

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Barcelona

Course Code / Title: BC/MKTG 310 Social Media in Business

Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Marketing / Business, Media Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: Market Research or other foundational course in Marketing is recommended.

Description

Social media and digital marketing have a tremendous influence on how consumers engage with their favorite brands, search for products, services or information and make purchasing decisions in alignment with their values, lifestyle and personal preferences. In the current social media landscape, marketers must know how to implement an effective social media marketing strategy including how to: design a diverse and targeted marketing mix; build an engaged following; convert know, like, trust into loyal customers; and avoid unethical, coercive or manipulative marketing tactics rooted in toxic capitalism. This course will help students gain practical knowledge and skills to research, plan and launch a successful social media marketing campaign that builds brand awareness, trust and leads to customers and sales. The course will also help students understand the Barcelona business online social media landscape and cultural context through practical, hands-on learning, field study course components, and a social media launch group project.

Content warning:

This course will invite students to dialogue around topics that are controversial. Specifically, this course will touch on the disruption of patriarchy, toxic capitalism, coercive/manipulative marketing and dominant/supremacist cultural communication tactics in online marketing and sales.

Students might find conversations about dominant or supremacist business culture challenging. The intention is not to endorse perspectives, but to create a safe and inclusive space to engage with different perspectives on how to leverage and engage with social media in ways that are ethical, and inclusive and do not play on or reinforce stereotypes or communication strategies, distort facts in a way, that may disproportionately harm or impact people who hold marginalized identities.

Students may also leave the classroom without academic penalty, if the discussion becomes too emotionally challenging or they need to take space to ground and regulate their nervous system through breathing or movement. Students are, however, responsible for all missed material, and so should arrange to get notes from another student or see the faculty member individually.

Objectives

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Through their participation in this course and the hands-on experiential projects and learning activities, students will:

- Gain an understanding of how to design and launch a successful, ethical social media marketing campaign for a Barcelona brand.
- Compare current social media marketing channels (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Threads, LinkedIn) and evaluate the most relevant strategies to build an engaged and loyal online brand following that leads to sales.
- Distinguish between the most current social media marketing channels and the benefits of each for a specific brand, audience, and product, service, or movement.
- Explore current social media trends including Interactive Video, AI, and Influencer Partnerships.
- Develop the skills to build community, engage followers with valuable content, and build know, like, and trust that leads to a credible brand, repeat customers, and recurring sales.
- Explore the intersection of toxic capitalism, marketing manipulation, and coercive online social media tactics.

Requirements

Students are expected to attend each class and field study including attending networking or other excursions, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Students are expected to read all assigned materials before the relevant class session and come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Reading assignments are generally 5-10 pages per class session in addition to consuming social media content including long form videos, blogs, social media posts, etc.. Students will also be expected to spend focused, meaningful time on social media to follow and engage with their selected Barcelona Case Study Brand.

All assignments must be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Graded assignments include:

- **Participation:** Students should actively participate in group dialogues, individually share their perspectives, openly ask questions, and otherwise actively participate in all in-class communication dynamics. This is a hands-on experiential laboratory-style class with a focus on interaction.
- **Homework:** 3 short response reflective journal entries as part of their research, evaluation, and critical analysis of their Barcelona Case Study Brand
 - Topic 1: Messaging and communication
 - Topic 2: Content and edutainment, stories, videos, and visual content
 - Topic 3: Community engagement and interaction with followers
- **Quizzes:** 2 short answer format quizzes to test student's comprehension of readings and classroom presentations and discussions.
 - Emphasis will be on qualitative comprehension and meaningful personal analysis versus a "correct" answer.
- **Group Project and Presentation:** In groups, students will design a social media campaign for a product, service or initiative using an element of the local Spanish context to illustrate concepts

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from the course (including content, graphics, blog, and other resources). The result will be shared in a group presentation of 15 minutes, with 10 minutes for questions and dialogue.

- **Final paper:** 8-10 page individual analysis and summary of the selected Barcelona Case Study Brand. Each student can choose a topic determined in consultation with the faculty member, from topics listed in the syllabus.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

Participation (<i>see rubric below</i>)	20%
Homework (3 at 5%)	15%
Short Answer Quizzes (2 at 10%)	20%
Group Project	25%
Project (15%)	
Presentation (10%)	
Final Paper	20%

Class Participation Grading Rubric

	A – 90-100% Exemplary	B – 80-89% Proficient	C – 70-79% Developing	D – 60-69% Unacceptable	F – 0-59% Missing
Quality of class participation*	Contribution is courageous, creative, thoughtful, insightful, and constructive, frequently interacting with peers	Contribution is mostly courageous, creative, thoughtful, insightful, and constructive, usually interacting with peers	Contribution is somewhat courageous, creative, thoughtful, insightful, and constructive, interacting with peers	Contribution is rarely courageous, creative, thoughtful, insightful, and constructive, rarely interacting with peers	Does not contribute or interact with peers
Level of class preparation	Always fully prepared, actively engaged and attentive	Mostly prepared, actively engaged and attentive	Somewhat prepared, actively engaged, and attentive	Rarely prepared actively engaged or attentive	Consistently unprepared and not on task

Readings & Resources

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Special Note on Video Content and Resources: Each week, as part of their “reading assignment”, students will research and select YouTube videos, reels, shorts or other types of social media content to share and recommend to the class as part of the Required course resources.

Students will come to class having consumed and analyzed social media content to discuss based on the following criteria”

- Quality of the content in terms of its coverage of a topic that educates the reader
- Whether the content conveys the core values of the brand
- If the content is purely entertaining or serves to share a particular message or create an action
- Content that is designed to position and effectively sell a brand, service, or product – what specifically in the content, its tone, its design, and its delivery, is creating impact (know, like, trust, and the motivation to buy or take an action)

The research and recommendations will be made in the first two weeks of class. All students will score and vote on recommended resources, and 10 will be chosen to include as part of the course curriculum.

Online Readings

Alexander Fischer, Manipulation and the Affective Realm of Social Media (The Philosophy of Online Manipulation pp.327-352)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361272287_Manipulation_and_the_Affective_Realm_of_Social_Media

Angela Tuduri, 5 trends to succeed in social media this 2024 (LaSalle Blogging 11 March 2024)

<https://blogs.salleurl.edu/en/5-trends-succeed-social-media-2024>

Khalid Jamil, Liu Dunnan, Rana Faizan Gul, Muhammad Usman Shehzad, Syed Hussain Mustafa Gillani*, Fazal Hussain Awan, Role of Social Media Marketing Activities in Influencing Customer Intentions: A Perspective of a New Emerging Era (Frontiers in Psychology 2022 Jan 17)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8803150/>

Soniya Behzadinasaba, Leila Andervazhb, Ebrahim Albonaiemi
Presenting Model of Ethical Strategies Based on Social Media Marketing (International Journal of Ethics & Society (IJES) Journal homepage: www.ijethics.com Vol. 2, No. 3 (2020))

<https://ijethics.com/article-1-95-en.pdf>

Myles Dalmain-Jones, Social Media Trends in Spain (gaasly.com)

<https://www.gaasly.com/blog/social-media-trends-spain>

Content

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Topic 1 – The design and launch of a successful, ethical social media marketing campaign for a Barcelona brand

- On the ground research of local Barcelona brands, including visiting stores and making a comparative analysis of the brand experience in-store versus online
- Field study and visits to business networking or promotional events at stores, local coworking or networking venues such as The Impact Hub
- Attend business expos or conferences for services, products, or brands of interest

Examples of sites or venues that may offer events:

- <https://www.bizbarcelona.com/>
- <https://barcelona.impacthub.net/en/>
- <https://www.eventbrite.com/d/spain--barcelona/business--networking/>
- <https://www.meet.barcelona/en/invest-and-do-business/trade-fairs-and-conferences>

Topic 2 – Current social media marketing channels (Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Threads, LinkedIn)

- Follow and evaluate channels of Barcelona Case Study Brand

Topic 3 – Strategies to build an engaged and loyal online brand following that leads to sales

- Edutainment vs. entertainment, how to inspire and educate future buyers
- Understand the key elements to inspire follower engagement
- Distinguish between visibility, reach, traffic and conversions
- Storytelling on social media

Topic 4 – Anatomy of a successful Barcelona brand with a strong social media presence across 2-3 common channels

- Evaluate and critically analyze the Barcelona Case Study Brand based on edutainment value, reach, traffic and conversions
- Engage in market research and/or interview a sales representative or social media manager of the selected Barcelona Brand or similar company. *This can be conducted as a team, as part of the Group Project, and can be an in-person interview, networking with a brand at one of their events, or having a Zoom call/interview and sharing reflections and a summary of findings.*

Topic 5 – Current social media marketing channels and the benefits of each for a specific brand, audience and product, service or movement

- Review and compare Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Threads as the leading platforms for the Barcelona Case Study Examples

Topic 6 – Social media trends including Interactive Video, AI, and Influencer Partnerships.

- Test and evaluate new social media trends
- Predict what will accelerate the success of the social media marketing strategy of the Barcelona Case Study Brand and implement findings into the Group Project.

Topic 7 – Community engagement and building a loyal following with valuable content and building know, like, and trust that leads to a credible brand, repeat customers, and recurring sales

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- Design a targeted marketing mix that builds know, like, trust and a loyal following that leads to repeat customers, referrals and a solid brand reputation
- Examine engagements, comments, and how Barcelona Brand is communicating with its followers
- What invitations and free offers, CTA's, discounts, or opportunities are exclusively offered to social media consumers

Topic 8 – Profile, behaviors, values, and lifestyle of a brand's ideal client, and creating content that inspires and motivates buying without coercive or manipulative marketing tactics

Topic 9 – Toxic capitalism, marketing manipulation, and coercive online social media tactics

- Understand the role of dominant culture communication strategies and marketing manipulation
- Identify ethical and unethical, coercive and non-coercive marketing strategies
- Examine the impact of traumatic stories, cult techniques, and other approaches to building a following in ways that are harmful to social media consumers of a particular brand and its platform
- Possible case study examination of Teal Swan or other social media influencer/coach/healer and marketing manipulation using trauma bonding

Topic 10 – How to design and launch a social media campaign, for a product, service or initiative (such as an event) as a Group Project, and designing a presentation to highlight and share the social media content, graphics, blog and other resources created as part of the project.

** Syllabus is subject to minor changes in term-specific syllabus at instructor discretion.*