

MKTG 4890-001: Applied Marketing Problems

Fall 2026 Syllabus*

Class hours:	Monday 6:35 PM to 9:25 PM
Location:	BLB 180
Instructor:	Dr. Yi Zheng
Office hours:	Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM or by appointment
Office Location:	BLB 358F
Email:	yi.zheng@unt.edu

* This syllabus is tentative and subject to change. I will notify you of any changes.

Optional Texts and Materials

- Required materials

1. All business cases used in the class (access and purchase the cases via <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1442597>). Please purchase the cases before August 18.
2. Course Slides and other materials on Canvas

- Recommended Optional Textbook (not required)

Marketing Strategy Based on First Principles and Data Analytics, 2nd ed. 2021, by Robert W. Palmatier and Shrihari Sridhar, ISBN 978-1-352-02246-3

or the e-book version

ISBN-10: 1352011476 | ISBN-13: 9781352011470, which is available at the following links:

<https://www.vitalsource.com/products/marketing-strategy-robert-palmatier-shrihari-v9781352011470>

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/marketing-strategy-9781352011470/>

Course Description

This course focuses on strategic marketing management, which is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services in order to accrue short-term and long-term stakeholder value. The course is an integration of all marketing elements in a strategic planning framework. It emphasizes areas of strategic

importance, especially those that have significant implications and relevance for marketing policy decisions in competitive situations.

The course objectives for students are to

- Understand important marketing strategy principles (or hopefully review them);
- Apply these principles to real marketing problems and opportunities;
- Develop analytical, critical thinking, decision making and team skills;
- Have some kind of fun in the process.

After taking this course, students will have:

- a more market-oriented managerial philosophy
- the tools to understand the marketing function
- an enhanced capability to communicate with other business executives
- an understanding of marketing in a continuous improvement context/learning organization/leader driven environment
- the ability to stimulate their creativity and support the innovation process within a firm.

- Email Communication

You may contact me at any time via UNT email but remember to treat ***all email communications as professional correspondence***. Please note these guidelines:

- Include a subject line that clearly indicates the reason for your email.
- Identify the Section of your class in the body of the email.
- Use an appropriate salutation for the recipient, e.g. **“Dear Professor Zheng or Dr. Zheng”**
- Make the tone of your email professional. Ask yourself how you would interpret the tone and content of the email had you received it from someone else. **Your email should not read like a text.**
- Avoid slang and do not use email or text abbreviations. Remember that good grammar, spelling and punctuation can make the difference between comprehension and confusion. Carefully proof your email before hitting the ‘send’ button.

Please send all correspondence via the UNT email system to yi.zheng@unt.edu.

I will respond to your emails within a 24 hour time period. **Do not send emails through Canvas.**

Emails generated out of Canvas may not receive a timely response since there are multiple professors teaching this class. Canvas emails sent to “All Instructors” and/or “All Teaching Assistants” will not receive replies.

The best way to schedule a conference is to suggest an appointment time via email to yi.zheng@unt.edu .

Course Main Components & Grading

This course combines lectures, case discussions, group projects, and simulation-based learning.

- First, learn from lectures. You acquire knowledge in the form of facts, terminology, or concepts. The nature of this class is such that, hopefully, most of the lecture material is not fundamentally new. Therefore, **with the overriding goal of making you as much of a marketing expert as possible before graduation**, knowledge must be *reviewed*. The course slides on Canvas are the major resource for acquiring or reviewing knowledge of marketing strategy principles. Lectures will be based on the course slides, covering and complementing the optional text.
- Second, learn from cases. Ultimately you must apply acquired knowledge (learning by doing). In this course, cases represent a vehicle for knowledge application. The goal of using cases is for you to do some “thinking” and some “discussing.” The “thinking” and “discussing” will be required by all students through the entire semester. You are expected to participate in case discussions. Your active participation in case discussions will not only make this class more interesting, but also will aid in your understanding and retention of marketing concepts. Thus, in the end, a typical chapter will involve at least (1) some lecture that covers a key aspect of marketing strategy and (2) a case that fits the topic.

-Assignments and Percent of Final Grade

Assignments	Percent of Final Grade
Class Attendance	20%
Weekly Quiz	5%
Group Reports and Presentation (including 3 in-class reports and a group presentation)	15% (2% for each report and 9% for the presentation)
In-class simulation	20%
Exam	15%
Peer Evaluation for teamwork	15%
SONA Research Participation	10%
Total	100%

-Grading Scale

Grading Scale (%)	Grade
90 - 100	A
80.00 - 89.99	B
70.00 - 79.99	C
60.00 - 69.99	D
0 - 59.99	F

Note:

Grades are not “given.” They are earned based on your performance and are not negotiable commodities.

1. Class Attendance (20%)

Attendance is **mandatory** in this class since your participation is essential for class discussions. You are expected to be physically present in classroom on time and to actively engage in class discussions. **Your class attendance is recorded by class attendance sheets.**

Late arrival, defined as arriving 30 minutes after the class starts without decent reasons, is defined as absence. Your attendance is crucial, not only for your benefit but also for your classmates. Excused absences will be considered based on the situation, and proof must be provided for the excused absence. Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious observance, jury duty or other legitimate reasons should provide **advance** written notice of the date(s) to the instructor.

NOTE: Only students who are present in class are eligible to earn participation extra credit.

2. Weekly Quiz (5%)

The title of the case assigned for each week can be found in the “tentative class schedule” section. To test your preparation, I will give a quiz before the discussion of each case in each class. The quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions based on the assigned cases.

3. Group Reports and Presentation (15%)

Each group will select a well-known company that has faced, or is currently facing, a significant marketing challenge. Three class sessions will include approximately 45 minutes

of group work for this project. Most of the research and discussion should be completed during class, and a short group report will be submitted at the end of each session.

- Report 1 – The Marketing Problem: Describe the situation and identify the main marketing problem facing the company. Use the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) to examine the problem and determine which areas are most important. Support your analysis with information from credible outside sources.
- Report 2 – The Company's Response: Explain what the company has done to address the problem. Consider its actions related to the 4Ps and evaluate what appears to have worked and what has not. Discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and possible limitations of the company's approach.
- Report 3 – Your Recommendations: Based on your research, explain what your group believes the company should do next. Develop specific recommendations using the 4Ps and discuss the expected benefits as well as possible disadvantages or risks. Your recommendations may improve the company's current approach or suggest a different one.

Each report should list the sources used and briefly state what each group member contributed during that class session. These reports are not formal papers and will not be graded primarily on writing style. More complete, specific, well-supported, and thoughtful work will receive higher scores.

The final group presentation will bring together the work from the three reports. Your group should explain the company's marketing problem, evaluate how the company responded, and present and defend your recommendations.

The reports must reflect your group's own research, discussion, and writing. AI tools may not be used to generate the reports or the analysis submitted for this assignment.

4. Final Exam (15%)

The final exam will include multiple-choice questions that are based on the cases and core concepts covered in our class.

If you have earned extra credit and have a cumulative course grade of 90% or higher before the final exam, you may be exempt from the final exam and receive an A in the course.

5. Marketplace Simulation (20%)

A team-based business simulation immerses you in the realities of using consumer insights in decision making. In this simulation, your team will start up and run a company for eight quarters/rounds. Each decision-making round represents a business quarter in the Marketplace. Each group will work on a simulation. A few groups will compete against each other in one market. Your team's performance will be graded quarterly (starting with R4) based on your rank in the Marketplace as determined by

the Balanced Scorecard. A team's grade will be based on competition, which means you have to perform better than your competitor to obtain a higher score. The grade of the Marketplace simulation will be curved based on the score generated by the simulation. Each team is expected to spend at least 30 minutes on each weekly decision-making session. Teams that do not meet this requirement will receive a point deduction for that session. The winning team will receive additional extra credit toward the final course grade.

6. Peer Evaluation for Presentations (15%)

Everyone will have a chance for peer evaluation at the end of the semester. One of the goals of this class is to develop and improve your collaboration and team work skills. Peer evaluations will be used to assess each individual's overall contribution to the team's work, including the in-class group reports, group presentation, and Marketplace simulation, and to discourage free-riding.

7. SONA Research Participation (10%)

As part of your learning experience in this course, you will be required to participate in research studies to gain experience with the research process and learn about methods and scaling techniques. Your participation in these research studies will make up 10% of your final class grade.

To fulfil the requirement, you must create an account on the College of Business REP webpage—unt-cob.sona-systems.com—which allows you to browse and sign up for available studies. The amount of credit assigned is based on the length of time the study takes to complete and whether you participate online or in the COB behavioral Lab (BLB 279).

You will receive the credits as long as you participate the research studies. Additional extra credit points may be available at my discretion.

To sign up, please visit **unt-cob.sona-systems.com**. If you have questions, DO NOT contact me. Contact the behavioral lab manager by email at **RCoBRep@unt.edu**. Your questions will be addressed promptly.

Please Note:

- 1) Access the studies early and often to make sure you have first access to available studies. Once you sign up, the lab manager will update you periodically about newly posted studies.
- 2) Make sure you assign your credits to the correct course.

-Opportunities for Extra Credits

1. Class participation

You can earn extra credits based on the **quantity and quality** of contributions to the in-class discussion. High-quality contribution is based upon your thorough preparation and presentation of important ideas, useful insights, and persuasive arguments. You can participate by answering my questions or commenting on other students' answers by speaking in class. Good examples of discussion include:

- Provoking constructive dialogue among students
- Introducing thoughtful perspectives
- Clarifying difficult concepts with facts and examples
- Demonstrating an in-depth understanding of class material

If I find that your comment meets the above standards, I will give you a thumbs-up or say “good answer.” Students who receive a thumbs-up or are told “good answer” should report to me after class to ensure that their participation is recorded and the extra credit is awarded.

2. Microsimulations in Marketplace Simulation

There are 8 microsimulations in the Marketplace simulation. Each time you complete a microsimulation with a score of 100%, you will receive 1% extra credit. The deadline will be Dec 4th.

You can also earn extra credit if your group outperforms the other groups in the simulation.

3. Other Opportunities Announced Throughout the Semester

Week	Dates	Content
1	Aug. 18	Introduction of the class, syllabus, <i>Case: DeBeers's Diamond Dilemma</i>
2	Aug. 25	<i>Case: Layla's Delicacies: Scaling Up a Small Business with Insights from Marketing Research</i> In-class Group Report 1 – The Marketing Problem
3	Sept. 1	<i>Case: Crocs: Using Community-Centric Marketing to Make Ugly Iconic</i> In-class Group Report 2 – The Company's Response

Week	Dates	Content
4	Sept. 8	Case: <i>Harley-Davidson: Rejuvenating an Iconic Brand</i> In-class Group Report 3 – Your Recommendations
5	Sept. 15	Case: <i>Pricing at Netflix</i> Marketplace simulation (Quarter 1)
6	Sept. 22	Case: <i>Headspace vs. Calm: A Mindful Competition</i> Marketplace simulation (Quarter 2)
7	Sept. 29	Case: <i>McDonald's: Moving Towards a Fully Automated Future?</i> Marketplace simulation (Quarter 3)
8	Oct. 6	Case: <i>MrBeast: Building a YouTube Empire</i> Marketplace simulation (Quarter 4)
9	Oct. 13	Group presentations Marketplace simulation (Quarter 5)
10	Oct. 20	Group presentations Marketplace simulation (Quarter 6)
11	Oct. 27	Group presentations Marketplace simulation (Quarter 7)
12	Nov. 3	Group presentations Marketplace simulation (Quarter 8)

Week	Dates	Content
13	Nov. 10	Guest speaker (subject to change based on speaker availability)
14	Nov. 17	Guest speaker (subject to change based on speaker availability)
15	Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Break (no class)
16	Dec. 1	Guest speaker (subject to change based on speaker availability)
17	Final Exam	During the University's scheduled final examination period

UNT Fall 2026: regular classes begin Aug. 17; Thanksgiving Break is Nov. 23–29; last regular class meeting is Dec. 3; final exams are Dec. 7–11.

Course Policies

-Academic Integrity Policy

The G. Brint Ryan College of Business takes academic honesty seriously. Ethics and integrity are important business values, essential to building trust and adhering to both professional and legal standards. Academic dishonesty destroys trust, damages the reputation and the value of the degree and is unacceptable.

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions from admonition (a warning) to expulsion from the University.

Some of the most common examples of academic integrity violations include plagiarism or cheating, such as unauthorized assistance on examinations, homework, research papers or case analyses. Your work must be entirely your own. When working on assignments, you should not discuss your work with others unless approved by the course instructor. Group assignments should only be discussed with members assigned to your group, and all group members may be held accountable in some way for known academic integrity violations in a group assignment.

Another example of academic dishonesty relates to improper attribution. When preparing your assignments, you must cite all outside sources in the manner requested by your instructor. Copying or using material from any source prepared by or previously submitted by others, at UNT or other institutions, or downloaded from the Internet, is plagiarism. Unless directed otherwise in an assignment, large scale “cutting and pasting” from other sources, even if properly footnoted, is not appropriate. You should synthesize this material in your own words and provide a footnote.

Your instructor will specify what materials, if any, may be used on the tests and exams. Using materials other than those permitted, talking with other individuals during the exam, individuals exchanging information about an exam when one has taken the exam and the other has not, or copying or using material from another individual’s exam is academic dishonesty and will result in a meeting to discuss academic integrity violations and potentially issue sanctions mentioned above, and may result in ineligibility for academic scholarships. The use of online assistance, such as sites commonly used for finding homework solutions, group chat, cell phones, smart watches, and similar tools during exams is not allowed for any reason unless specifically permitted. No portion of an exam may be copied or photographed without permission.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the University's status as an institution of higher education. A student is responsible for responding to a request to discuss suspected academic dishonesty when issued by an instructor or other University official. If a student fails to respond after a proper attempt at notification has been made, the University may take appropriate academic actions in the absence of the student’s participation.

-Generative AI Usage Policy

In this course, students may use Generative AI tools **only for grammar and word choice proofreading of English writing during class activities**. Any other use of Generative AI for assignments, quizzes, exams, or other course-related tasks—including but not limited to generating, rewriting, translating, analyzing, brainstorming, or completing work—is strictly prohibited.

Any use beyond the permitted scope will be considered **unauthorized GenAI use** and will result in a grade deduction in accordance with the course academic integrity policy. Serious violations will be addressed under the University of North Texas Academic Integrity Policy.

-Attendance & Participation

The class attendance is mandatory, and it is highly encouraged for this course. There will be regular in-class activity that is graded and cannot be made up if students are not present at the time of activity. Finally, please respect your fellow students and guest speakers by arriving on time and keeping noise and other distractions to a minimum.

-Requests for Special Consideration

When any student requests special consideration for missing a quiz, missing an assignment due date, or any other reason, written documentation to the Professor, must be provided in support of the request. Providing special consideration to a student without documentation discriminates to the favor of the requesting student and to the detriment of all other students.

-Grading Challenge Policy

This Instructor strictly follows the guidelines set forth in the current Undergraduate Catalog for grade appeals, changes, and the awarding and removal of an 'Incomplete'. Should you believe there is a grading error for a particular activity, you may make a grade "challenge". This grade "challenge must be made in writing to your instructor no more than 48 hours (two days) after the grade is posted and should specify why you believe the grade is incorrect. Challenges made after this time will not be accepted and your grade will stand as recorded.

-Late Submissions

You are expected to turn in assignments on time. Please pay attention to the deadlines.

-Americans with Disabilities Act

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

-Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

-Student Perception of Teaching

Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey is available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Feedback from students helps to improve this course. I consider SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

-Emergency Notification and Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Technology Requirements

This course is built on digital competence in order to complete the course work. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>) and especially useful are these 8 Tips https://online.unt.edu/succeeding_in_your_online_classes

To maximize the value and learning of this class, students will need:

- Computer with a reliable internet connection
- Canvas Learning Management System
- UNT Email
- Microsoft Office 365: <https://outlook.office.com/>
- Google Docs: <https://docs.google.com/>
- Zoom App: <https://zoom.us/>
- Adobe Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
- Web-camera and/or ability to videoconference and record videos

Technical Assistance

Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other tech issues.

UIT Help Desk: [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>)

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu **Phone:** 940-565-2324 **In Person:** Sage Hall, Room 130 For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328) (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)