

MARK 3520
Competitive Positioning
Fall 2019-20
Course Syllabus
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INSTRUCTOR AND INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

How does the market perceive your offering? How are you different from your competitors? Are you able to deliver value to your target markets? As the market situation dramatically changes across time, one has to understand how such dynamics influence buyers' preferences and competitive response, and should be able to present an appropriate value proposition in order to remain competitive.

On successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- analyze evolving market issues arising from external environmental factors, market behavior, and competitor actions
- apply relevant analytical tools for a coherent analysis of the competitive market space
- construct a persuasive value proposition for a company's offering
- formulate proactive and reactive strategic options for effective marketing management that will help create a sustainable competitive advantage

This course is of a blended learning format. It utilizes a mix of online and face-to-face components to maximize students' learning.

- The Online Component provides students with the fundamental knowledge through an online self-study mode.
- The Face-to-Face Component utilizes the contact time to develop students higher order thinking.

TEXTBOOK AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

There is no prescribed textbook in this course. However, supplementary readings and cases will be assigned on occasion. The relevant materials will be available on a two-hour loan basis at the Department of Marketing.

Students will go through a direct-competitive marketing simulation (MARKSTRAT) and will thus need to read and consult the *Markstrat for Windows* Participant Manual (downloadable through the MARKSTRAT website).

CLASS SCHEDULE

The face-to-face classroom sessions are held on **Tuesdays 12:00 n- 1:20 p.m. @ LSK 1001**

(except on certain weeks when the class meets on Thursdays – duly noted on the class timetable at the end of this syllabus-- on account of a Tuesday being a holiday, or test being scheduled for Thursday)

In addition to the Tuesday classroom session, students are required to watch the online video materials and perform the required online coursework / exercises/ quizzes.

Tutorial sessions have been scheduled for **Wednesdays 6:00- 6:50 p.m** at **LSK 1014**. We will generally NOT meet during tutorials, but we will use these times for consultation, team interaction for MARKSTRAT decision making (as respective teams would require), and for extra/make-up sessions that we might need. You will be duly advised of any session that would be scheduled for any of the tutorial times.

COURSEWORK AND ASSESSMENT

<i>Coursework</i>	<i>Weighting (%)</i>	<i>Individual/Team</i>
Term Test 1	20	Individual
Term Test 2	20	Individual
Learning Exercises -- include in-class and on-line exercises and quizzes, and case analysis/discussion	13	Individual/ Team
Class Participation	10	
MARKSTRAT Performance (Scores benchmarked against the team's final standing in terms of Stock Price Index)	15	Team (subject to iPeer assessment)*
Final Report on MARKSTRAT (Written and Oral Presentation)	20	Team (subject to iPeer assessment)*
Research Experiment (part of the Department of Marketing Subject Pool)	2	Individual
TOTAL	100%	

*Team activities will be peer-assessed to reflect individual contributions to the group effort.

MARKSTRAT FOR WINDOWS

Students, working in teams, will participate in a simulation specifically designed for teaching strategic marketing management concepts. The simulation provides a good setting for planning, control, feedback, and adaptation of marketing activities, and incorporates important strategic marketing and competitive positioning issues.

There will be one or two independent industries in each class, depending on the class size. Four to five firms (teams) will compete against each other within an industry.

Decision Making

Each firm will submit a collective strategic marketing decision on designated dates. Decisions should be entered on the MARKSTRAT website (decision interface) not later than the specified time on the designated date. Check the timetable at the end of this syllabus for the detailed schedule.

Results for the period can be accessed through the MARKSTRAT website within two hours of the decision submission deadline, except in Period 8 where final results will be announced in-class on **26 November**. Students will have access only to their own company's reports, and they need to authenticate their access by entering their respective passwords.

It is important that decision submissions are made on a timely basis as the professor will generally process the decisions soon after the deadline expires. Thus, late submissions are not acceptable.

Assessment

Students will be assessed based on their team's simulation performance, and final report.

Market Performance

Teams will be awarded grades based on their performance ranking (SPI) in their respective industries.

Final Report

At the end of the simulation, each team will submit an 12-page (max) written report that discusses

- the team's short-term and long-term objectives and strategies
- the team's overall performance analysis up to Period 8
- the team's long-range strategic plans as it hands over the firm over to a new management team (Period 9 onwards).

The team's final written report has to be uploaded on CANVAS not later than 5:00 p.m. on **22 November** (Friday).

Learning Exercises and Case Analysis

This coursework component includes graded in-class exercises, online submissions of exercises (related to either MARKSTRAT or the theoretical discussions or both), and quizzes, both online and in-class.

In-class exercises will typically require students to work in groups and answer questions based on given scenarios in a case or in their respective MARKSTRAT situations.

A number of cases will also be assigned as pre-reading and will be discussed in class as scheduled.

Class Participation

The classroom experience is very important in your learning process. In addition to lectures, time will be allocated to in-class group exercises. These exercises will be in the form of cases or discussion questions that will be handed out in class. Each team will then get some time (10-15 minutes) to discuss the assignment or exercise. Following this, I will ask one team to discuss their work. The other teams will be expected to add their comments and join in a discussion of the exercise/assignment. *In order to facilitate this type of discussion, each group of students is required to sit together for all lectures. Group participation points will only be given to members of the group who are present for the discussion.* All students are required to display a card kept in front of them **during class**, containing their group number and their names (We will provide the name cards).

All members of the same group will receive the same marks for the in-class exercises. There will **also** be individual class participation points – i.e., marks given for individual comments

and answers to questions asked in class. Individual class participation will be graded on a scale from 0 (lowest) through 4 (highest points), using the criteria below. The criteria focus on what you demonstrate and do not presume to guess at what you know but do not demonstrate.

Points	Criteria
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present, not disruptive. • Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. • Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic case or reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them. • Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class). • Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. • Demonstrates sporadic involvement.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates good preparation: knows case or reading facts well, has thought through implications of them. • Offers interpretations and analysis of case material (more than just facts) • Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion. • Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed case exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material (e.g., readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.). • Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of case material, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further. • Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc. • Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.

PEER ASSESSMENT

To ensure equal participation in and contribution to team-based activities, a peer assessment system will be in place. Each student is required to evaluate his/ her team members' performance/contribution to the team via the *iPeer* system. The student will also conduct self-evaluation, although the self-evaluation score will not contribute towards the calculation of the student's average evaluation score.

In addition to the numerically-scaled assessment, the student should input his/ her qualitative evaluation/ comments, especially in cases where his/ her assessment of a teammate's contribution is low.

Evaluation criteria include:

- Attendance during team meetings/ activities
- Quality of input/ work done
- Volume of work contributed
- Overall contribution to the group deliverable

Each student is required to participate in this exercise for two events:

- MARKSTRAT decision-making
- MARKSTRAT Final Report preparation

Evaluators should include qualitative comments/ evaluation especially in case where extreme scores were assigned to the member being evaluated.

The iPeer events will open and close on specific dates as indicated in the timetable at the end of this syllabus. A student who fails to submit his/her peer assessment on time will automatically earn a significant mark deduction in that particular coursework component.

Individual peer assessment scores will be released on CANVAS after the closing date. The students will then have an opportunity to raise any concern about their peer assessment scores within a given period of time. No queries or challenges will be entertained after the designated cut-off date for raising queries. Please refer to the timetable at the end of this syllabus for the exact dates and times.

TERM TESTS

Two term tests will be administered within the semester. The tests will be held during regular class hours on **Thursdays**. The test dates are:

17 October

28 November

The test format will be a combination of Multiple Choice and short-answer/ discussion questions or problems related to MARKSTRAT and/ or a given mini-case.

RESEARCH EXPERIMENT

Students enrolled in this class are expected to earn 2 research credits (worth 2% of the grade). This can be done through participation in 2 *marketing experiments* (of 1 hour each) OR by completing 2 *research assignments*.

Marketing experiments will be scheduled throughout the semester and students can sign up for these experiments. Instructions on how to sign up will be given to you once the add/drop period is over. You will receive an email giving you the instruction. Instructions will also be posted on your course website. (It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the procedures so you are notified of experiments when they are posted). Note that all research experiments begin on time and if you are late, you will miss your chance. If you sign up and then fail to show up (and this occurs several times), you might be blocked from further participation.

If you choose to do *research assignments*, you can pick them up from the Marketing Department Office (pick-up schedule to be announced). These assignments can be turned in

on the last day of class to the MARKETING MAIN OFFICE. Please do not give it to me (your instructor) since they are evaluated by the department.

Note that the department requires that students earn 2 research credits for each marketing elective that they are enrolled in. Given that a few of you are enrolled in multiple marketing electives, the department has placed a cap on the number of research credits (experiments/assignments) you have to do. The maximum that each student does is 4 experiments/assignments. Thus, if you are enrolled in three marketing classes, you do NOT have to do 6 experiments or 6 assignments.

MARK 3520 SCHEDULE (14 NOVEMBER- 06 DECEMBER)

Week	Date	IC or OL	Topic	Notes
Week 11	12 Nov	In-class	Attack and Counter-attack Strategies	CLASSES CANCELLED
	14 Nov	Online	Best practice examples of Positioning Strategies 1 11.1 Break-away Positioning- Marketing Success Through Understanding Consumer Behavior 11.2 Pioneering Strategy- Using Product as a Source of Positional Advantage 11.3 Follower Strategy 11.4 Late Entrants 11.5 Hardball: Killer Strategies for Defeating Competition	
Week 12	19 Nov	RVC	Case Discussion/ Presentation <i>Product Team Cialis: Getting Ready to Market</i> (Attack and Counter-attack Strategies)	Remote Video Capture (RVC). Link to the RVC recording will be published on course website (CANVAS) for students to view. Students who wish to be present during regular class period are welcome. Your SAFETY is our primary concern, so please make a rational judgment if you plan to be in class. Your attendance will not be monitored. <i>(The professor will switch to narrated Powerpoint presentation if the situation warrants such move)</i> Decision 9 due 11:00 p.m., 19 November
	21 Nov	Online	Positioning Mistakes 12.1 Underestimating Competitors 12.2 New Product Failures 12.3 Price Wars 12.4 Recovering from Channel Misfit 12.5 Stuck in the Middle 13.1 When Pioneering Is Not an Advantage 13.2 Curveball: Strategies to Fool Competition 13.3 Defensive Marketing 13.4 Is There Life After Death? Rejuvenation Strategies 13.5 Most Common Marketing Mistakes	22 November, Friday (5:00 p.m.): MARKSTRAT Final Written Report uploaded on CANVAS 22 November (5:00 p.m.) iPeer starts (2 events) 25 November (5:00 p.m.)- Closing date of iPeer Assessments
Week 13	26 Nov	Online	MARKSTRAT Final Debrief Course Summary and Conclusion	Narrated Powerpoint presentation will be published on CANVAS by 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, 24 November, at the latest.
	28 Nov	Online	Term Test 2: ONLINE (CANVAS) 12:00-1:30 p.m.	28 November (5:00 p.m.)- Individual peer assessment scores released on CANVAS. 02 December (5:00 p.m.)- cut-off for any queries regarding iPeer scores