

# MARK 7365 Introduction to Digital Marketing

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There might be changes in the syllabus depending on the overall progress. Changes in the syllabus will be announced through Blackboard announcement, and the latest syllabus can be found under the “course syllabus” section of Blackboard.

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Instructor:	Dr. Shijie Lu (“Lu” is preferred though my last name is “Lyu” in the UH system)
Classes:	<b>Online Only (Asynchronous lectures + Synchronous Q&amp;A)</b>
Office:	Melcher Hall 385B (third floor, marketing department)
Office hours:	Zoom hours every Thursday 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm, or by appointments
Course website:	Blackboard
Prerequisite:	A fundamental course in Marketing/Advertising (e.g., MARK 6361).
Preferred contact:	<a href="mailto:slu@central.uh.edu">slu@central.uh.edu</a>

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## Course Description and Objectives

Companies are increasingly shifting marketing efforts from traditional media to digital media such as search engines, social media, and mobile. These technologies influence customers and also have an impact on firm performance. It is important for marketing managers to understand some of these digital strategies and familiarize themselves with some of the technologies underlying them. This course is a **graduate-level elective course** designed to provide an **introduction** to digital marketing. At the end of the course, it is expected that students will be able to:

1. Be familiar with the concepts, theories, and issues in digital marketing.
2. Familiarize with the key technologies and strategies used by firms in digital advertising.
3. Understand the key metrics in web and social media analytics.
4. Develop analytical abilities to solve real-life problems.
5. Make independent assessment of digital marketing strategies of companies.
6. Develop teamwork, critical thinking, and business communication skills.

## Class Format

This course is taught asynchronously, which means there is no designated day or time assigned to the course (although optional synchronous sessions are possible, such as virtual office hours or discussion groups). Asynchronous instruction generally involves accessing content, such as recorded video lectures, readings, discussion prompts, assignments, and assessments during a flexible time frame, with due dates as specified.

Each week, the weekly learning modules with the necessary materials (videos, slides, assignments, quizzes) will be available under the “weekly activities” tab on Blackboard after 10:00 am every Tuesday. Weekly learning activities consist of three parts:

- Allocate your time to watch videos of this week’s lectures on the Stream.
- Work on individual/group assignments and complete the small online quiz, if any.
- Attend a virtual discussion session hosted by the instructor over Zoom (7:30 pm - 9:00 pm every Thursday)

## Course Materials

### *Textbook (optional):*

As the digital media landscape moves so quickly, there is no required textbook for this course. If you really would like to have a textbook, I would recommend the following online textbook: “The essential guide to marketing in a digital world (6<sup>th</sup> edition),” which is available as a free downloadable PDF <https://www.redandyellow.co.za/textbook/>.

### *Case Pack (required):*

A set of four Harvard Business School cases is required ( $\$4.25 \times 4 = \$17$ ). You need to purchase these cases individually (rather than co-purchase with other students) to work on your group case assignments. You can buy directly from Harvard Business Publishing via this link:

<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/794724>

### *Lecture notes (required):*

Lecture notes will be available on Blackboard after 10:00 am every Tuesday.

## Grading

Individual Assignments (1*10%)	10%	Individual
Online quizzes (10*1%)	10%	Individual
Midterm Exam	30%	Individual
Group Case Assignment (4*5%)	20%	Group
Final Group Project Presentation	30%	Group
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

The final letter grade will be determined by the total points based on the following table.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
≥93	≥90	≥86	≥82	≥78	≥74	≥70	≥66	≥60	<60

### **Individual Assignment**

One individual assignment must be submitted electronically to Blackboard before 11:59 pm on the due date (Sunday) listed in the course schedule. As data analytics is an essential part of digital marketing, some quantitative exercises are expected in the individual assignment. Assignments submitted after the due date but within 24 hours of deadline will receive only 50% of the earned grade. No credit will be given 24 hours after the deadline.

### **Online quizzes**

There will be 10 weekly quizzes (see course schedule). Each quiz has up to 5 multiple choice questions related to the learning module of that week. You can take the quiz before 11:59 pm Sunday of that week.

## Group Case Assignments

The objective of forming groups in this course is to enhance problem-solving and nurture teambuilding skills. Students need to form groups voluntarily on Blackboard. Each group will consist of up to 5 students (the exact size will be determined after final enrolments). You will work with your group on case assignments and the final group project. Please see Appendix B for assigned case questions.

The deliverable of each group case assignment is a PowerPoint deck. The slide deck should be no more than 8 pages, including the title page and exhibits. A recommended format is to start with one introduction page summarizing case background, followed by 3-5 pages of your answers/analyses to assigned case questions, and one conclusion page.

Each group should submit their case assignments to Blackboard before 11:59 pm on the due date (Sunday) listed in the course schedule. The quality of the slide deck will be evaluated based on the understanding of the case background, the depth of analysis and thinking, and the feasibility of recommended solutions. A rubric for assessing case assignments is given in Appendix C.

## Final Group Project

The same group formed for the case presentation will also work on a semester-long group project. In this project, you will work with your team to provide digital marketing consulting to an organization (business or non-profit) of your choice. Your group should choose an organization with the resources to use digital media (e.g., company website, online advertising, social media presence) but does not meet its potential.

### *Do not choose*

- Companies such as Apple, Google, Amazon, Coca-Cola, etc. These large companies tend to have complex business strategies beyond this group project's scope. Preferably please choose medium- or small-sized companies where you can focus on a few (possibly unique) strategies that make them successful.
- Companies that you like but have no idea of their business and marketing strategies. Remember that your recommendations should be worth the organization's effort and sustainable in the long run (especially for small organizations).

### *Deliverables*

- The final deliverable is a 15-minute virtual presentation followed by a 2-minute Q&A over Zoom at the end of the semester. All team members must participate equally in the presentation. The page limit for the slides is 15, including the title page and exhibits (e.g., supporting figures, tables, links, etc.) Writing should mostly be bullet form. Anything beyond the page limit will not be read.

Below is a recommended guideline for the final group project presentation:

- *Introduction (2-3 pages)*
  - a. What are this organization's primary offerings? What is unique in this organization's offering that differentiates it from other similar offerings? (e.g., you could use 3C's, SWOT analysis here)

- b. What's this organization's current digital marketing efforts (e.g., you could check the organization's ranking on search engines, its use of online advertising, its presence on social media, its offering of mobile apps, etc.)
- *Audit (5-6 pages)*
  - c. What is ONE key objective of the organization's digital marketing strategy?
  - d. Create TWO marketing personas (1 slide each) containing the following two elements: Segmentation information (select personas that reflect the target segments of the organization) and 'Humanizing' information (begin with a photo, these elements create empathy for your customer. These elements must be relevant to the relationship between the customer and the organization.)
  - e. Diagnose whether the organization markets successfully to each of the two personas in achieving its key marketing objective. Identify up to 3 key areas to improve. Please provide evidence to support your arguments.
- *Recommendation and Implementations (5-6 pages)*
  - f. Present and defend up to 3 recommendations for your organization in response to the problems identified in Part e. A superior recommendation bears in mind the organization's constraints (e.g., financial, expertise, existing targeting and positioning strategy).
  - g. Demonstrate how to implement your suggested recommendations (e.g., creating a sample social media campaign, presenting a website mockup, etc.)
  - h. Define metrics that the organization should continuously monitor for evaluating your tactics' performance in line with the organization's objectives.

### *Evaluation*

The group project presentation will be evaluated by students from other groups (half weight) and the instructor (half weight) based on the interest, engagement, and energy conveyed in the presentation as well as the quality of contents, the depth of analysis, and the feasibility of your planned tactics. Please see Appendix D for the grading rubric for the group project presentation.

Group members will also be asked to assess each of their team member's contributions. This peer assessment will be used to determine each team member's final score on the group project assignments, including the final group project presentation and group case assignments. For example, suppose all your team members give you 90 out of 100 in peer evaluation. In that case, you will receive only 90% of the final grades for the final group project presentation and group case assignments. Please see Appendix E for the peer evaluation form.

### *Timeline*

- 1st group project meeting to discuss the selected organization, current digital marketing effort, primary marketing objective, and buyer personas on 3/4 (Thu). Please submit a one-page note outlining your current progress through the Blackboard by 11:59 pm 3/3 (Wed).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> group project meeting to discuss the identified areas to improve, and preliminary recommendations on 4/15 (Thu). Please submit a one-page note outlining your current progress through the Blackboard by 11:59 pm 4/14 (Wed).
- Presentation on 4/29 (Thu).
- The slide deck and peer evaluation form is due by 11:59 pm 5/3 (Sun).

## Exams

The midterm exam will be asynchronous. Students can access the exam book within a specific time around the exam date (see course schedule) and has to complete the exam within a time window after they start the exam on the Blackboard. The exam covers all materials from lectures and case assignments. It consists of multiple-choice questions (about 70 points) and short answer questions (about 30 points). Some of the questions may involve quantitative analysis. Details on exam format and sample questions will be provided in the review session before the exam.

Inform the instructor in the email of any legitimate exam conflicts **at least two weeks** in advance. If the instructor does not receive written notice at least two weeks before the exam, you will not be allowed to take it at another time. You are responsible for contacting the instructor concerning missing an exam as soon as possible, preferably before the exam.

If you think there are genuine reasons for you to appeal, you can submit for regrading **within a week after the exam**. Please remember that when you appeal for regrading, the instructor will regrade all questions, and you might lose or gain points at your own risk.

## Class Policy & COVID 19-Related Instructions

### Excused Absence Policy

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

### Recording of Class

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Center for Students with DisABILITIES](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

### **Syllabus Changes**

Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through the Blackboard.

### **Resources for Online Learning**

The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our [Power-On](#) website. Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the Internet, AccessUH, and Blackboard; requesting a laptop through the Laptop Loaner Program; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact [UHOnline@uh.edu](mailto:UHOnline@uh.edu).

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

The University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy is strictly enforced by the C.T. Bauer College of Business. No violations of this policy will be tolerated in this course. A discussion of the policy is included in the University of Houston Student Handbook, which can be downloaded at <http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/>.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Reminders
1	1/19 (Tue)	Introduction Consumer Behavior in the Digital Age	Quiz 1 due by 11:59 pm 1/24 (Sun)
2	1/26 (Tue)	Search Engine Optimization	Quiz 2 due by 11:59 pm 1/31 (Sun)
3	2/2 (Tue)	Google Analytics Search Advertising	Quiz 3 due by 11:59 pm 2/7 (Sun)
4	2/9 (Tue)	Search Advertising (cont'd) Opening of the Case: Thunderbird	Group case assignment 1 and Quiz 4 due by 11:59 pm 2/14 (Sun)
5	2/16 (Tue)	CANCELLED	
6	2/23 (Tue)	Display Advertising Review of the Case: Thunderbird Opening of the Case: Measuring of ROI	Group case assignment 2 and Quiz 5 due by 11:59 pm 2/28 (Sun)
7	3/2 (Tue)	Display Advertising (cont'd) Review of the Case: Measuring of ROI Opening of the Case: Rocket Fuel	Group case assignment 3 and Quiz 6 due by 11:59 pm 3/7 (Sun)
	3/4 (Thu)	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Group Meetings over Zoom about the Group Project</b>	A one-page note due by 11:59 pm 3/3 (Wed)
8	3/9 (Tue)	Regression Analysis Midterm Review	Take the exam on the Blackboard
	3/11 (Thu)	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
9	3/15 – 3/20	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	
10	3/23 (Tue)	Social Network	Quiz 7 due by 11:59 pm 3/28 (Sun)
11	3/30 (Tue)	Social Media Marketing	Individual assignment and Quiz 8 due by 11:59 pm 4/4 (Sun)
12	4/6 (Tue)	Social Media Marketing (cont'd)	Quiz 9 due by 11:59 pm 4/11 (Sun)
13	4/13 (Tue)	Mobile Marketing Opening of the Case: Bigbasket	Group case assignment 4 due by 11:59 pm 4/18 (Sun)
	4/15 (Thu)	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Group Meetings over Zoom about the Group Project</b>	A one-page note due by 11:59 pm 4/14 (Wed)
14	4/20 (Tue)	AI, ML and Big Data Review of the Case: Bigbasket	Quiz 10 due by 11:59 pm 4/25 (Sun)
15	4/29 (Thu)	Final Group Project Presentation	Slides & peer evaluation form due by 11:59 pm 5/2 (Sun)

## Appendix A: Reading List

### Introduction

Required reading:

- Course syllabus (Blackboard)

### Consumer Behavior in the Digital Age

Required reading:

- The consumer decision journey, McKinsey Quarterly (2009) ([link to article](#))

Suggested reading:

- American's Internet Access: 2000-2015, Pew Research Center (2015) ([link to article](#))
- Social Media Usage: 2005-2015, Pew Research Center (2015) ([link to article](#))

### Search Engine Optimization

Required reading:

- Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide, Google ([link to site](#))

Suggested reading:

- Google analytics tutorial ([link to site](#))

### Search Advertising

Required reading:

- The ABCs of AdWords, WordStream and Hanping Marketing (2015) ([link to pdf](#))
- Best web metrics/KPIs for a small, medium or large sized business, Avinash Kausik (2011) ([link to article](#))

Suggested reading:

- Did eBay just prove that paid search ads don't work? Harvard Business Review (2013) ([link to article](#))
- AdWords "Ineffective" Says eBay, Google "Meta-Pause Analysis" Contradicts Those Findings, Search Engine Land (2013) ([link to article](#))
- Multi-Channel Attribution Modeling: The Good, Bad and Ugly Models, Avinash Kausik (2013) ([link to article](#))

### Display Advertising

Required reading:

- The evolution of online display advertising (2012) ([link to video](#), 4 mins)
- How Google Edged Out Rivals and Built the World's Dominant Ad Machine: A Visual Guide, WSJ (2019) ([link to article](#))

Suggested reading:

- A Step-by-Step Guide to Smart Business Experiments, Harvard Business Review (2011) ([link to article](#))
- Why Managing Consumer Privacy Can Be an Opportunity? MIT Sloan Management Review (2013) ([link to article](#))

## **Social Media Marketing 1**

Required reading:

- The power of like, ComScore (2012) ([link to article](#))

Suggested reading:

- Contagious: Why Things Catch On, by Jonah Berger (2013) Simon & Schuster: New York ([link to book](#))
- How Often Should You Post on Social Media? Benchmarks for 9 Different Industries, HubSpot Blogs (2015) ([link to article](#))

## **Social Media Marketing 2**

Suggested reading:

- Mine Your Own Business: Market-Structure Surveillance Through Text Mining, Oded Netzer et al. (2012) ([link to article](#))

## **Social Media Marketing 3**

Suggested reading:

- Whose and what chatter matters? The effect of tweets on movie sales, Huaxia Rui, Yizao Liu, and Andrew Whinston (2013) ([link to article](#))
- Online Chatter That Moves Markets, WSJ (2012) ([link to article](#))
- More Tweets, More Votes: Social Media as a Quantitative Indicator of Political Behavior, Joseph DiGrazia et al. (2013) ([link to article](#))

## **Mobile Marketing**

Required reading:

- How You Can Use Geo-Location To Turn Mobile Traffic Into Offline Gold, Marketing Land (2014), ([link to article](#))

Suggested reading:

- Mobile Targeting, Xueming Luo et al. (2014) ([link to article](#))
- Mobile Ad Effectiveness: Hyper-Contextual Targeting with Crowdedness, Michelle Andrews et al. (2015) ([link to article](#))
- Geo-Conquering: Competitive Locational Mobile Promotions, Nathan Fong et al. (2015) ([link to article](#))

## Appendix B: Case Questions

### Case 1: Thunderbird (with data)

1. Identify Thunderbird key metrics and define the KPIs.
2. Generate tables and graphs, and provide a summary of the main observations, inferences, and potential extrapolations offered by the data.
3. Conduct an evaluation of the each of identified KPIs and then group them according to each marketing goal. Identify gaps and opportunities based on the KPI grouping exercise.
4. Provide a set of recommendations to improve the online performance of Thunderbird.

Required reading: Excel Pivot Table Tutorial ([link to video](#), 6 mins)

### Case 2: Measuring ROI on Sponsored Search Ads (with data)

Please see the question at the end of the case

### Case 3: Rocket Fuel (with data)

1. Was the advertising campaign effective? Did additional consumers convert as a result of the ad campaign?
2. Was the campaign profitable?
3. How did the number of impressions seen by each user influence the effectiveness of advertising?
4. How does consumer response to advertising vary on different days of the week and at different times of the day?

### Case 4: Customer Analytics at Bigbasket – Product Recommendations (with data)

1. What is the difference in the recommender system requirements between Bigbasket and other e-commerce companies such as Amazon and Flipkart?
2. What are the different types of recommender systems? Which recommender system is more appropriate for Bigbasket?
3. What are the possible data challenges in developing a recommender system? What approach should be taken to resolve these data challenges?
4. How do we build a Smart Basket for a customer? Please outline your proposed algorithm in words.

## Appendix C: Case Assignment Grading Rubric

Each aspect of the case assignment is rated based on the following criteria:

- Level 4 = Excellent = 25 points
- Level 3 = Good, achieved = 20 points
- Level 2 = Fair, still evolving = 15 point
- Level 1 = Poor, still developing = 10 point

	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Content</b>	Answered all questions provided. Discussions of all questions are relevant, complete, and excellent.	Answered all questions provided. Discussions of most questions are relevant and good.	Answered most questions provided. Discussions of some questions are irrelevant or inadequate.	Does not seem to understand the questions very well. Discussions of most questions are irrelevant or inadequate.	
<b>Comprehension</b>	In-depth critical thinking is evident. Excellent reasoning skills and application of concepts learnt in the classes.	Some evidence of in-depth thinking. Good reasoning skills.	Insufficient evidence of in-depth thinking. Lack of reasoning. Student simply lists facts.	No evidence of in-depth thinking. No reasoning.	
<b>Creativity</b>	Student shows considerable creativity and completely justifies rationale for the recommendations.	Student shows creativity and reasonably justifies the rationale for the recommendations.	Student shows some creativity in recommendations, but the rationale is not sufficiently justified.	No evidence of creative thoughts in the recommendations. No justification of rationale.	
<b>Communication</b>	Information is very organized with well-crafted sentences and exhibits. Demonstrate a clear and concise flow of ideas.	Information is organized with understandable sentences and exhibits. Demonstrate a clear flow of logic.	Information is organized, but the flow of logic is somewhat difficult to follow.	Information is not well organized. The flow of logic is difficult to follow.	
<b>Total Score</b>					

## Appendix D: Final Group Project Presentation Evaluation Form

Your group number: \_\_\_\_\_

Scale: 5=Excellent, 4=Good, 3=Satisfactory, 2=Needs Improvement, 1=Poor

Please evaluate each other group's presentation **carefully, responsibly, and critically**. **Do NOT evaluate your own group.**

<b>Presentation</b>	Group1	Group2	Group3	Group4
Were speakers completely prepared and obviously rehearsed? Did the speakers present clearly and loudly?				
Did speakers give interesting facts and examples? Did the presentation get your attention quickly?				
Did all group members meaningfully contribute to the presentation? Did speakers establish eye contact with the audience rather than reading the slides?				
Was the presentation well organized and easy to follow? Was the slideshow relevant to the overall message? Was the information presented in a logical sequence?				
Was the length of presentation within the assigned time? Was the delivery controlled and smooth? Did speakers address questions appropriately?				
<b>Contents</b>				
Was the key marketing objective clearly identified in the introduction? Was the objective relevant to the focal firm?				
Did speakers conduct solid and comprehensive research on the firm's existing digital marketing effort?				
Did speakers provide sufficient evidence-based analyses? Were the analyses necessary and logically related to their recommendations?				
Did speakers recommend inspirational and creative ideas? Were those recommendations likely to provide a competitive edge to the focal firm?				
Did speakers propose relevant metrics to evaluate the success of recommended strategies?				

**Additional comments: (2-3 things you like BEST and/or LEAST about each presentation?)**

## Appendix E: Group Effort Peer Evaluation Form

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Group Number: \_\_\_\_\_

To evaluate individual contributions to team efforts, including both the group case assignments and the final group project, I am asking everyone to provide a candid evaluation of their teammates. Please think carefully about the assignments you and your teammates have worked on before answering the below. Please submit an electronic copy of your peer evaluation form through Blackboard before the last class.

For each teammate on your team, indicate whether they pulled their share of the load. If so, give that teammate 100 contribution points. If a teammate did not pull his/her share of the workload, give that teammate an amount of points that represents how much of a fair share they are pulling. For example, if you think a teammate is doing about 90% of what he/she should be doing, then give him/her 90 points. I expect that most teams will be functioning well and that most teammates will receive 100 points. However, if a teammate has consistently underperformed, then indicate it so that individual evaluations can be adjusted. For any underperforming teammates, please provide comments that describe the nature and extent of the problem.

**Please do NOT rate yourself.**

Teammate Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution Points \_\_\_\_\_

Comments about underperforming teammate(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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