

MARKETING 499: MARKETING ETHICS

Tues & Thurs Noon – 1:50 p.m. (4 units)

Spring 2013

HOH 305

Instructor: Shlomo Sher, Ph.D.

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** Keep a hardcopy of this syllabus in order to keep up with your reading and writing assignments throughout the semester. You can also download a copy at any time from this courses' Blackboard site.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

As marketers, we recognize that we not only serve our organizations but also act as stewards of society in creating, facilitating and executing the transactions that are part of the greater economy. In this role, marketers are expected to embrace the highest professional ethical norms and the ethical values implied by our responsibility toward multiple stakeholders (e.g., customers, employees, investors, peers, channel members, regulators and the host community).

- American Marketing Association Statement of Ethics

While an *effective* marketer succeeds in a set of promotional tasks, a *good* marketing professional, like other good professionals, does much more. As the American Marketing Association recognizes, a good marketer helps to foster trust in her profession and an understanding of the valuable contribution it makes to society, consciously avoids causing harm to others through her professional activities, and embraces the core ethical values of honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, transparency, and citizenship.

The first of these is particularly important in a society where marketing, the most visible of business functions, draws the majority of public scrutiny and concern about unethical behavior in business. Some of this criticism is almost surely justified, some unwarranted, and some uncertain. What is not in doubt is that marketing is a powerful and increasingly influential force shaping both personal lives and global affairs. Its impact – good, bad, or neutral - depends on the character and actions of marketing professionals.

In order to live up to the professional responsibilities of being a marketer you need to be able to identify the ethical issues that arise in marketing contexts, recognize and identify with the many parties who have a stake in the decisions made by marketers, understand some of the key conceptual debates about the ethics of marketing activities, and develop skillful ethical decision-making habits. This is your opportunity to begin developing these key professional skills.

Course Learning Outcomes

We will be guided in our course by 3 central objectives:

- (1) To familiarize you with ethical considerations as they arise in a marketing context;
- (2) To provide you theoretical tools with which to identify ethical considerations and resolve difficult ethical problems;
- (3) To give you a sense of what it is like to be in an ethically difficult situation in the workplace, as well as the opportunity to “test out” some of your thoughts about what to do in such situations.

REQUIRED MATERIALS: (AVAILABLE AT BOOKSTORE)

Ethical Marketing by Murphy, Laczniak, Bowie, and Klein; Prentice Hall (2004)

** All other reading materials will be available for download through Blackboard*

***COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS**

10% Consistent and Constructive Participation

20% Short Essay (4-5 pages + Bibliography) (*see suggested topics on Blackboard*)
(Due Feb 28, Midnight)

15% Ethics Debate and Summary Memo (group project)
(Summary Memo due March 5 or April 23, depending on your group assignment)

25% Group Research Project (group project) (*see suggested topics on Blackboard*)

- (i) Project Clearance from me – 5%
- (ii) Presentation – 10%
- (iii) Summary Report (group) – 10%

(Presentation dates will depend on your group assignment)

30% Final Paper (Due May 15th at 4 PM)

The following are the cutoff points for each letter grade:

		B+	88	C+	78	D+	68
A	93	B	83	C	73	D	63
A-	90	B-	80	C-	70	D-	60

GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT

Each team (size will depend on enrollment) will complete a detailed written case analysis (8-10 pages) along with a 20 minute class presentation. To successfully assess a case, you will need to research a specific situation faced by company. You may also wish to contact the organization or media sources directly for more information.

Your analysis should do the following:

1. Evaluate what led to the ethical issue
2. Explain how the ethical issue should be understood, referencing relevant stakeholders and ethical considerations.
3. Describe and critically evaluate the company's response to the problem
4. Explain what could have been done to prevent the problem from arising and recommend steps the company should take now.

Written reports are due on the day of the presentation.

ETHICS DEBATE AND SUMMARY MEMO

Throughout your careers, you will be faced with the need to defend your moral beliefs to others on controversial issues. Doing so well requires the ability to articulate your points to others clearly and concisely. Debating helps developing these skills and allows you to practice and improve them.

You will be assessed on the following:

- (i) The relevance of the content of your presentation to the debated topic
- (ii) The degree to which your arguments and response to the other team's arguments are convincing
- (iii) The confidence, energy and style with which the material is presented.

Remember this is not about winning a competition, but about convincing *people you work with* that one course of action is better than another. This will require sensitivity to the values that lead them to disagree and respect for them as thinking/feeling persons.

A two-page summary memo outlining your arguments for or against the issue is to be written. The memo should also list the reference material you used to prepare for the debate. It is due the day of your debate.

PEER EVALUATION OF GROUP PROJECTS

(see also Peer Evaluation sheet on Blackboard)

You will evaluate the contribution of all group members (inc. yourself). Once the peer evaluations are collected, the scores will be averaged and impact individual the grade the individual receives as follows:

- 5** - Made an above average contribution to the projects, i.e. expended more effort than other members of the group, did additional research, spent more time, took on a leadership role, etc.

Group project grade + 20% (3 pts for debate / 5 pts. for research project)

- 4** - Contributed to the projects in a quality manner expected of a USC student, i.e., came to scheduled group meetings, did their share of the tasks in a 'quality fashion', contributed suggestions, completed tasks on time.

Group project grade w/o adjustments

- 3** - Made a lower than average contribution to the projects, i.e. came to meetings but offered few suggestions, put limited effort into assigned tasks or performed tasks to a lower standard than did other members of the group, failed to meet group deadlines.

Group grade - 20% (3 pts for debate / 5 pts. for research project)

- 2** - Made a minimal contribution to the projects. Attended some meetings, but missed many others. Failed to do the research they had agreed to perform, failed to meet deadlines, or failed to offer helpful suggestions.

Group grade - 40% (6 pts for debate / 10 pts. for research project)

- 1** - Made no contribution to the project.

Students who receive a grade of 1 will not be given any credit for the project.

However, students who believe that a member of their group is not contributing to the project must advise me as soon as possible so that the student can be counseled and the problem rectified if at all possible.

** The requirements and measures of success presented here are based on activities and assessment strategies used in a Marketing Ethics syllabus developed by Dr. Peggy Cunningham (2005)*

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

** Chapter and page number references apply to the Ethical Marketing book. All other readings will be available for download from the course website.*

WEEK	DATE	THEME	READINGS
1	1/15	<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Syllabus</i>
	1/17	<i>Ethical issues in marketing</i>	<i>Workshop: Where do you draw the line – Marketing Edition</i>
2	1/22	<i>Corporate social responsibility</i>	Hartman and DesJardins, “Corporate Social Responsibility” “Rethinking the Social Responsibility of Business: A Reason Debate Featuring Milton Friedman, Whole Food’s John Mackey, and Cypress Semiconductor’s T.J. Rodgers”
	1/24	<i>Consumer responsibilities</i>	Anonymous, “Consumer responsibility” Doug Taylor, “Caveat emptor in the financial services market”
3	1/29	<i>Ethical decision-making</i>	<i>Ch 1: 1-20</i>
	1/31	Comprehensive Ethical Theory	<i>Ch 1: 22-47</i> Short Paper Assigned
4	2/5	<i>Marketing Research</i>	Ch 2: 48-63
	2/7	<i>Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning</i>	Ch 2: 64-80 Nairn and Berthon, “Creating the Customer: The Influence of Advertising on Consumer Market Segments – Evidence and Ethics”
5	2/12	<i>Product Safety</i>	Ch 3: 81-91
	2/14	<i>Socially controversial products</i>	Ch 3: 92-113
6	2/19	<i>Channel of Distribution issues</i>	Ch 4: 113-136

	2/21	Pricing issues	Ch 4: 137-150
7	2/26	Personal Selling	Ch 6: 186-200
	2/28	Personal Selling	Ch 6: 201-211 Short Essay Due
8	3/5	<i>Debates</i>	Debate Preparation
	3/7	<i>Guest Speaker</i>	<i>TBA</i>
9	3/12	<i>Advertising and autonomy</i>	Arrington, “Advertising and Behavior Control” Crisp, “Persuasive Advertising, Autonomy, and the Creation of Desire”
	3/14	<i>Advertising and autonomy</i>	Waide, “The Making of Self and World in Advertising” Sneddon, “Advertising and Deep Autonomy”
<i>SPRING BREAK 3/18 – 3/23</i>			
10	3/26	<i>Manipulation in consumer marketing – deception</i>	Gardner, “Deception in Advertising - a conceptual approach” Sher, from “A Framework for Assessing Immorally Manipulative Marketing Tactics”
	3/28	<i>Manipulation in consumer marketing – preying on perceived vulnerabilities</i>	Wilson, et al. Neuromarketing and Consumer Free Will Request for investigation of companies that engage in “Buzz Marketing”
11	4/2	<i>Consumer marketing to vulnerable populations</i>	Anonymous, “Selling to--and selling out—children” Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, “The Facts About Marketing to Kids”

	4/4	<i>Consumer marketing to vulnerable populations</i>	Bakir and Vitell, “The Ethics of Food Advertising Targeted Toward Children: Parental Viewpoint” Truman, “Is Marketing to Children Ethical?”
12	4/9	<i>Ethical issues in Political Marketing</i>	Banker, “The Ethics of Political Marketing Practices , the Rhetorical Perspective”
	4/11	<i>Ethical issues in Political Marketing</i>	O’Shaughnessy, “Toward an ethical framework for Political Marketing”
13	4/16	<i>Ethical issues in social marketing</i>	Musham and Lillian, “Bringing Health Services to the Poor Through Social Marketing: Ethical Issues” Hastings, Stead, and Webb “Fear Appeals in Social Marketing: Strategic and Ethical Reasons for Concern”
	4/18	<i>Ethical issues in social marketing</i>	Brenkert, “Ethical Challenges of Social Marketing
14	4/23	<i>Debate</i>	Debate Preparation
	4/25	<i>Technology - Search Engine Optimization</i>	Segal, “Search Optimization and Its Dirty Little Secrets” Perkins, “Ethical SEO Explained” and “SEO (Black and White) Hats”
15	4/30	<i>Technology - Privacy</i>	Wel and Royackers, “Ethical issues in web data mining” McCullagh, “Facebook 'Like' button draws privacy scrutiny”
	5/2	<i>Course Review and wrap-up</i>	Final Paper Assigned
<i>Final Paper due (through Blackboard), Wednesday, May 15th at 4 PM</i>			

ASSIGNMENTS AND FORMAT:

- Paper assignments will be turned in electronically through the appropriately marked assignment on Blackboard. They are due by the beginning of class on the paper's due date.
- Any assignment you turn in should include your name, the course name, and the assignment title.
- Formatting: Assignments must be double-spaced with 1.25 inch margins in Times New Roman 12 point font. There should be no extra spaces between paragraphs.
- All pages should be numbered in the bottom right-hand corner.
- All students are expected to keep a copy of their work and be able to produce it upon request.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own.

Each student is expected to know the University policy on plagiarism as it is stated in SCampus (<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/behavior.html>). Students caught plagiarizing on a paper, exam, or any assignment, will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and will be failed for the course. Proper citations are an easy way of avoiding this problem. If you are unsure about how to cite in your paper, please see me.

YOUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

At this point in our academic careers, we should be working to establish a fun but professional learning environment. I expect considerate behavior from each of you in order to make the most of your time in class. Most situations that would fall into this discussion are simple common sense; below, though, are a few of the more prevalent distractions:

- Feel free to snack in class, as long as your "meal" will not cause a significant distraction. For example, yogurt or a Snickers bar would be fine, but Doritos (which tend to be VERY noisy) or a large salad (which would take up your entire desk space and much of your attention) are a bit extreme.
- Do not read non-class materials during class time (novels, the newspaper, textbooks for other classes, etc.)

- Please turn off cellular phones, pagers, or any other noisy/distracting device. Anything that might happen during class will be waiting for you when class is over.
- Participation is a central component of the course, but keep in mind that you should be considerate of other students when you are participating.

THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center is a valuable resource for students from all disciplines, backgrounds, and skill levels. The trained staff can help you in any stage of your process. You can call the Writing Center at 213-740-2691 for more information or to schedule an appointment. They also accept walk-ins.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am-5pm Monday through Friday. The telephone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

*Syllabus subject to revision