

Family and Consumer Studies 3470-1:

INTERNATIONAL CONSUMER POLICY

(A Social and Behavioral Science General Education Course)

Thursday Evenings, 7:15 - 9:45 p.m. / Room 350 Alfred Emery Building

Instructor: Dr. Robert N. Mayer

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228 Emery Building / 581-5771 /

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Course Description: This course involves a whirlwind tour of globalization from the viewpoint of consumers in both more developed countries (MDCs) and less developed ones (LDCs). In terms of economic activity, globalization involves the increasing extent to which investment, production, and consumption occur without regard for national boundaries. In terms of culture, globalization usually refers to the process by which Western (or U.S.) values and lifestyles spread throughout the world, although the process of influence also flows in reverse. In terms of politics, globalization has spread democracy, but in so doing, it has also created new demands for consumer policy as well as social movements of resistance to globalization. Whether viewed in economic, culture, or political terms, globalization involves *the consumer* – whether through increased access to goods and services, exposure to new and complex marketplace problems, pursuit of government policies to improve consumer well-being, or protest against globalization's effects on everyday life and local culture.

Course Objectives:

1. To understand the commonalities and key differences in the status of consumers around the world as well as the economic, political, social, and cultural factors that affect consumption;
2. To understand the process by which consumer policy is made, implemented, and evaluated;
3. To appreciate how the United States influences the consumer policies of other countries and how the U.S., in turn, learns from the consumer policy experience of other countries
4. To value the richness of global economic, political, and cultural diversity

Basic Course Schedule:

Weeks 1-3:	Introduction to Globalization and International Consumer Policy
Weeks 4-6:	Consumer Policy Issues in Western MDCs
Weeks 7-8:	Consumer Policy in Japan
Week 9:	Midterm Exam
Week 10:	Spring Break
Weeks 11-12:	Consumer Policy in Formerly Socialist Countries
Weeks 13-15:	Consumer Policy in LDCs
Week 16:	Final Exam

Required Reading:

The readings for this class are contained in a course packet. The reading load in this course is relatively light, so please arrive in class each week ready to discuss the readings.

Grading:

Grades will be based on two *non-cumulative* exams (40 points each), a country profile paper (10%), and five one-page reaction papers (2% each).

WebCT: Detailed lecture notes, along with other course functions, are available via WebCT. Visiting the website frequently helps to maintain the course's momentum, especially in course that meets only once a week.

Very Important Do's and Don'ts:

1. The prospect of a poor course grade does not justify a request to receive an "incomplete." An incomplete is reserved for the most extraordinary circumstances and only when a student has no more than the final exam or the final paper to complete in this course.
2. A missed exam means no credit. If you are sick on the date of the exam, make sure to contact the instructor directly or leave a message on my phone mail (581-5771) **before the exam** so that other arrangements can be made.
3. **The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.**
4. I will keep any unreturned exams or written assignments until 8/1/06, after which they will be recycled or destroyed.
5. My view regarding grading is that an "A" is an exceptional grade achievable by a small percentage of students who perform on a consistently outstanding level. Conversely, I am not a sadist, and I would like to see every student earn a good grade in the class. I do **not** offer extra credit assignments in upper-division classes such as this one.
6. If you miss a class, it is **your** responsibility to find out from other students (and WebCT) what was covered.
7. Please do not fax your written assignments. Reaction papers **must** be handed to the instructor **in class** on the day they are due. Your country profile paper is due no later than the end of class on Thursday, April 13th, but I would enjoy receiving your paper earlier. Late papers will be accepted, but they will be penalized 10% (1 point out of 10) for each non-weekend day that they are late. Any late papers should be handed

in **and certified** by a member of the staff in the FCS Department Office in room 228 AEB..

8. Familiarize yourself with the U of Utah's code of student conduct, especially the definitions of "cheating" and "plagiarism."

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POLICY

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Professor Robert N. Mayer**

Course Readings

1/12 *Introduction to Course, Each Other, and Globalization*

1/19 *Intro: Globalization in Numbers*

Reading #1: Norman Myers and Jennifer Kent, The New Consumers, Island Press, 2004, pp. 3-17.

Reading #2: United Nations, "More Aid, Pro-Poor Trade Reform, and Long-Term Peace-Building...", Press Release, 9/7/05

Reading #3: Thomas Friedman, The World Is Flat. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005, pp. 416-21.

1/26 *Intro to Consumer Policy*

Reading #4: Margot Roosevelt, "Toxic Trade?" Time, 3/25/02, pp. B18-19.

Reading #5: Lori Wallach, Testimony on U.S. Membership in the WTO to the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee (excerpts), 5/17/05

Reading #6: World Trade Organization, "The WTO Does NOT Dictate..." Undated

2/2 *Food Safety*

Reading #7: John Feffer, "Trans-Atlantic Food Fight," The American Prospect, May 2003, pp. 35-38

Reading: Jeremy Smith, "Lawmaking on Genetic (GMO) Food is Minefield for EU," USA Today, February 28, 2005

Reading #8: Lawrence A. Kogan, "Ducking the Truth About EU GM Policy," EU Reporter, 10/22/2004, p.6.

Reading #9: Rick Weiss, "Starved for Food," Washington Post, July 31, 2002, p. A12.

2/9 *Advertising*

Reading #10: Pascaline Dumont, "Temptation-Free Television," UNESCO Courier, Sept. 2001, pp. 44-6.

Reading #11: "EU Takes Aim at Junk Food Adverts," BBC News, 1/20/2005

Reading #12: Johnathan Beukes, "Freedom of Speech or Sexist Advertising?" Amalungelo, September 2004, p. 27.

2/16 *Information and Product Testing*

Reading #13: "EU Deploys Shock Tactics to Curb Smoking" Deutsche Welle, 10/23/04

Reading #14: Dagmar Giersberg, "Testing Quality to Protect Consumers – 40 Years of Stiftung Warentest," Goethe Institut, January, 2005.

- 2/23** **Japan**
 Reading #15: Tim Larimer, "Targeting Japan, Inc," Time, September 25, 2000, V. 156, No. 2
 Reading #16: Suvendrini Kakuchi, "Scandals Force Japanese to Watch What They Eat," Asia Times, May 22, 2002
- 3/2** **Japan**–continued
 Reading #17: Department of Trade and Industry (United Kingdom), Japan, undated
 Aya Takada, "Japan Consumer Groups Threaten U.S. Beef Boycott," AlertNet/Reuters, 10/27/05
 Reading #18: Chisake Watanbe, "Japan Supermarkets Cautious of U.S. Beef," Washington Post, 12/13/05
- 3/9** **TEST #1**
- 3/16** **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**
- 3/23** **Socialism**
 Reading #19: Jeffrey Tayler, "Thin Walls, Bad Neighbors" The Atlantic, November 1997, pp. 54, 56, 60, 61.
 Reading #20: Slavenka Drakulic, How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed, NY: WW Norton, 1991., pp. 17-25.
- 3/30** **Socialism**–continued
 Reading #21: Christoph Neidhart, Russia's Carnival. Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, pp. 15-20.
 Reading #22: Nick Paton Walsh, "Wealth That Moves Sideways." New Statesmen, 2/3/03
 Reading #23: Angela Drujinina, "Russia Crackdown as Food Fraud Runs Rife," CEE--Foodindustry.com, May 13, 2005.
 Reading #24: Anna Gilmore and Martin McKee, "How the East Was Won," Multinational Monitor, May/June, 2005, pp. 9-15.
- 4/6** **Less Developed Countries**–Part 1
 Reading #25: Soren Ambrose and Njoki Njoroge Njehu, "Heartache and Hope in Africa," Multinational Monitor, July/August 2005, pp. 30-34.
 Reading #26: Thurow and Kilman, "Seeds of Discord" Wall Street Journal, 9/11/2003, p. A1,8.
 Reading #27: Emad Mekay, "Brazil Triumphs over U.S. in WTO Subsidies Dispute," Inter-Press Service, March 4, 2005
 Reading #28: "Punch-Up Over Handouts," The Economist, 3/23/2005.
- 4/13** **Less Developed Countries**–Part 2
 Reading #29: Jonathan Karp, "Smoking Offensive," Wall Street Jour., January 15, 2002, p.A1.
 Reading #30: Jim Lobe, "Tobacco Treaty Takes Effect, Without the U.S.," OneWorld US, 2/25/2005

Reading #31: Asia Russell, "Victory and Betrayal," Multinational Mon., June 2002, pp. 10-13

Reading #32: Michael Bailey, "Big Pharma's Tiny Gestures," The Guardian, March 21, 2004

Reading #33: Matt Moffett and Heather W. Tesoriero, "Brazil Issues AIDS-Drug Ultimatum," Wall Street Journal, 6/27/2005

Reading #34: Peter S. Goodman, "China Serves as Dumping Site for Computers," Washington Post, February 24, 2003, p.A1.

Reading #35: Carter Dougherty, "Trade Theory vs. Used Clothes in Africa," New York Times, June 3, 2004

4/20 ***Less Developed Countries***–Part 3

Reading #36: Sara Grusky, "Privatization Tidal Wave," Multinational Mon., Sept., 2001, pp. 14-19

Reading #37: John Tagliabue, "As Multinationals Run the Taps, Anger Rises Over Water for Profit," New York Times, August 26, 2002, p. A1.

Reading #38: Robin Simpson, "Should Consumers Demand Higher Water Prices," Consumer 21, Autumn 2002, pp. 8-11.

Reading #39: "Raise a Glass," The Economist, 3/20/2003

Reading #40: "Consumerism Picking Up in Villages," Financial Express, 5/25/2005

Reading #41: Amy Waldman, "Despite Poverty, A Consumer Class Emerges in India," New York Times, 10/20/03

Reading #42: Jim Yardley, "Chinese Take Recklessly to Cars," New York Times, 3/12/2005

Reading #43: Kathleen E. McLaughlin, "China's Busy Consumers Flock to Easier Credit," Christian Science Monitor. 1/13/05

Reading #44: Jonathan Watts, "China's New Consumers Get a Taste for Luxury Goods," The Guardian (UK), 6/18/05

Reading #45: "For Protecting Consumers' Rights and Interests," China People's Daily, 5/23/00

4/26 **TEST #2**

Application for International Requirement Course Designation

Please complete this form and send it electronically to:

jwtharp@hum.utah.edu

Please cc: your Department Chair and your Dean (if applicable). The committee will process new course proposals only after they have been approved by the relevant departmental curriculum committee.

In addition to this form, please remember that for **new courses** you must submit a representative **syllabus** from each department that will teach the course and for each modality in which the course will be taught (classroom, telecourse, web).

For **existing courses**, please submit a representative **syllabus** for each modality and from each department who has taught the course in the two most recent semesters in which the course has been offered. The committee will review the student course evaluations from each section that has been taught in the last two semesters in which the course has been offered.

Assessment: The International Requirement Committee places a high value on assessing learning outcomes. By applying for the IR designation you are agreeing to participate in periodic assessments of student outcomes in your class focusing on the fourth question in this application (see below). During these assessments we will sample courses that meet the requirement and ask instructors to collect samples of student work on those assignments that were indicated in this application as measuring the International Requirement outcomes. -

International Requirement courses must be at the 3000-level, or above; all International Requirement courses address the following criteria:

1. Course has an international, transnational, or comparative focus that includes a variety of perspectives.
 2. Course focuses on cross-border phenomena (borders conceived in the broadest sense: language, cultural, economic, political, etc).
 3. Course focuses principally on contemporary issues, or shows how historical approaches are relevant to contemporary issues.
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Please indicate your level of agreement with the following questions about the course content criteria using the scale on the right and putting an “X” in the appropriate box. Please also answer the open-ended questions using as much space as you need and *making specific reference to your syllabus(i) in each of your responses:*

1. The course has an international, transnational, or comparative focus that includes a variety of perspectives.		1. Disagree
		2. Somewhat Disagree
		3. Neutral
		4. Somewhat Agree
	X	5. Agree
		Not Applicable (explain below)

Please describe: The essence of FCS 3470 (International Consumer Policy) is for students to examine globalization through the eyes of consumers. Specifically, students explore how different countries address similar consumer problems (e.g., genetically modified food, auto safety, advertising directed at children) as well as how countries export and import consumer aspirations and lifestyles. The course covers a variety of more developed nations (e.g., Sweden, Japan, Germany), so-called transition economies (e.g., Russia, Poland), and less developed countries (e.g., India, China, Bolivia, South Africa).

In terms of multiple perspectives, the topic of globalization must be understood as an economic, political, and cultural phenomenon (see course description). The study of international consumer policy also requires an integration of economics, history, political science, sociology, and law. For example, to appreciate the problems and prospects of consumers in the countries that were once part of the Soviet bloc, one must understand the difference between market and planned economies, the events that led to the unraveling of the Soviet Union, the legacy of a dependency culture in which people were discouraged from speaking out or politically organizing, and recent changes in consumer protection law.

The various aspects of FCS 3470 described in this response are captured by the course's first and fourth learning objective: "1. To understand the commonalities and key differences in the status of consumers around the world as well as the economic, political, social, and cultural factors that affect consumption" and "4. To value the richness of global economic, political, and cultural diversity."

2. Course focuses on cross-border phenomena (borders conceived in the broadest sense: language, cultural, economic, political, etc).		1. Disagree
		2. Somewhat Disagree
		3. Neutral
		4. Somewhat Agree
	X	5. Agree
		Not Applicable (explain below)

Please describe: In FCS 3470, students examine cross-border phenomena both literally and figuratively. Globalization entails the movement of capital, production, and consumption with little regard to national borders. The course covers trade in all three of these basic economic elements (and the movement of people) as well as the political organizations and agreements that govern this trade (e.g., the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization). At a more figurative level, international policy involves the trade of consumer problems (e.g., the downsides of infant milk formula use and water privatization in less developed countries) and policies designed to address these problems (e.g., controls on the marketing of tobacco products and compulsory licensing of AIDS drugs). This latter aspect of 3470 is articulated in the course’s third learning objective: “3. To appreciate how the United States influences the consumer policies of other countries and how the U.S., in turn, learns from the consumer policy experience of other countries.”.

3. Course focuses principally on contemporary issues, or shows how historical approaches are relevant to contemporary issues.		1. Disagree
		2. Somewhat Disagree
		3. Neutral
		4. Somewhat Agree
	X	5. Agree
		Not Applicable (explain below)

Please describe: Although the discussion of consumer problems and policies is grounded historically, the main focus is on contemporary consumer issues. Students in this class learn about contemporary developments such as NAFTA; the expansion of the European Union; efforts to reduce worldwide tariffs on agricultural products like cotton and sugar; treaties to control the global flow of toxic chemicals (the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions), trends in Japanese marriage, childbearing, and saving; proposals for debt relief in Africa; efforts to control the mounting death toll from car accidents in China; and, of course, the current status of the consumer movements of various more and less developed countries. Beyond these specific topics, the course addresses two larger issues: (1) Do the benefits of increasing global interdependence outweigh its costs, and (2) Is globalization inevitable?

4. All International Requirement courses demonstrate a broad commitment to the desired student outcomes. Specifically, students will be able to:

1. identify and explain some contemporary issues that impact the global community;
 2. identify and explain political, economic, social, and/or cultural connections between the United States and other communities of the world;
 3. identify some examples of global interdependency and explain their relevancy for the future;
 4. explain how global awareness will impact their frame of reference in the future;
 5. use a comparative framework for an understanding of local, national, and disciplinary issues in an international or global context;
 6. become aware that different nationalities may use different frameworks to understand issues
 7. communicate across language, cultural, and political borders.
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Please describe how your course targets and measures at least three of the desired student outcomes, e.g. portfolio, written assignments, group projects, and presentations. In the table below use the **first column** to indicate which **outcome** you intend to address. In the **second column** make **specific reference to the assignments and evaluation methods** in your syllabus or syllabi that will be used to address the relevant outcome. We require that you describe three outcomes, but encourage you to add as many additional rows as you need in order to demonstrate your assessment of student learning.

<i>Student Outcome #</i>	<i>Assignment or evaluation method in your syllabus that addresses this outcome.</i>
<i>1-3</i>	<i>Students read 40 or more brief articles providing background and differing points of view on contemporary consumer policy issues.</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>Students discuss the inherent biases in the words (e.g., First vs. Third World; developed and developing countries) and pictures (e.g., Mercator vs. Peters projection vs. DownUnder view) people use to describe the world.</i>
<i>1-5</i>	<i>Students write five brief reaction papers in which they react to assigned readings and try to apply the reading to their lives.</i>