Contact Information

Instructor  Alex R. Zablah, Ph.D.
Office     Enterprise Hall, Room 126
Email      azablah@gmu.edu (preferred method of contact)
Office phone 703.993.4174
Office hours Online via Blackboard Collaborate: Tuesday 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. (day and time subject to change). Offline: By appointment only. Please email me to set up an appointment for an online or offline meeting.

Course Basics

Course materials  *What is Marketing?* by Alvin J. Silk – available for purchase at the George Mason University bookstore
Course lecture materials – available for download via the course website

Course website  Blackboard @ My Mason Portal, [https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu](https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu)
Meeting time  Wednesday 7:20 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Meeting location  Arlington: Founders Hall 113
Prerequisite  Admission to MBA program

Teaching Philosophy

As the instructor in this course, my objectives are twofold. First, I aim to expose students, in a systematic and structured fashion, to conceptual and analytical tools that can be utilized to address common and emerging marketing management problems. Second—and more importantly—I seek to improve students’ understanding of and ability to leverage these tools to solve “real world” problems through the use of cases, hands-on assignments, and real-world examples that stimulate critical thinking and reflection.

Overall Course Objectives and Focus

*Catalog description:* Develops market-based knowledge and skills for effective marketing decision-making, strategy design, implementation, and evaluation in a wide variety of institutional and competitive situations. Addresses the importance of companies being market-driven and customer-focused. Emphasis on case studies, team work, and projects.

*Course topics:* Core marketing management issues, including segmentation, targeting, positioning, and the four P’s. Market analysis techniques, including situation, breakeven, market size, market share, buyer behavior, and customer lifetime value analysis. New challenges and opportunities in marketing management, such as those conferred by social media, design thinking, co-creation, and open innovation.
Skill Development Objectives

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify, collect, and evaluate data that can be utilized to address marketing management problems.
2. Apply conceptual and analytical models to solve marketing management problems.
3. Effectively communicate and defend, in written and oral form, recommendations intended to address marketing management problems.
4. Critically evaluate and discuss others’ recommendations for addressing marketing management problems.

Course Expectations

Students can expect that I will:
1. Arrive to class on time;
2. Be prepared to teach and lead classroom discussions;
3. Be fair and impartial;
4. Do my best to enhance their learning experience;
5. Act in a professional manner;
6. Respect their comments and opinions;
7. Address their questions and concerns;
8. Be willing to provide assistance outside of the classroom;
9. Begin and adjourn class at the scheduled times;
10. Return graded assignments/exams promptly.

I expect that students will:
1. Avoid the urge to engage in any form of electronic communication while in class;
2. Attend all lectures and arrive to class on time;
3. Be prepared to discuss all assigned cases and readings;
4. Actively participate in classroom discussions;
5. Respect and be courteous to their peers and myself;
6. Turn in completed assignments on time;
7. Perform to the fullest of their abilities;
8. Adhere to George Mason University policies on academic honesty;
9. Actively participate in group activities;
10. Ask a question when something is unclear.

Course Policies and Requirements

Academic Integrity

I will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty. Please familiarize yourself with George Mason University’s policies regarding plagiarism, cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification, and multiple submissions. Violations of academic integrity guidelines, willful or otherwise (e.g., due to ignorance of existing policies), will be severely punished and may result in a failing course grade, a failing grade on a course assignment, and/or other penalties deemed appropriate by the University’s Honor Committee. More information about George Mason University’s academic integrity guidelines can be found online at: http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/

As a reminder, George Mason University’s student Honor Code reads as follows:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work

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Course Participation and Attendance

Given the course’s focus on case analysis and interactive discussion, student attendance and participation is critical to each student’s learning and to the learning of his or her classmates. I thus expect all students to be in class every day (for the full class period), engaged, and ready to go. While class attendance is not formally graded, **student course participation is evaluated during each class meeting.** For that reason, **more than two absences during the semester may have a grave effect on students’ course grades.**

Student participation in case discussions, during lectures, and as part of class exercises will be graded after each class period. Participation grades are based on the quality and relevance of the point being made, and the level of professionalism demonstrated in class and when interacting with fellow students and the instructor. Strong consideration will be given to the student’s demonstrated knowledge of the conceptual and analytical decision-making tools presented in class. Student participation grades during case discussions will also consider: (1) evidence of pre-class preparation, (2) understanding of key case issues, (3) content of presentation, (4) interactions with group members, (5) completeness of analysis, and (6) questions and comments.

Please note that each student **(not the instructor) is ultimately responsible for their level of participation and contribution during class sessions.** The instructor will not seek out individual student participation for grading purposes; it is students’ responsibility to ensure that their work and perspective has a constructive influence on class and case discussions.

Please note that course exams are based primarily on class lectures; thus, failure to attend class on a regular basis is very likely to lead to poor performance on the course exams. In addition, understanding of lecture materials is fundamental to the successful completion of the course project. It is my experience that students who consistently show up for class achieve a superior mastery of the subject and perform substantially better than their absence-prone counterparts on the exams and project.

Unless you are experiencing major difficulties which will keep you from class for an extended period of time or are involved in university-sponsored activities, you do not need to provide me notice of/ keep me informed about the reason for your absence.

You are all adults—I trust that you will manage your schedule in a manner that is most beneficial to you. However, please note the following: (1) it is your responsibility to catch-up with course materials when absent from class (I will not answer any questions on an individual basis that I have already addressed during class), and (2) I am unwilling to offer assistance outside of the classroom to those students who are chronically absent (this includes, but is not limited to, meeting to review an exam or pick-up an assignment distributed in a class).

Case Analysis Worksheet and Case Packet

Adequate case preparation is critical for the fruitful in-class discussion of assigned cases. Prior to each case discussion session, students are expected to individually: (1) read, analyze, and digest the case, (2) answer case questions, and (3) complete a case analysis worksheet. Case analysis worksheets (see Appendix 1 of the lecture packet) must be type-written, professionally formatted, and limited to a maximum of three pages (single-spaced). Students must bring a hard copy of the case analysis worksheet to the class period in which the case will be discussed. Upon the completion of the semester, students will electronically submit a case analysis packet that contains all of the case worksheets for the semester. Case analysis packets will be graded on: (1) professionalism (e.g., grammar and organization), (2) demonstrated effort (e.g., comprehensiveness of analysis), and, most importantly, (3) evidence of growth in case analysis skills from case to case.
To motivate adequate student preparation for cases, several case analysis worksheets will be randomly collected throughout the semester (cases that are collected in class will be used to assess preparation but will not be formally graded). Failure to turn in a hard copy of the case analysis worksheet during a “random collection day” will result in a deduction of 14% of the case packet grade. Make-up opportunities are not provided for case analysis worksheets that are not turned in during class (no exceptions).

Nature of the Course

The course is arranged into three complementary modules. The first module covers the fundamentals of marketing strategy development while the second module focuses on the analytical techniques needed to develop such strategies. The third and final module focuses on the implementation of marketing strategies through the four P’s. The course map (refer to page 8) provides details as to the specific topics that will be covered under each module. Class sessions will usually be a mixture of lectures and case discussions; there will also be ample time for questions, discussion of current business events, and the sharing of relevant professional and personal experiences.

One final but important note: As this course is part of the MBA core, it will be demanding and challenging. Students are expected to demonstrate an ability to think critically and articulate independent, original thoughts. How well students perform in the course will depend not only on their abilities but also on their willingness to put forth the necessary effort.

Course Exams

Unless otherwise noted, exams will focus primarily on topics emphasized during course lectures and discussions. Course exams will consist of five to seven short answer questions that challenge students to apply the critical concepts, frameworks, and tools discussed in the course. As a general policy, students will not be allowed to keep a copy of graded exams, but are welcome to make an appointment to review their exams with the course instructor. Failure to return graded exams to the instructor will result in a grade of zero for that exam.

Make-up Exams and Related Policies

Tests will be conducted on the dates indicated in the course schedule; students who arrive more than 15 minutes late to class on exam days will not be allowed to complete the exam and will receive a grade of zero. Makeup tests will only be granted in extreme circumstances to students who provide a valid reason for their absence; decisions regarding make-up exams will be made on a case-by-case basis. Students seeking a make-up exam will be required to provide corroborating evidence (e.g. detailed doctor’s note, receipt for medical services showing a date/time of treatment) which convincingly demonstrates that an exception is warranted. Per University policy, documented absences due to personal illness or family emergency constitute acceptable bases for missing exams (pre-planned weddings, vacations, and the like are not acceptable reasons for absence from an exam). In an attempt to preserve the integrity of the testing process, I reserve the right to change the content (i.e. individual questions) and/or format (e.g. multiple choice vs. essay) of makeup exams.

Course Project

As part of the course, students will be required to conduct a market potential analysis for a start-up product (assigned by the instructor) that is being or has currently been crowd-funded via Kickstarter (www.kickstarter.com). The course project is designed to offer students an opportunity to apply the decision-making skills acquired throughout the semester to an unstructured marketing management problem. As such, the course project is an integral part of students’ learning experience that will challenge them to think critically and apply their newly-gained marketing knowledge. As noted in the course
schedule, the project will be completed via two complementary assignments: (1) an information gathering exercise (due electronically via Blackboard), and (2) an in-class presentation of the market potential study. The project will be completed in groups of no less than four but no more than five students. Peer evaluations will be utilized to assess each student’s course project grade by multiplying their team’s project score (e.g., 90%) by their average peer evaluation score (e.g., 70%) to arrive at the individual student score (e.g., 90% x 70% = 63%). Please do not underestimate the amount of effort that it will take for you to successfully complete this project, especially because late assignments will not be accepted and will result in a grade of zero. Specific details, requirements, and grading procedures about the course project are discussed in the “project addendum” handout.

Getting Instructor Feedback on the Group Project

The course project is to be completed without the help of any outside parties. Please do not ask the instructor to evaluate any of your project assignments before turning them in (i.e. do not try to hedge your risk by asking me to pre-grade your project assignments; e.g. does this look ok?). The instructor will gladly provide feedback (via email or in-person) when groups have very specific questions about an assignment or need clarification on a very specific issue (e.g. is this a good way to approximate X?). However, students are expected to “think things through” on their own—little is gained (from a learning perspective) if the instructor ends up grading his own work. Excessive reliance on instructor feedback will result in a grade deduction on the assignment in question.

Students with disabilities

Students that need special accommodations and have a “Faculty Contact Sheet” from the office of Disability Services (http://ods.gmu.edu) should let the instructor know as soon as possible. The instructor will make the necessary adjustments for students with disabilities based on the recommendations and guidance provided by the Student Disability Services experts.

Blackboard Course Website

Lecture presentations and other relevant course materials will be distributed via the course’s Blackboard website (https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/). Exam grades will be promptly posted in the course website as well. It is your responsibility to download and print any documents that will be used in each lecture—before coming to class. Make sure to periodically check the website for announcements and changes. If you are experiencing problems with Blackboard, please let me know about it and contact the ITU Support Center at 703.993.8870. It is essential that students have Blackboard access starting on day one of the semester and it is their responsibility to ensure that they can successfully logon to the system.

E-mail

The instructor will often utilize the official university e-mail system (i.e., MasonLIVE) to communicate important course information. Students should check their university email address on a regular basis (see http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information). When contacting the instructor via e-mail, please do so directly at azablah@gmu.edu.

Extra Credit

On occasion, you will be given the opportunity to earn extra credit for your voluntary participation in experimental studies or completing survey instruments. Points awarded will vary depending upon the complexity of the assignment.

Disruptive Behaviors

As a courtesy to their peers and instructor, students should turn off their cell phones, pagers, laptops, and other similar types of electronic devices before class starts. Surfing the web, text-messaging, reading the
newspaper or fielding phone calls during class is very disruptive (not to mention disrespectful) and will
not be tolerated. The instructor reserves the right to seize the electronic equipment of students who violate
this policy for the duration of the class period and to dismiss repeat violators from class. Student
participation is critical to the success of this course—however, be aware that student comments should be
appropriate for and directed towards the entire class. Students that engage in “private conversations” or
make offensive comments will also be excused from class.

Food and Beverages
Snacks and beverages (non-alcoholic, of course) are permitted in class as long as their consumption is not
disruptive to peers and the instructor. This is a privilege—please do not abuse it.

Course Enrollment/Registration
Instructors have no control over students’ enrollment/registration status (only over students’ course
grades). It is students’ responsibility to process their registration and withdrawal requests via Patriot Web
or through the registrar’s office. Students that intend to withdraw from the course but fail to do so before
the end of the withdrawal period will receive an “F” in the course.

Miscellaneous
Students who plan to miss class for religious reasons should inform me of their expected absence during
the first two weeks of the semester. George Mason University offers students’ different types of
assistance, including counseling services (http://caps.gmu.edu/) and English writing assistance
(http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/). Please take advantage of these valuable resources as needed. When
inclement weather affects the area, check the University website (www.gmu.edu) or call the university
switchboard (703.993.1000) to learn about changes to the University schedule.

Changes to the syllabus
The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus, if necessary, but will make every effort to avoid
any changes and will give prior notice of any modifications.

Course Grading
Course grades are assigned using the assignment weighting and grading scale noted below. Students are
responsible for the grade they earn in the class—the instructor will not engage in any grade negotiations due,
for example, to students who are under pressure to make a certain grade in order to avoid some negative
outcome (e.g., not graduating, loss of a job offer, etc.). Grades will only be adjusted when computational
mistakes are made; students should inform the instructor of any such errors as soon as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Exams</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>A+</th>
<th>97-100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Project</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation and customer analysis</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project presentation</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution and Cases</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case analysis packet</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class contribution</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tentative Course Schedule: Deviations from this schedule may be necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LECTURE TOPIC</th>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES &amp; DEADLINES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introductions; profile cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic A1. The Case Method</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>Topic 1. Marketing Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapters 1 and 3 (B); Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Situation Analysis (P)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic 2. Situation Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Topic 3. Marketing Feasibility</td>
<td>Reed Supermarkets</td>
<td>Chapter 1 Appendix (B); Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Breakeven Analysis (P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Topic 4. Market Potential Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Market Size and Market Share Analysis (P)</td>
<td>Discuss project; form project teams; team pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td>Topic 5. Customer Value Analysis</td>
<td>Classic Knitwear and Guardian: A Perfect Fit?</td>
<td>Chapter 9 (B); Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Customer Lifetime Value Analysis (P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>Topic 6. Buyer Behavior Analysis</td>
<td>HubSpot: Inbound Marketing and Web 2.0</td>
<td>Chapter 2 (B)</td>
<td>Mid-term course evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Team member trade/quit deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>Topic 7a. Managing Products</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 4 (B)</td>
<td>Project group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>Topic 7b. Developing New Products</td>
<td>Porcini's Pronto: &quot;Great Italian Cuisine Without the Wait!&quot;</td>
<td>Chapter 4 (B)</td>
<td>Project information gathering exercise is due electronically</td>
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<td>10/31</td>
<td>Topic 8. Communication</td>
<td>OpenIDEO</td>
<td>Chapter 6 (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>Topic 9: Pricing</td>
<td>United Breaks Guitars</td>
<td>Chapter 7 (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/14</td>
<td>Topic 10. Distribution</td>
<td>Optical Distortion, Inc. (A)</td>
<td>Chapter 5 (B); Chapter 8 (B)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>Catch-up &amp; Project Group Work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Case analysis packets are due electronically</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/5</td>
<td>Group Project Presentations</td>
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<td>Peer evaluations are due; presentations are due electronically</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>Final Exam (7:20 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.)</td>
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Notes: B= Course textbook; P=Harvard Business School case and note packet.
Marketing Management

Marketing Analyses
- Situation Analysis
- Marketing Feasibility Analysis
- Market Potential Analysis
- Customer Value Analysis
- Buyer Behavior Analysis

Marketing Plans (4 P’s)
- Managing and Developing Products
- Marketing Communications
- Pricing
- Distribution Channels

Strategy Formulation
- Marketing Strategy
- Customer Strategy