

We live in a branded world. From the water we drink, to the politicians we vote for, everything is branded. In an over-communicated, hyper-connected, storified, gamified world, brands have expanded their footprint far beyond the niches of FMCG goods, consumer durables or sports gear. Branding is as important for culture and politics as it once was for market commodities. But what is it that makes brands and branding powerful? What explains the global diffusion of branding techniques? Or at an even more fundamental level, what is a brand? How do we go about building a brand? How do we go about managing a brand that already exists? What are the challenges that managers, marketing firms and consumers face when interacting with brands? How do different stakeholders created and maintain brands in dynamic environments? These are some of the questions that this course will attempt to answer.

In this course, we will examine multiple theoretical perspectives on 'brand' and will understand how each theoretical approach involves a different brand management toolkit. We will approach branding from multiple perspectives - from rational branding to emotional branding to cultural branding. To complement the theoretical foundations, we will discuss real life strategic challenges that brand and their managers face and learn from the success and failure of particular brand strategies. We will also understand how brands and brand management have evolved in the 21st century and what are the key ethical, environmental and socio-cultural implications of brand management's evolutionary trajectory. We will explore concepts such as unique selling proposition (USP), mindspace positioning, cultural brand strategy and performance metrics such as brand equity, brand love, share of voice.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

- Apply appropriate branding theories and toolkits to solve practical case studies
- Critically evaluate different approaches to measure brand performance
- Align epistemological assumptions with appropriate approach
- Exhibit fluency with the building blocks of branding strategies

- Identify appropriate segmentation strategies on appropriate bases, define targets and relevant brand positioning techniques
- Understand the evolutionary trajectory of consumer brand management
- Analyse and critique branding strategies and come up with alternatives

We will attempt to simulate the life of a brand manager in a typical multinational organization, who is working with incomplete data, technological vanishing points, multi-method research reports, changing marketplace dynamics, intensifying competition and increased customer power.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

I will assess student performance on the following measures:

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|----------------------------------------------|-------|
| I. Attendance & Class Participation | (15%) |
| II. Small-group Discussions (Class Readings) | (20%) |
| III. Individual Assignments (Weekly) | (40%) |
| IV. Final Individual Paper | (25%) |

STUDENT WORKLOAD

ACTIVITY	Breakdown (Hours)	Total (Hours)
Classroom Hours + Time for Reflection	17,5 + 17,5	35
Small-Group Discussion (Class Readings)		30
1. Personal Reading & Reflection	30	
2. Group Discussion	10	
Individual Assignments		50
1. Personal Reading and Reflection	20	
2. Group Discussion and Presentation	5	
Final Individual Paper	45	45

TOTAL	160
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PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE (Subject to change based on company schedules)

Session	Date	Topic	Visitors
1	Tuesday, April 14	Course Guidelines & Introduction	
2	Thursday, April 16	Lecture: Evolution of Brand Management Approaches	
3	Tuesday, April 21	Lecture: Customer Based Brand Equity & Brand Identity	
4	Thursday, April 23	Lecture + Small-Group Discussions: Brands as Cultural Artefacts	
5	Tuesday, April 28	Lecture + Small-Group Discussions: Creating and Managing Service & Experiential Brands	
6	Thursday, April 30	Lecture + Small-Group Discussions: Brand Management in a Trans-local World	
7	Tuesday, May 5	Lecture + Small-Group Discussions: New Media, New Tech, New Challenges & Opportunities	
8	Thursday, May 7	Lecture + Small-Group Discussions: Pressures and Challenges of Managing Brands in the 21 st century	
9	Tuesday, May 12	Lecture + Case Discussions Reviving a Dying Experiential Brand	
10	Thursday, May 14	Lecture + Case Discussions	

COURSE MATERIALS

I will post PDF files of assigned readings on mycourses at least a week in advance so students will have ample time to familiarize themselves with the literature.

GUIDELINES FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSIONS (CLASS READINGS)

Depending on the number of enrolments, each group will be assigned one or two readings to discuss in small groups in class. Each group member will get an assigned breakout room and will lead the discussion on the assigned reading with a small group of students. I will facilitate the discussions as well. Each group will get 15 minutes to discuss the reading. We will finalize the order of presentations during the introductory lecture. To keep it fair for all the groups, I will use a pseudo-randomizer to schedule group discussions. The one pre-condition will be that no group has to present twice in the same week.

GUIDELINES FOR CASE DISCUSSION (BRAND STRATEGY)

This part of the course would involve coming up with a brand strategy for two real-world brands using the approaches discussed in the articles and course lectures. Depending on the kind of problems case companies face, you will come up with a diagnosis of the brand challenge and propose a solution.

GUIDELINES FOR FINAL INDIVIDUAL TERM PAPER

The final term paper will involve a set of 5 inter-related questions that you will have to reflect on and answer, given all that you have learned in the course. Each of the questions will have a minimum word limit of 500 words and a maximum word limit of 600 words. The deadline for the final term paper will be May 31st, 2020 (23:59).