George Mason University School of Management
MBA 623.002 – Marketing Management
Spring 2014

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 Please email me to set up an appointment for a meeting.

Course Basics

Course materials
Course readings – available for download via the course website.
Course case and note packet – available for purchase ($15.80) from Harvard Business School Press https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/23299645 (remove the optional audio tracks from the packet unless you need them)
Course simulation – purchase starting February 16th ($ 35) at http://www.links-simulations.com/PHP/PayForLINKS.php
Course lecture materials – available for download via the course website

Course website Blackboard @ My Mason Portal, https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu
Meeting time Thursday 6:30 p.m. – 10:05 p.m.
Meeting location Fairfax: University Hall 1200
Prerequisite Admission to MBA program

Course Objective
To provide you with the understanding necessary to develop and implement marketing strategies that profitably satisfy customers’ needs.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this course, you will:

1. Understand theoretical frameworks that inform successful marketing strategies and tactical marketing programs.
2. Be familiar with data-driven analyses and tools commonly used to support marketing decision-making.
3. Gain an appreciation for the dynamic interplay between marketing program elements.
4. Comprehend how marketing contributes to firm performance and influences/is influenced by other business functions.
Basic Expectations
Both students and instructors tend to have expectations as they begin a new course or term. Over the duration of my career, I have found that certain critical expectations tend to be common among both students and the instructor and, as such, provide the foundation for a successful course. In no particular order, these core mutual expectations are as follows: (1) pre-class preparation, (2) in-class engagement (which requires physical presence), (3) respect for all individuals, and (4) integrity in all dealings. I ask all of my students to live up to these expectations and commit to doing so myself.

Course Structure and Policies

Nature of the Course
I designed the course to maximize learning outcomes while keeping in mind the constraints imposed by our long class meetings, your workload in other courses, and the personal and professional demands on your time (i.e., the course will be very challenging but manageable). Specifically, the course involves a mixture of lectures, supplemental readings, case discussions, exercises, and a large-scale simulation. There will be ample time in class for questions, discussion of current business events, and the sharing of relevant professional and personal experiences. Please note that adequate pre-class preparation – by completing assigned readings, assignments, and simulation runs – is critical to your learning and performance in the course.

Academic Integrity
Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated. 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/

While it is difficult to anticipate all possible student actions that violate academic integrity standards, I offer the following as examples of behaviors that are (a) a clear violation of academic integrity guidelines, and (b) punishable by a failing grade in the course:

1. Relying on case solutions posted on the Internet (or obtained elsewhere).
2. Obtaining copies of old course exams, exam questions, case solutions, and assignments from current or former students.
3. Executing individual course assignments in collaboration with others, especially when such collaboration leads a student to change his or her answer(s) on an assignment.
4. Relying on unauthorized materials (including others’ answers) during an exam.
5. Helping others cheat.
6. Plagiarism of materials from any source.

Course Participation, Attendance & Tardiness
Given the nature of the course and audience, 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. Tardiness and absences will have a meaningful negative impact on your course participation grade. Further, the course exam is based primarily on class lectures; thus, absences are also very likely to lead to poor performance on the course exam. Let me and your group mates know in advance if you have to miss a class for any reason. Please note that it is your responsibility to catch up with course materials in the case of absence, and I am unwilling to offer assistance to those students who are chronically absent.
Student participation in case discussions, during lectures, and as part of class and group exercises will be graded after each class period. Participation grades are based on the: (1) extent of peer interaction, (2) level of preparation, (3) level of participation, (4) contribution quality, (5) in-class group dynamics, (6) attendance and tardiness, and (7) professionalism. You will complete a course contribution self-assessment at the end of the term that I will consider when assigning participation grades. Please review this contribution self-assessment form (posted in Blackboard) for insight into each of these participation elements and their relative importance. Course participation grades will be assigned at the end of the term only. You will, however, receive a participation “progress report” around the mid-point of the course.

Please note that you are responsible for your level of engagement and contribution during class sessions. I 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.

**Course Activities and Assignments**

**Course Exams & Policies (Individual)**

The course involves two exams, a mid-term and a final. The mid-term exam is case-based and is completed in class during the fifth week of the semester. The mid-term emphasizes topics covered during the first four course lectures (marketing strategy) and consists of two types of questions: some questions will ask you to explain basic theoretical frameworks and concepts discussed in the course while others will ask you to apply those frameworks and concepts to issues presented in the case. **IMPORTANT:** Be sure to arrive on time to class for the mid-term exam. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late to class for the mid-term exam will not be allowed to complete the exam and will receive a grade of zero. As a general policy, students are not be allowed to keep a copy of the graded mid-term exam, but are welcome to make an appointment with the instructor to review their graded exams further. Failure to return graded exams to the instructor will result in a grade of zero for the exam.

The final exam is based on the course simulation and is take-home in nature (submitted electronically for grading via Blackboard during the finals weekend). The final exam focuses on topics covered during the last four course lectures (marketing tactics) and consists of questions that ask students to use course frameworks and concepts to solve problems derived from the course simulation. **IMPORTANT:** The final exam is an individual assignment that is intended to assess individual (not group) learning from the simulation. You may consult all course materials (including the simulation manual and website) when completing the exam but may not receive help from any other human resource (e.g., current or former student, simulation administrator, etc.) when doing so. Violations of academic integrity standards when completing the final exam will result in a grade of zero for the exam and course. To receive credit on the final exam, students must turn in the completed exam – in Microsoft Word format – through the course’s Blackboard website by the due date indicated in the course schedule. Final exams not turned in by the deadline will receive a grade of zero.

Makeup opportunities and/or deadline extensions for the course exams will only be granted in extreme circumstances. Decisions regarding make-up exams/deadline extensions will be made on a case-by-case basis and – with the exception of unforeseeable emergencies – require that arrangements be made with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the exam’s scheduled date. Students seeking a make-up exam/deadline extension 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 of makeup exams.
Case Preparation and Write-Ups (Individual)

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, and (2) complete a case write-up. Case write-ups must address the assigned case questions (posted in Blackboard under the case materials section), be type-written (in at least 11 pt. font), professionally formatted, and limited to a maximum of two single-spaced pages with margins of at least one inch (exclusive of financial projections and appendices). Completed case write-ups are graded along two dimensions: (1) demonstrated effort (50%) and (2) adequacy of the logic and arguments used to support answers to case questions (50%).

IMPORTANT: Case write-ups must be turned in as hard-copies in class. Make-up opportunities are not available for case analysis write-ups that are not turned in by the due date or in compliance with the course late assignment policy (again, no exceptions).

Course Simulation (Group)

Simulation Runs. The course simulation is the learning centerpiece of the course. The simulation challenges you, along with your teammates, to manage a firm directly competing against other firms in the industry. Your goal as managers is to improve the firm’s performance over time. To do so, you work with your team to make quarterly decisions regarding demand generation (i.e., marketing strategy and programs), manufacturing, distribution, service levels and so on for six periods. Your team’s grade on the simulation is assigned using a multi-factor, within industry quantitative performance measure (see the simulation manual for further details). All simulation runs are completed on the dates and times indicated in the course schedule. It is not possible to make-up a missed run. Are you ready to dominate the competition?

Do not underestimate the challenge posed by the simulation or the commitment required to successfully compete in the simulation. Each run of the simulation is equivalent to a comprehensive case analysis. Expect to spend between 3 to 4 hours preparing your decisions for each run of the simulation

I will use peer evaluations to assign each student’s grade on the simulation assignments, including the simulation run and post-action reviews. Specifically, I will multiply students’ grades on the simulation assignments (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%).

IMPORTANT: When you run into “trouble” or have questions about the simulation, your natural tendency will be to reach out to the instructor for help. While I am here to help, please note that there is a limit on how much assistance I can offer in order to be fair to all of your “rivals.” So, here is my advice when you have a question: check the manual! If the answer is not in the manual, check it again! If it’s still not there, check the FAQs page on the simulation website. If the FAQs fail you, then come to me. I am happy to provide assistance – however, teams that over-rely on my direction will accrue a “consulting fee” penalty that starts at $100,000 for every help session lasting 10 minutes or less.

Post-Action Reviews. After each simulation run, all teams must submit a post-action review to the instructor via Blackboard (in Microsoft Word format). The post-action reviews are very brief documents that offer insight regarding the critical decisions the simulation team just made. A template that all teams must use to complete the post-action reviews is provided in the course website, along with its grading rubric. IMPORTANT: teams that fail to complete their simulation run (i.e., do not change their decisions from the preceding quarter) automatically receive a grade of zero on the post action review (no exceptions). Finally, to encourage active reflection, particularly thoughtful (and on time) post-action reviews may receive $100,000 simulation bonuses that will appear as “consulting fee” credits during the subsequent simulation period.
Late and Missed Assignment Policy

Late assignments incur a 10% penalty per calendar day and are accepted up to three calendar days after their scheduled due date. You must inform the instructor if you plan to submit a late assignment. Assignments turned in three days after their scheduled due date will automatically receive a grade of zero. Make-up opportunities are not available for any missed assignments or assignments submitted outside the three day late submission window. The late assignment policy does not apply to simulation runs or course exams (see the course exam section for details on the exam policy). Simulation run decisions must be entered into the system by the assigned date and time; otherwise you forfeit all points corresponding to the run’s post-action review.

Miscellaneous

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

You may be given an opportunity to earn extra credit for voluntarily participating in experimental studies or completing survey instruments. Points awarded will vary depending upon the complexity of the assignment. This is the only form of extra-credit provided in the course (and its occurrence is rare).

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.
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>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case write-ups</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Simulation</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-action reviews (4)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm performance</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<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>Week</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Other Activities</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Simulation</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 (Feb 2-8) | Customer Analysis I | -Course overview  
-Introductions | -The End of Rational Economics  
-A Nobel That Bridges Economics and Psychology | | |
| 2 (Feb 9-15) | Customer Analysis II | -Simulation overview  
-Form simulation teams  
-Case 0: LINKS Bad (in-class exercise; download from BB) | -How Valuable is Word of Mouth?  
-Customer Profitability and Lifetime Value (Case Packet) | | |
| 3 (Feb 16-22) | Segmentation & Targeting | -Case 1 Discussion: Rosewood Hotels and Resorts  
-Preview mid-term exam | -Rediscovering Market Segmentation  
-Know What your Customers Want Before they Do | | -Case 1 write-up (C)  
-Register for simulation by Feb 20 @ 7:20 p.m. |
| 4 (Feb 23-Mar 1) | Positioning | -Case 2 Discussion: The Fashion Channel | Mapping Your Competitive Position | Simulation is initialized | -Case 2 write-up (C) |
| 5 (Mar 2-8) | | Mid-term exam | | | Mid-term course evaluation (prior to exam) |
| 6 (Mar 9-15) | | | | LINKS Simulation Manual | -Bring simulation Q3 output to class |
| 7 (Mar 16-22) | Pricing | Plan R.2 decisions | -The Price is Right?  
-Why Business Don’t Experiment | R.1 by Mar 16 @ 9:00 p.m. | -R.1 post-action review by Mar 16 @ 11:59 p.m. (BB) |
| 8 (Mar 23-29) | Managing & Developing Products | Plan R.3 decisions  
-Preview final exam | -Defeating Feature Fatigue  
-The Value of a Broader Product Portfolio | R.2 by Mar 23 @ 9:00 p.m. | -R.2 post-action review by Mar 23 @ 11:59 p.m. (BB) |
| 9 (Mar 30-Apr 5) | Distribution | Plan R.4 decisions | -The Future of Shopping | R.3 by Mar 30 @ 9:00 p.m. | -R.3 post-action review by Mar 30 @ 11:59 p.m. (BB) |
| 10 (Apr 6-12) | Marketing Communications | Plan R.5/6 decisions | -Tweet Me, Friend Me, Make Me Buy | R.4 by Apr 6 @ 9:00 p.m.  
-R.5/6 by Apr 11 @ 9:00 p.m. (double run) | -R.4 post-action review by Apr 6 @ 11:59 p.m. (BB)  
All by Apr 12 @ 11:59 p.m. (BB):  
-Peer evaluations  
- Contribution self-assessment  
-Final exam |

*Notes:* BB= Assignment must be submitted via the Blackboard course website. Q=Qualtrics (link provided via Blackboard). C=hard copy due in class.