**

Please contact AgBio Student Services in the Dean's office at [agbio.studentservices@usask.ca](mailto:agbio.studentservices@usask.ca)

### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

As we gather here today, we acknowledge that the Saskatoon campus of the University of Saskatchewan is on Treaty Six Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another. We recognize that in the course of your studies you will spend time learning in other traditional territories and Métis homelands. We wish you safe, productive and respectful encounters in these places.

**University of Saskatchewan Grading System (for undergraduate courses)****Exceptional (90-100)** A superior performance with consistent evidence of

- a comprehensive, incisive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make insightful critical evaluation of the material given;
- an exceptional capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.

**Excellent (80-90)** An excellent performance with strong evidence of

- a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make sound critical evaluation of the material given;
- a very good capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.

**Good (70-79)** A good performance with evidence of

- a substantial knowledge of the subject matter;
- a good understanding of the relevant issues and a good familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- some capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- a good ability to organize, to analyze and to examine the subject material in a critical and constructive manner.

**Satisfactory (60-69)** A generally satisfactory and intellectually adequate performance with evidence of

- an acceptable basic grasp of the subject material;
- a fair understanding of the relevant issues;
- a general familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- an ability to develop solutions to moderately difficult problems related to the subject material;
- a moderate ability to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner.

**Minimal Pass (50-59)** A barely acceptable performance with evidence of

- a familiarity with the subject material;
- some evidence that analytical skills have been developed;
- some understanding of relevant issues;
- some familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- attempts to solve moderately difficult problems related to the subject material and to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner which are only partially successful.

**Failure <50** An unacceptable performance