1. Course Description

Consumers today are bombarded with thousands of messages on a daily basis. Advertising and promotion are all around you—as a fundamental aspect of the food you eat, the clothes you wear, the films you watch, the sports team’s you cheer for, the stocks you invest in, and the companies or organizations you may choose to work for. As you go through this course, you will gain a broad appreciation of the “ubiquity” of advertising and promotion—it is certainly not everything, but it certainly is everywhere.

The world of marketing communication seems to be changing almost daily, as marketers keep searching for new ways to communicate with consumers, and the variety of communication channels, particularly digital, keeps growing. Some have asked: Should we throw out the old textbooks on marketing communications? The answer is both “yes!” and “no!” Although many of the fundamental marketing principles of communication have not changed—there are fundamental shifts occurring in how consumers get information and from whom, and how much trust they place in different sources. These changes are wreaking havoc with traditional advertising approaches and challenging advertisers and marketers to develop new strategies to address a rapidly changing media environment.

Not surprisingly, this makes for a highly dynamic and exciting learning opportunity. Advertising is a critical element of any business endeavor. As you will learn in this course, integrated marketing communications provide one of the fundamental building blocks for an organization’s strategy and success. Therefore, whether or not you are interested in a career in this field, it is important to understand the how and why of advertising. The knowledge and skills acquired in this course will help you be more effective in whatever career you choose, be a more educated consumer in today’s society, and help create the successful businesses of the future.

Advertising is both an interdisciplinary and applied area of study. Throughout the course, you may recognize concepts and techniques from core disciplines such as psychology, economics, and statistics. You may also recognize some key findings from other marketing or communication courses you have
taken. It can be interesting to see how these discipline-based concepts are applied to the assessment and solution of real-world advertising problems.

Early in the semester we will examine the strategic issues in advertising. From there, we will venture into tactical territory to understand the various tools of the trade and keys to maximizing effectiveness. More specifically, this course will introduce you to the concepts, analyses, and activities that comprise advertising and provide practice in assessing and solving advertising challenges. Class sessions will be devoted to learning major advertising and promotion concepts and applying them to real world examples and experiences. There is much ground to cover, but luckily, the subject matter is interesting and lots of fun!

2. Course Objectives

The overall objective of this course is to build your knowledge base in advertising using an integrated marketing communications (IMC) perspective. Specially, this course will provide you with the skills and knowledge to:

- Understand what IMC is and why it is important to marketing programs today.
- Understand who the key players in the IMC industry are and what they do.
- Determine how insight and knowledge of consumers and particular target markets provides critical input to the design of advertising, sales promotions, Internet marketing, and direct marketing programs.
- Develop an effective positioning strategy to distinguish a product or service offering from the competition.
- Understand how to develop communications objectives, formulate a creative strategy and design a set of creative tactics for advertising that will best achieve your communication objectives.
- Select various forms of media to maximize the effectiveness of an integrated marketing communications (IMC) program.
- Understand the key role of other communication tools in the IMC mix—sales promotions, direct marketing, and the Internet in creating a synergistic IMC campaign.
- Practice the process of analyzing an opportunity, formulating strategy, and developing and implementing an IMC plan.

3. Course Road Map

The course is roughly divided into three blocks:

Part I Strategy: Before you begin an adventure into unknown territory, it is helpful to understand the landscape, i.e. where the opportunities (and the threats) may be hiding. In the first part of our course, we will look at advertising through a wide-angle lens to gain an appreciation for the elements of an IMC strategy.

Part II Tactics: Next, we will look at advertising through a tactical lens. We will learn about the tools and techniques used to design the components of effective IMC programs, including creative development, different communication modalities, and measurements of effectiveness.

Part III Putting It All Together: In the final segment of our course, you will be asked to integrate your understanding of IMC concepts with the tools and skills available to create an original IMC plan, which
will be presented at the end of the semester. Using the concepts, tools, and analyses that you have learned, you and your team will use creative and analytical skills to develop an IMC plan and “pitch” your ideas and findings to the class at the end of the semester.

Required Course Materials

**MKTG 4900 Blackboard course site:** it is your responsibility to make sure Blackboard has your correct email address. Blackboard is the primary mechanism I will use to communicate with you.

**Textbook chapter readings** should be completed before the session for which they are assigned:


**Additional materials:** short articles and other material will be available on Blackboard as assigned or delivered in class as appropriate.

Please let me know if there are any problems accessing the material. Class absences are not an excuse for not accessing the material.

4. **Communication**

The best way to reach me is by email. I access my email much more frequently than I am able to check my voicemail messages. Official office hours are on Mondays and Tuesdays from 3:30-4:30pm and by appointment. Email me if you prefer to set up a time that works better with your schedule. I will use Blackboard’s email system to contact you individually or as a group about the class (e.g., changes in the syllabus, assignments, etc.). *It is your responsibility to make sure emails sent via Blackboard can reach you at an email address you check on a regular basis.*

5. **Electronics Policy**

You are encouraged to bring your laptops and related electronic devices to class and use them appropriately during class. Appropriate uses include looking up examples of topics we are covering. You cannot use your devices (laptops, cellphones, smart phones, tablets or other electronic devices) for email, games, chat, or any use not related to the discussion at hand. Your adherence to this policy is greatly appreciated and helps assure a productive classroom environment that enhances learning.

6. **Attendance**

My attendance policy is straightforward. I expect that you will attend each and every class. Repeated absenteeism will result in the reduction of your final grade. *If you are unable to attend class on any occasion, please notify me in advance by email* if at all possible. If you miss class due to a pressing emergency, please provide me with the necessary documentation to excuse your absence. Be sure to obtain copies of notes from at least two of your classmates to insure that you do not miss any important material. You will be responsible for everything covered or announced in class on that day even if you miss a class session.
7. Grading

Total grades will be curved to determine your letter grade in this course according to the GWSB Grading Guidelines (average GPA range = 3.0-3.4 for non-BADM courses, a low B+). I do not assign letter grades until the very end of the course, and a letter grade is only assigned to your total weighted score, not to individual deliverables. I weight each component of your grade (see below), and then add them up to get the total weighted score. The key idea behind the curve is the distribution of scores and where you fall in that distribution.

Note, this means that I do not use arbitrary cut-offs to assign grades, so a percentage of 90% does not mean anything by itself and does not imply any given letter grade. I also do not curve grades by forcing a particular percentage of students into a particular grade category (e.g. only 10% receive an A, and so on).

My grade curve has the following properties: 1) the average total weighted score in the class will correspond to a B+; 2) the person with the highest weighted score will earn an A in my course, regardless of what that score is. Natural breaks in the distribution of total weighted scores determine the cut-offs for the assignment of letter grades. For students on the margin between two different grades, I take into account whether they were voted as “Most Valuable Player” on their group project.

In the past, my grade distribution has had many more A’s than C’s and I have rarely had to give a grade lower than a C, but, unfortunately, that has happened.

Grading Components:

- **Class Participation, In-Class Exercises and Activities** 20 points
- **Two Midterms** (25 points, 25 points) 50 points
- **IMC Team Project** 30 points
  - Two Interim Presentations (2.5 points each)
  - Final presentation (10 points)
  - PPT deck with notes (15 points)

  **Total** 100 points

*If necessary, within-group peer evaluations (see the form on the last page of this Syllabus) will be used to adjust your team project grade based upon your individual level of participation.

8. Course Deliverables

Class Participation, In-Class Exercises and Activities (20% of your grade)

Class participation is an important component of this course. Your ability to benefit from the course and contribute to the class is largely dependent upon your attendance during class meetings and your interaction during in-class exercises and related activities. Students in management education can learn a great deal from each other, drawing on different experiences, viewpoints, and opinions unique to each individual student.

You should be consistently prepared for class and able to participate appropriately in the variety of activities in the course—lecture, case discussions, interactive questions and discussion exercises, small group exercises, etc. Keep in mind that frequent participation in class is not as important as the quality
of participation; you should strive to make effective use of discussion time in class, through thoughtful, timely, and constructive participation. Poor classroom etiquette (e.g., failing to attend lectures, coming to class late, making disruptive comments, engaging in any non-class related activity during class) will seriously affect your class participation grade.

In sum, in order to maximize on your class participation grade:
   a. Attend class and be punctual.
   b. Read the assigned chapters/articles/cases and be prepared for class.
   c. Actively participate in all exercises and activities.
   d. Turn in your project peer evaluation form by the deadline.

**Midterms (25% each, for a total of 50% of your grade)**

The two midterms involve multiple choice questions that will test your understanding of key concepts discussed in the text, additional readings and lecture material presented and discussed in class. Midterms are not cumulative. There is no final exam in my course.

*Make-up Policy.* Students are expected to take the midterms at the scheduled times. No make-up exams are allowed, except for extraordinary circumstances such as a death in the family or a medical emergency. In those cases, make-up midterms will only be given to students who have written proof of the death or medical emergency. If you will miss a midterm due to a religious holiday, you must notify me in the first week of class.

If you miss a midterm without prior notice and without medical or other emergency documentation you will receive a grade of zero on that midterm.

**IMC Team Project (30% of your grade)**

The IMC project consists of a team effort to develop an integrated marketing communications plan for a specific brand challenge. It includes in-class exercises and activities, several interim in-class presentations as well as a final in-class presentation “pitch” and a PPT deck with notes that serves as the final report. For your project, you will review the situation facing your chosen brand, identify the objectives, target market, and strategy for the brand and then indicate how all elements of the promotion mix (mainstream, alternative, direct and online advertising, sales promotions, direct marketing and PR) are to be coordinated to achieve communication objectives. From a pedagogical perspective, the plan gives you the opportunity to incorporate all of the concepts we will learn in this class.

The number of project teams in this class will depend on class enrollment. Teams typically consist of 5 students each. Students will work in their teams to develop an IMC Plan. Students must do supplementary secondary research to gather current information regarding the positioning, target marketing, and IMC tools in developing their IMC plan.

This project should be challenging—and fun—as it allows you to integrate your advertising, promotion, and marketing knowledge with ideas from other courses with a heavy dose of creativity and insight. See Blackboard for the IMC Team Project Template.

- **In-class Interim Presentations (5 points total).** Periodically throughout the semester, teams will make very brief (approximately 5 minutes) presentations of their progress on their projects.
The purpose of these interim presentations is to keep teams on track and provide opportunities for early feedback.

- **In-Class Pitch Final Presentation (10 points).** Each group will prepare a PowerPoint presentation including time for Q&A (time depends on the number of teams) that members of your group will present in class. This presentation represents the “pitch” of your ideas to the “client” (i.e. the professor and members of the class), simulating an actual pitch such as might be conducted by agency. Every member of the team must present. All class members and the instructor will evaluate each presentation. You will have about 21 slides for the final report so you will need to edit your in-class pitch very carefully to focus on the “big picture.”

- **Final PPT Deck with Notes (15 points).** Each slide in your final slide deck should be accompanied by a set of notes at the bottom of each slide. You can prepare these notes in “Notes” view using Times Roman 10 point font. Your report will be evaluated on the quality of your notes in addition to the quality of the slides. Be sure to carefully follow the guidelines in the detailed IMC Team Project Description. Decks will contain around 21 slides.

**Start early!** You should begin your IMC Team Project as soon as your brand and target market has been approved. This way, you will have enough time to research your brand and develop your IMC plan. You will need every minute of this time to pitch a successful plan!

**Team selection and brand choices are due by Tuesday, January 26.** By the beginning of the third week of class you will be able to self-select yourself into one of the IMC Project teams. Team membership signup forms will be available on Blackboard. I will enable group tools in Blackboard (discussion board, wiki, blog, etc.) that you may wish to use to facilitate your collaborative work. Students who have not signed up for a project team by the deadline will be randomly assigned to a team.

If multiple teams select the same brand, the team email with the earliest time stamp will get the brand they selected, and the other team(s) will be asked to select a different brand. Pick early for the best choice! You can submit your topic as soon as you have formed your group. Your team should pick a brand that has a real problem that interests you. With literally dozens and dozens of brands to choose from, this should not be a problem.

Email your team selection and brand choice to me at dlhoffman@gwu.edu no later than Tuesday, January 26 before class. **In the email, clearly identify the names of your group members, and your brand choice. All brand choices must be approved by me.**

**Expectations for the IMC Plan are found in the IMC Template on BB. Please adhere to these details carefully.**

9. **Academic Integrity Policy**

I believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values that guide and inform us as individuals and as a community. The academic culture requires that each student take responsibility for learning and for producing work that reflect their intellectual potential, curiosity, and capability.

For that reason, I support the GW code of Academic Integrity. It defines academic dishonesty as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of
others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. “

To ensure the highest standard of academic integrity, all students should be familiar with the Code of Academic Integrity posted at:
https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/sites/studentconduct.gwu.edu/files/downloads/130722%20Code%20of%20Academic%20Integrity%20-%20Final.pdf

10. Support for Students Outside the Classroom (Disability Support Services)

Please let me know if you have a documented disability and need special arrangements for quizzes. To establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations for quizzes, please contact the Disability Support Services Office (202-994-8250), in Rome Hall, Suite 102, or visit http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/ for more information.

11. Counseling Services

The University Counseling Center offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:
• Crisis and emergency mental health consultations
• Confidential assessment, counseling services (individual & small group), and referrals

Visit http://counselingcenter.gwu.edu/ or call 202-994-5300 (24/7 Hotline).

12. Accommodations of Religiously Observant Students

The University administration has accepted a resolution of the Faculty Senate regarding accommodations of religiously observant students and faculty. The requirements of this resolution state that students must notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. Faculty member will extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
**Note: This schedule is subject to change. You are responsible for any changes announced in class or posted on Blackboard**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Tues, Jan 12</th>
<th>TOPIC AND ASSIGNMENTS</th>
<th>READING AND DELIVERABLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Course Introduction and IMC Overview</td>
<td>Chapter 1, Syllabus, IMC Project description</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Welcome to the course!</td>
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<td>IMC in Action</td>
<td>Communication Strategy and Media Plan Execution</td>
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<td><strong>In-Class Exercise: Revitalizing a Tired Brand</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Tues, Jan 19</td>
<td>Opportunity Analysis, Market Segmentation &amp; Target Marketing</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
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<td>Key tools in the strategic marketing plan</td>
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<td><strong>In-Class Exercise: Segmenting GW</strong></td>
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<td>Contemporary Marketing Communications Firms</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Changing role of ad agencies and the rise of integrated marketing communications services</td>
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<td><strong>In-Class Exercise: Constructing the Brand Challenge and the Big Idea</strong></td>
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| Class 3 | Tues, Jan 26 | Consumer Behavior and the Buying Process | Chapter 4  
Relevance of consumer behavior to advertising efforts  
**In-Class Exercise: The Consumer Behavior Decision Process in Action**  
*Deadline to select teams and brands is Friday, January 29*  
*Students who do not sign up for a project team will be randomly assigned to a team.*  
Email your brand choice to me at dlhoffman@gwu.edu. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Class 4 | Tues, Feb 2 | The Importance of Branding  
**Team Activity: IMC Project Product Positioning Analysis**  
**Brand Audit**  
Consumer Response to Communications | Chapter 2 and pp. 292-295  
**Brand Positioning**  
**In-Class Exercise: Evaluating Ads with the Cognitive Response Model** |
| Class 5 | Tues, Feb 9 | Communications Theory  
**In-Class Exercise: Applying the Meaning Transfer Model**  
Communication Objectives | Chapter 6  
**The role of source, message and channel factors**  
**Team Activity: Situation Analysis: Consumer and Competitors** |
| Class 6 | Tues, Feb 16 | Test Your Knowledge  
**Covers Chapters 1-7, in-class lectures, exercises, discussion**  
**Midterm #1 (25%)** |  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 7</th>
<th>Tues, Feb 23</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Activity: Review Brand Challenge, Big Idea, and Situation Analysis and Prep for Interim Presentation #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interim Presentation #1: Articulating the Brand Challenge; What’s the “Big Idea?”; Situation Analysis</td>
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<td>Creative Strategy I</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<td>Developing the Big Idea</td>
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<td>In-Class Exercise: Developing the Big Idea for a Turnaround Campaign</td>
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<th>Class 8</th>
<th>Tues, Mar 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Strategy II</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluating the Big Idea</td>
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<td>In-Class Exercise: Social Media Ad Appeals and Ad Execution Styles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Planning in Practice I</td>
<td>Chapter 10-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing and Implementing Media Strategy</td>
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<td>Mainstream Media Advertising: TV &amp; Radio, Print</td>
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<th>Class 9</th>
<th>Tues, Mar 8</th>
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<tr>
<td>Media Planning in Practice II</td>
<td>Chapters 10-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing and Implementing Media Strategy</td>
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<td>Mainstream Media Advertising: TV &amp; Radio, Print</td>
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<td>Nontraditional Support Media</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
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<td>Alternative media, including out of home, digital outdoor, in-store, branded entertainment, guerilla marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Class Exercise: Guerilla Marketing</td>
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| Spring Break Monday March 14 – Saturday March 19 |
| Class 10 | Tues, Mar 22 | Online Media | Chapters 14-15  
The rise (and rise) of the Internet as a marketing communication medium  
In-Class Exercise: Online Strategy for Acquiring New Customers |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Virality | Chapter 15  
The science of virality  
In-Class Exercise: What Makes Ads Go Viral? |
| Class 11 | Tues, Mar 29 | Test Your Knowledge | Covers Chapters 8-15, in-class lectures, exercises, discussion  
Midterm #2 (25%) |
| | | Team Activity: Developing IMC Strategy |
| Class 12 | Tues, Apr 5 | Interim Presentation #2: Strategic Considerations |
| | | The Need for Sales Promotion  
Chapter 16  
Consumer-focused techniques  
In-Class Exercise: Sales Promotions That Build Brand Equity |
| Class 13 | Tues, Apr 12 | PR and Publicity | Chapter 17  
What’s the difference and why does it matter?  
In-Class Exercise: Successfully Integrating PR into the IMC Program |
| Advertising and Society | Chapter 21  
In-Class Exercise: IMC Programs That Promote Social Change |
| Class 14  
| Tues, Apr 19 | Pitch Day! | Teams pitch their IMC plans today |
| | | **Due:** Group project peer evaluation form (turn in during class) |
| | | One member from each team uploads their PowerPoint slides via Blackboard (link to be provided) no later than 9:30 am the day of class. **Clearly name your attachment:** TEAM.ppt (where TEAM is your group name) |
| | | **DO NOT EMAIL** your files to me. |
| | Finals Week  
| May 2-May 10 | IMC Final Report Due | Tuesday, May 3, 2016, 6pm EST |
| | | One member from each team uploads their final PowerPoint report with notes to Blackboard (link to be provided) no later than 6pm EST today. **Clearly name your attachment:** BRAND.ppt (where BRAND is your group name) |
| | | **DO NOT EMAIL** your files to me. |
Please read the instructions below VERY CAREFULLY.

In the spaces below, list the name of each of your team members, including yourself. Rate each of your teammates on a scale from 100% to 0%, according to their contribution to team work on your IMC team project. You are free to rate each team member at 100%, in which case each person gets 100% of the group grade. This standard means that each person in the group generally pulled his or her weight.

**BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOURSELF.** Percentages are independent, range from 0 to 100% for each person, and DO NOT add up to 100!!

Also, please select the ONE student from your group who you believe deserves the designation of “most valuable player” in your group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Group Member</th>
<th>Effort Rating (100% to 0%)</th>
<th>Most Valuable Player (place an X for one member only)</th>
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<td><strong>ME, MYSELF, I</strong></td>
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*If I don’t receive a peer evaluation form from you, I will assume your effort rating is 0% and your team members’ effort is 100%*

***Please include written comments explaining your point allocation. This is particularly important if your allocations for some team members are less than 100%***