



23C59000 - Consumer research

Introduction

Ilona Mikkonen

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The instructor

Ilona Mikkonen, PhD

Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing

- Teaches Consumer Research and Qualitative Research Methods
- Supervises theses (BA and Master's)
- Consumer culture researcher (specific interests in consumer resistance, gender issues, consumer well-being, and "dark" side of consumption)



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Agenda

- **Introduction to consumer research**
 - What is a consumer? What is consumption?
 - What are different perspectives to consumer research?
 - Guest speaker **Hannu Uotila** from Sailer
- **Short introduction of the course**
 - Goals and objectives of the course
 - Course assignments and grading

What is consumer research?

Breakout room

In a small group in breakout rooms:

1. Discuss the questions

1. What is consumption?
2. What is the difference between consumer and customer?

2. Identify three consumption-related things that you all share

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Which of the following entails consumption?

1. Taking a life insurance
2. Watching a movie at home
3. Smoking
4. Joining a religious community
5. Buying a text book
6. Following a social-media influencer

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What Is Consumer Research?

MORRIS B. HOLBROOK*

I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation.

—William Wordsworth (1814)
The Recluse, lines 56–58

The field of consumer research in general and the *Journal of Consumer Research* in particular currently find themselves in a crisis of identity. Whatever the historical basis for its editorial policy, *JCR* has lately come to embrace a variety of topics once thought too arcane or abstruse for a scholarly publication devoted to the study of consumer behavior. Recent examples of this trend would include articles on ritual, materialism,

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studies consumer behavior; (2) consumer behavior entails consumption; (3) consumption involves the acquisition, usage, and disposition of products; (4) products are goods, services, ideas, events, or any other entities that can be acquired, used, or disposed of in ways that potentially provide value; (5) value is a type of experience that occurs for some living organism when a goal is achieved, a need is fulfilled, or a want is satisfied; (6) such an achievement, fulfillment, or satisfaction attains consummation; conversely, a failure to achieve goals, fulfill needs, or satisfy wants thwarts consummation; (7) the process of consummation (including its possible breakdowns) is therefore the fundamental subject for consumer research.

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Holbrook (1987): What is consumer research?

1. Consumer research studies consumer behavior
2. Consumer behavior entails **consumption**
3. Consumption involves the **acquisition, usage, and disposition** of products
4. **Products are goods, services, ideas, events, or any other entities** that can be acquired, used, or disposed of in ways that potentially provide value
5. Value is a type of experience that occurs for some living organism when a goal is achieved, a need is fulfilled, or a want is satisfied
6. Such an achievement, fulfillment, or satisfaction attains **consummation**; conversely, a failure to achieve goals, fulfill needs, or satisfy wants thwarts consummation
7. **The process of consummation** (including its possible breakdowns) is therefore the fundamental subject for consumer research.

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HOLBROOK (1987) WHAT IS CONSUMER RESEARCH?

The contribution of other disciplines

Contributions	
Macroeconomics	National spending behavior and disposable income
Microeconomics	Price elasticity of demand, utility theory, various income effects on purchases in a particular product class
Psychology	Choice among brands (e.g. multiattribute attitude model, linear com- pensatory model) Memory, learning
Sociology	Social patterns of consumption (conspicuous consumption, subcultures)
Anthropology	Disposition and use; consumption practices, rituals, and mythology; symbolic meanings
Philosophy	Moral and ethical questions
Humanities	Gender, linguistic and discourse studies

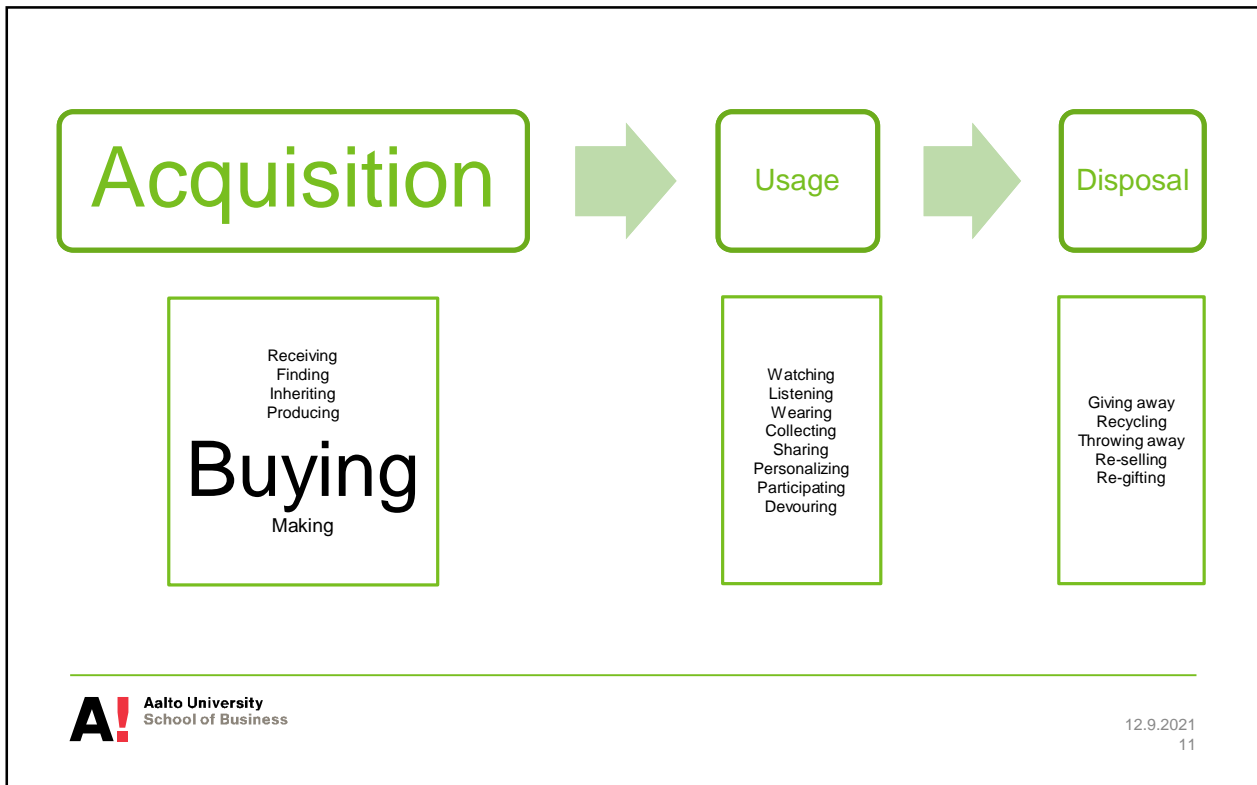
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Holbrook (1985): What's wrong with consumer research?

As implicitly recognized in Alderson's (1957) **distinction between "buying" and "consuming,"** a gulf exists between phenomena involved in purchasing decisions and those pertaining to consumption experiences.

Yet, even while acknowledging the conceptual primacy of the latter, consumer researchers too often put the cart before the horse and preoccupy themselves with the former. Typically, we study **brand choice at the expense of product usage** (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982); we dwell on **buying behavior instead of consuming behavior** (Belk 1984); **we obsess over choosing and ignore using** (Holbrook, Lehmann, and O'Shaughnessy 1983)

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WHAT IS WRONG WITH CONSUMER RESEARCH? (Holbrook 1985)

I therefore urge my fellow consumer researchers to regard our discipline as a field of inquiry **that takes consumption as its central focus [as opposed to studying choosing and buying]** and that therefore examines **all facets of the value** potentially provided when some living organism **acquires, uses, or disposes of any product** that might achieve a goal, fulfill a need, or satisfy a want.

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The two main perspectives to consumer research on this course

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BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVE



CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE



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BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVE TO CONSUMER RESEARCH

Behaviorism = systematic approach to understanding the behavior of humans. It assumes that all behaviors are

- 1) either reflexes produced by a response to certain stimuli in the environment
- 2) effects of psychological, cognitive, emotional factors (for example learning, motivation, intelligence, perception, reasoning processes etc.)

Methods typically: quantitative methods, experiments

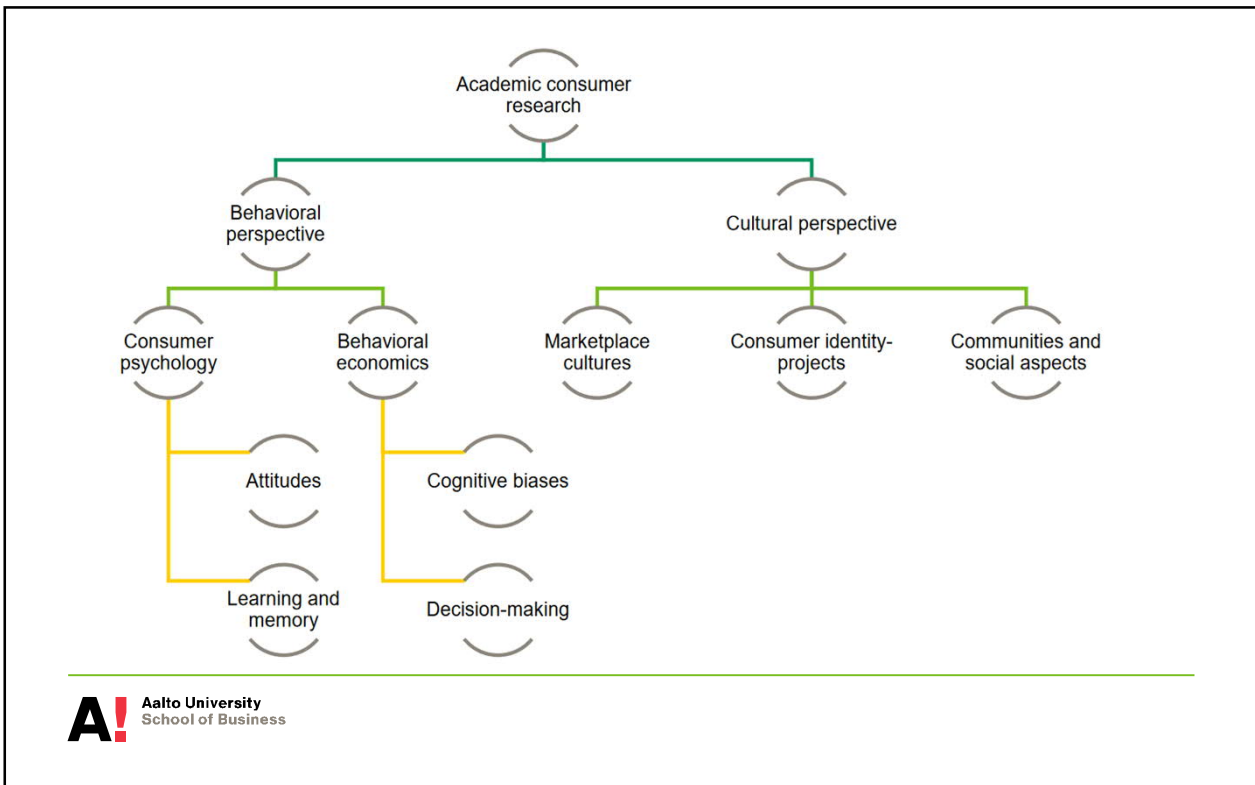
CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE TO CONSUMER RESEARCH

Consumer research which addresses “the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption” (Arnould & Thompson 2005)

- Consumer identities
- Marketplace cultures
- The Sociohistoric Patterning of Consumption
- Mass-Mediated Marketplace Ideologies

Methods typically: qualitative (in-depth interviews, ethnographic methods, discursive and visual analysis etc. etc. etc.)

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HOLBROOK (1987) WHAT IS CONSUMER RESEARCH?


The contribution of other disciplines

Contributions	
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BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVE

Micro economics
Macro economics
Psychology



CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

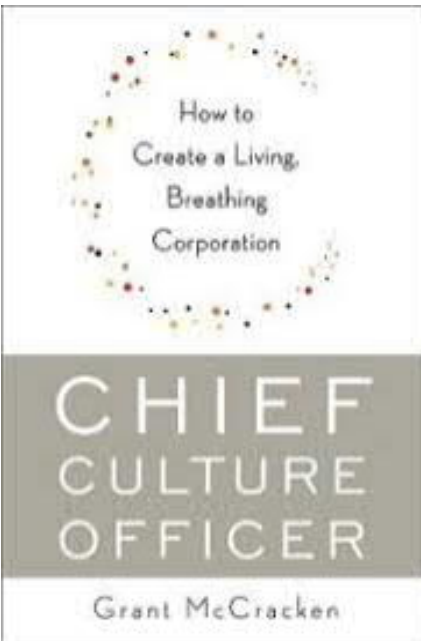
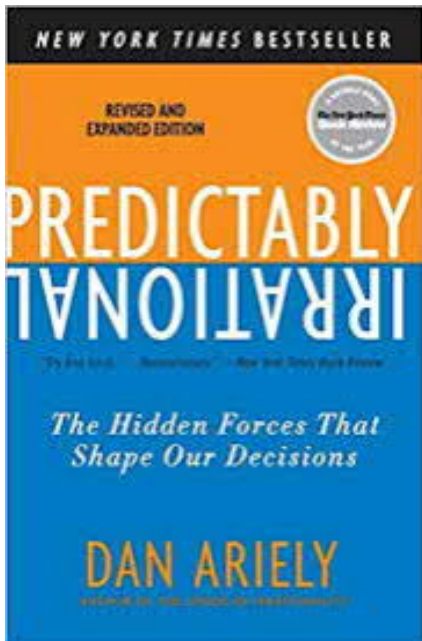
Sociology
Humanities
Anthro-pology
Philosophy



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ACADEMIC consumer research

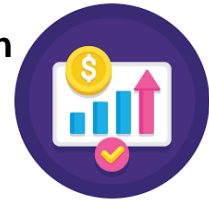


Basic research → Meant to produce new knowledge for “all”

Constructs **theory**

→ Done by universities and academic institutions

COMMERCIAL consumer research



Often closer to **customer research**

Produces information for **an individual** business for their **practical needs**

→ Done by market-research companies, consulting firms etc.

ACADEMIC/BASIC RESEARCH

- **Enquiry driven**, theoretical and/or applied
- **Peer reviewed**, published in academic journals and books
- **Results shared** at conferences and in journals, also open-access journals
- May be **funded with Government sources**
- (Ideally) **widely available**
- Generally have **long lead times** to publication
- (Ideally) no overarching agenda (objectivity)
- Academic layout and language

COMMERCIAL/BUSINESS RESEARCH

- **Need driven** and almost always applied
- Generally seeks **specific answers to specific problems**
- Often undertaken by consultants or research companies
- **Results not widely available**, may have confidentially clauses
- **Tight timelines**
- Written in non-academic language
- Not peer reviewed
- Expenditure **expected to produce income**

For example: Brand image

What is brand image?
What are the dimensions of brand image?



What kind of image do consumers/our customers have of our brand?

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Does academic consumer research
have **anything** to give
to pragmatic, commercial
consumer-research?

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Hannu Uotila
founder and CEO



Course practicalities





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Things you need to know about this course

1. This course is a **rather labor intensive**
→ **a lot of work** to do!
2. You will **learn a lot** 😊

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Goals and objectives of the course

- To appreciate how **understanding consumers** can lead to **competitive advantages**
- To introduce current knowledge of **both substantive findings and theory about consumer behavior**
- To **provide concepts for understanding consumer reactions** to (marketing) stimuli
- To improve the ability to **identify potential applications of consumer behavior concepts** and to utilize those concepts in analyzing marketing problems and determining marketing strategy
- To teach you to **read and understand academic research and to apply its methods** to more practical market and consumer research.

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Practicalities - classes

- **Classes on Tuesday and Thursday, 13.15 to 15ish in Period I and 15.15 to 17ish in Period II**
 - **No compulsory attendance**, but are expected to turn in 3-2-1 quizzes based on what you have learned on the course

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Date	Class – Tue & Thu @ 13.15 to 15
14.9.	Introduction (Guest speaker: Hannu Uotila)
21.9.	Reading and writing academic texts & How to pitch
23.9.	Methods and research design (Guest lecturer Petra Paasonen)
28.9.	Behavioral perspective to consumer research: heuristics and biases
30.9.	Continuing with the behavioural perspective: Attitudes, emotions and Judgement
5.10.	Continuing with the behavioral perspective: Consumer curiosity Guest lecturer Heta Kenttämää
7.10. & 12.10.	NO CLASS, independent work
14.10.	Pitch session (Guests Hannu Uotila & JP Huhtala)
WEEK 42	NO CLASS – tutoring sessions

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Date	Class – Tue & Thu 15.15-17
2.11.	Cultural perspective to Consumer Research: Consumer culture
4.11.	Continuing with the cultural perspective: Social class, lifestyles and Subculture
9.11.	Continuing with the cultural perspective: Self, identity and gender
11.11.	Modes of consumption - from ownership to access-based forms of Consumption
WEEK 46	NO CLASS – tutoring sessions
23.11.	Dark and deviant consumption
25.11.	Global cultural flows and digital consumer behavior
WEEK 48	NO CLASS – independent work
7.12.	Final presentations (Guests: Hannu Uotila & JP Huhtala)

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Practicalities - communication

- **Communication should mostly take place through MyCourses**
 - Please use the discussion forum **for all questions regarding course practicalities**, readings, assignments etc. → do not email!
 - Official announcements etc. will be posted in the News forum. Make sure you check it periodically
 - Contact the course instructors by email if your matter is urgent and/or personal

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Grade structure

On the course you can earn **100 points**, ie. 100% of the grade.

Individual assignments



3-2-1 quiz
25% of the final grade

Collaborative assignments



Perusall readings
25% of the final grade

Groupwork assignments



Groupwork project
50% of the final grade

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3-2-1 quizzes

The 3-2-1 is a reflective activity that encourages students to reflect on a course experience and organize their thoughts and identify areas of confusion or concern.



In each 3-2-1 quiz you are asked to write down

- Three **things you have learned** that week
- **Two questions** for clarification/discussion
- One piece of **feedback** regarding the lectures and/or readings that week

Please see MyCourses for an example and the grading rubric

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Perusall (25%)

Perusall is a **collaborative** e-reader platform

- As you read the assigned texts, you annotate the text, i.e. leave comments and questions
 - You collaborate by responding to posts by others
- Ideally you start meaningful discussions and/or debates



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Perusall instructions

1. Create an account on Perusall.com
2. Join the course by inserting the course code: **MIKKONEN-G4G9M**.
Complete the assignments before the deadline

Your Perusall score depends on (in the order of importance):

1. **Posing thoughtful questions** and comments that **elicit responses from classmates**
2. **Answering questions/comments form others**
3. **Getting upvoted**
4. **Upvoting** thoughtful questions and helpful answers
5. Reading **all the way to the end** of the assigned reading

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Perusall

Note! Comments such as and similar to...

"I agree!"
"Great point!"
"So true!"

**do not constitute meaningful
contributions and will be deleted!**

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Group project (50%)

- During the course, you will be working on developing consumer-research idea **with practical and/or policy implications** for a for-profit or not-for-profit organization.
- You will work in groups of 5 to 6 to first **pitch** your research idea in the beginning of the course, **give a presentation** of your final proposal at the end of the course, and finally write a **full, theory-based (i.e. academic) research plan**.

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Group project topics

Your group will have two different options for topics:

Option 1: A real world marketing problem

- You assume a role of market-research consultants
- For this option, **you will have to find a company to work with**
- Together with the company representative, you will **identify an actual marketing problem that can be solved through consumer research**.

→ i.e. you propose a research project to a company, and this research is for their specific use



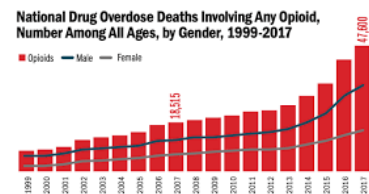
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Group project topics

Option 2: Real-world social problem

- For this option you do not need find an organization to with
- Here you assume a role of an advocate group who is writing a grant proposal for a non-profit organization or a foundation

→ you are seeking funding for a research project, which will have implications for policymakers



Group project deliverables: Pitch & idea paper (10%)

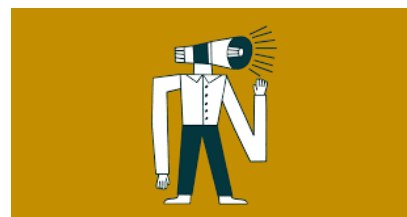
Pitch = a **maximum 5-minute presentation** followed by 5 minutes a Q&A

Deliverable: your pitch presentation slides

In this pitch presentation you should:

- Outline the **consumer-behavior phenomenon** your group has chosen (scale of the phenomenon, market structure, etc. relevant information)
- Convince the importance of the topic **for your chosen organization**
- Provide you initial idea on how you would carry out the research in practice

→ assume you're pitching to the company/not-for-profit organization



Group project deliverables: Presentation and final report

Online presentation of research proposal (10%)

A max 10-minute PowerPoint presentation of your research proposal

Written report (35%)

A max 15-page document

- Background to research
- Research objectives & questions
- Positioning of the research necessary
- Research methods & data collection plan
- Expected findings and practical relevance (what's in it for them)

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Active, meaningful participation is welcome (can earn you up to 5 more points)

ACTIVE IN CLASS

- Ask questions,
- Make comments

Activity is self-assessed



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The points will be converted to the final grade:

POINTS (PERCENTAGE)	GRADE
90 points and over	5
80 to 89 points	4
70 to 79 points	3
60 to 69 points	2
50 to 59 points	1
49 points and under	Fail

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Assignment deadlines

Date	Deadline
September 21 @ 13.00	Perusall 1
September 26 @ 23.55	3-1-1 quiz 1 (submit via MyCourses)
September 28 @ 13.00	Perusall 2
October 10 @ 23.55	3-1-1 quiz 2 (submit via MyCourses)
October 14 @ 13.00	Pitch presentation slides (submit via MyCourses)
November 2 @ 13.00	Perusall 3
November 7 @ 23.55	3-1-1 quiz 3 (submit via MyCourses)
November 9 @ 13.00	Perusall 4
November 14 @ 23.55	3-1-1 quiz 4 (submit via MyCourses)
November 23 @ 13.00	Perusall 5
November 28 @ 13.00	3-1-1 quiz 5 (submit via MyCourses)
December 7 @ 13.00	Final presentation slides (submit via MyCourses)
December 14 @ 23.55	Final research proposal (submit via MyCourses)

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Next step

- Form groups of 5 or 6, and let me know your group members via MyCourses general discussion
- You can also use the general discussion board to find yourself a group

