

Cimba

Spring 2025

Special Topics Course: Working Draft

The Special Topics Course studies in three topical marketing developments: Artificial Intelligence, Advertising and Marketing Decision Making.

Materials: Students are required to purchase a Harvard Business School Case and access to a Marketing Simulations. These are available as a package for \$41.00 from the Harvard Business School website.

Artificial Intelligence: AI is reshaping the business world and marketing is no exception. AI has changed how marketer approach customer insights, segmentation, personalization, targeting, email marketing, social media posting, ad content creation, customer service and sales forecasting. No prior coding experience or technical expertise is required. Our approach is to show you how AI works, the problems it can solve, and where it's applicable. We will show you how to use AI effectively and ethically.

Learning objectives:

- Understand key concepts and tools of AI (machine learning, neural networks, natural language processing, etc.) and their roles in marketing.
- Utilize AI tools to understand the market and develop AI-enabled marketing strategies.
- Identify the use and application of AI tools to design, communicate, and deliver value to customers.
- Recognize the bias, risk, and limitations of AI in marketing implications.
- Know how to acquire AI technical skills if needed.

Course Structure/Approach

Depending on the final calendar, the portion of the course will span 6-7 classes. The major topics include: Basic AI Concepts, Marketing Applications (demand prediction, sentiment analysis, affinity analysis), AI and Marketing Strategy, AI and Promotion Strategy. Classes will be part lecture and part demonstration/active learning exercises. Students will earn a Google Badge: Intro to Gen AI. The course concludes with a final project: "Designing and Building a Chatbot/Virtual Assistant." Grading based on one exam, inclass exercises and the final project.

Advertising: This portion of the course covers the fundamentals of today's advertising profession and its role in marketing communications. The foundation of advertising is persuasion: the effort to persuade someone somewhere to do something, usually with respect to a commercial offering. Advertising falls under the promotion area of the overall Marketing Mix (The 4Ps - product, price, promotion, and place). Promotion includes all activities that involve communicating with the customer about a product or service and its benefits and features. Advertising will be the primary focus of this class.

Course Objectives

- Define what Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is and learn its role in the marketing process works.
- Learn the theories on how advertising works and how consumers make decisions.
- Discover the theoretical approaches to advertisement design and learn about message strategies, advertising appeals and executional frameworks.
- Learn the elements, latest trends and tools used for a marketing communications mix.

Course Structure/Approach: Depending on the final calendar, the portion of the course will span 6-7 classes. The major topics include: The participants: Advertising Agencies and Consultancies, Messaging development and creation, Media strategy, International Perspectives. Course deliverables include: Student presentation/final project, one exam and one Harvard Case Study (Ikea Global Communication Strategy, \$8.00)

Marketing Decision Making: This portion of the course puts students in the drivers seat of marketing decision making. Students will participate in a Harvard Business School simulation. Students run a new marketing division to sell 3D printed, carbon fiber bikes for a large, international bike company. Starting with customer needs and wants, price points, and market potential, students formulate an initial marketing strategy and then make brand, price, advertising, and distribution decisions. Customer feedback, competitor data, and profitability reports challenge students to adjust their strategy in a dynamic and highly competitive environment.

Learning Objectives:

- Students put into practice marketing concepts, principles, and ways of thinking.
- Students experience/feel the excitement of a marketing professional going head to head with the competition, fueling their desire to learn and win.

Course Structure/Approach: Note: Students must purchase access to the simulation. Cost is \$33/person. There are 6 decision rounds...roughly corresponding to the 6-7 class periods

dedicated to this topic. Results are released after each decision round. Students compete against each other. Grading is based on 1.) Student performance in the simulation (adjusted for Effort (as measured in time spent on the simulation and quarter to quarter improvement) and class participation.

Course Evaluation: Each topic compromises 1/3 of the course grade. Total points are 600:

Topic	
Artificial Intelligence and Marketing	Exam-60 points In class exercises-40 points Final Project-100 points
Advertising	Exam-60 points Harvard Case Study-40 points Final Project-100 points
Marketing Decision Making	Simulation grade-150 points Class participation-50 points
Total	600 points