

## **MKTG 4890-001: Applied Marketing Problems**

### **Fall 2025 Syllabus\***

**Class hours:** Thursday 6:30 PM to 9:20 PM  
**Location:** BLB 180  
**Instructor:** Dr. Yi Zheng  
**Office hours:** Tuesday and Thursday 3:45 PM - 4:45 PM or by appointment  
**Office Location:** BLB 387A  
**Email:** [yi.zheng@unt.edu](mailto: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/1317787> ). Please purchase the cases before January 15.
2. Marketplace Simulation (<https://play.marketplace-simulation.com/?gameID=26101-00005-21318> ). Please purchase the cases before Sep 18.
3. 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](mailto: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](mailto:yi.zheng@unt.edu).

## Course Main Components & Grading

This course is designed around the following three components: **Lectures, Cases, and Simulation.**

- 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.
- Third, learn from a simulation project. The simulation project represents another approach for knowledge application or learning by doing. You will learn what it’s like to compete in a fast-paced, competitive global market where customers are demanding and the competition is working hard to take away your business. In the Marketplace simulation, your team will start up and run your own bike manufacturing company. You are given control of a simulated business and must manage it through eight decision rounds. You will make decisions on brand design, pricing, ad copy design, media placement, distribution, and sales force management. You must repeatedly analyze the consumer insights, plan a business strategy to improve performance, and then execute that strategy. You face great uncertainties from the external environment and from your own decisions. Market potential rises and falls with local and worldwide market conditions. Incrementally, you learn to skillfully adjust your strategy as you discover the impact of your real-life decisions on available options, linkages to other parts of the business, conflicts, and trade-offs among potential outcomes.

**-Assignments and Percent of Final Grade**

| Assignments                                | Percent of Final Grade |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Attendance                                 | 10%                    |
| Class Participation                        | 10%                    |
| Weekly Quiz                                | 10%                    |
| Case Presentation                          | 10%                    |
| Group Presentation                         | 10%                    |
| Marketplace Simulation                     | 15%                    |
| Exam                                       | 15%                    |
| Peer Evaluation for presentations          | 10%                    |
| Peer Evaluation for Marketplace Simulation | 5%                     |
| SONA Research Participation                | 5%                     |
| 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. Attendance (10%)

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 your submissions of in-class quizzes.**

**Late arrival, defined as arriving 30 minutes after the class starts, is discouraged. Three late arrivals will be considered ONE 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.

### 2. Class Participation (5%)

Your class participation grade will mainly depend on both the **quality and quantity** of contributions to class discussions including both in-class and Canvas 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 comment 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 and 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." Those who receive a thumbs-up and provide good answer should report to me after each class to ensure your participation is recorded.

**NOTE: Only those students in class** are eligible for the participation grade.

### 3. Weekly Quiz (10%)

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 are in format of multiple choices for the content of the case.

### 4. Case Presentation (15%)

Students are randomly assigned to different groups for **case presentations** and **group projects**. **Regarding the case presentation**, two randomly selected groups will present the case, each focusing on a different aspect:

- One group is required to introduce background information about the focal company in the case. The presentation slides should consist of **approximately 15**

**pages.** Specifically, the group should proactively research and present relevant **information not included in the case**, such as (but not limited to) the following, during their presentation:

- Current mission and goals
  - Past and current SWOT analysis about the focal company's latest current situation
  - Current marketing environment
  - Current marketing segments
  - Current 4Ps and the problems
- The other group will present an overview of the case, including the focal company and the challenges it faces. While it is not necessary to cover every detail of the case in the presentation, you should provide **sufficient information under each subtitle** to help the audience refresh their memory or gain a better understanding of the case after your introduction. The presentation slides should consist of **approximately 15 pages**.

The presenting team should **submit their slides** to Canvas **before class**.

#### **5. Group Presentation (15%)**

Each group needs to choose a company and analyze its marketing activities (**the company should be different from all companies in our cases**). Specifically, the group needs to proactively search but not limited to the following information:

- a. Mission and goals
- b. SWOT analysis about the focal company's latest current situation
- c. Marketing environment
- d. Marketing segments
- e. Current 4Ps and the problems
- f. Solutions about the company's current problems

#### **6. 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.

#### **7. Exam (15%)**

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

#### **8. Peer Evaluation (5%)**

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 are to determine each individual's overall contribution to the team's work (in-class activities, marketing article presentations, and case competitions) and to prevent free-riding.

## **9. SONA Research Participation**

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 5% 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](http://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](http://unt-cob.sona-systems.com)**. If you have questions, DO NOT contact me. Contact the behavioral lab manager by email at **[RCoBRep@unt.edu](mailto: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.

**Deadlines for Participation:** specific deadlines announced in the class or 5:00pm on Dec 11, 2025.

| Week | Dates   | Content                                                                                                           |
|------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Aug.21  | Introduction of the class,<br>syllabus,<br>Case: <i>DeBeers's Diamond Dilemma</i>                                 |
|      |         |                                                                                                                   |
| 2    | Aug.28  | Case: <i>Layla's Delicacies: Scaling Up a Small Business with Insights from Marketing Research</i>                |
|      |         |                                                                                                                   |
| 3    | Sep.4   | Case: <i>Pillsbury Cookie Challenge</i>                                                                           |
|      |         |                                                                                                                   |
| 4    | Sep. 11 | Case: <i>Michelin: Building a Digital Service Platform</i>                                                        |
|      |         |                                                                                                                   |
| 5    | Sep. 18 | Case: <i>Chase Sapphire: Creating a Millennial Cult Brand</i><br><br>Marketplace Simulation Quarter 1             |
|      |         |                                                                                                                   |
| 6    | Sep. 25 | Case: <i>Crocs: Using Community-Centric Marketing to Make Ugly Iconic</i><br><br>Marketplace Simulation Quarter 2 |
|      |         |                                                                                                                   |
| 7    | Oct. 2  | Case: <i>Google Glass: Development, Marketing and User Acceptance</i><br><br>Marketplace Simulation Quarter 3     |
|      |         |                                                                                                                   |
| 8    | Oct. 9  | Case: <i>Harley-Davidson: Rejuvenating an Iconic Brand</i><br><br>Marketplace Simulation Quarter 4                |
|      |         |                                                                                                                   |

| Week | Dates   | Content                                                                                         |
|------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9    | Oct. 16 | Case: <i>Pricing at Netflix</i><br>Marketplace Simulation Quarter 5                             |
|      |         |                                                                                                 |
| 10   | Oct. 23 | Case: <i>Amazon and Walmart on Collision Course</i><br>Marketplace Simulation Quarter 6         |
|      |         |                                                                                                 |
| 11   | Oct. 30 | Case: <i>Headspace vs. Calm: A Mindful Competition</i><br>Marketplace Simulation Quarter 7      |
|      |         |                                                                                                 |
| 12   | Nov. 6  | Marketing Reading: <i>Sales Force Design and Management</i><br>Marketplace Simulation Quarter 8 |
|      |         |                                                                                                 |
| 13   | Nov. 13 | Group presentation                                                                              |
|      |         |                                                                                                 |
| 14   | Nov. 20 | Group presentation                                                                              |
|      |         |                                                                                                 |
| 15   | Dec. 4  | Guest speaker                                                                                   |
|      |         |                                                                                                 |
| 16   | Dec. 11 | Final exam (6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.)                                                              |

## **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.

### ***-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](http://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](mailto: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](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](mailto: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>)