Note: This is a sample syllabus for reference of Cairo University faculty member. Please contact Professor Hassan El Alfy for more information.

Hours: By Appointment. I will usually be in every day except Wednesday.

There may be some used copies of this text around. If you buy an earlier edition, you are responsible for having the up-to-date case data. The data change from one edition to another. Having a different edition than the one assigned will not be an excuse for inaccurate analyses.

Prerequisites: 12 semester hours in marketing courses including MK3010, MK4100 and MK4200. No exceptions. If you don’t have the prerequisites, you will be withdrawn from the course.

Course Objectives

To help marketing majors refine their analytical/critical thinking and communication skills as applied to marketing problems. We will do this through case analysis and discussion, and a marketing plan project with an actual client. This course assumes knowledge of basic marketing principals and marketing metrics. The text reviews marketing math in Chapter 2 and we will also review it in class.

MK 4900 is part of GSU’s “Critical Thinking Through Writing” (CTW) program. You will write three short case analyses. They will be graded but they are not high value in terms of points. They will be used to give you feedback in preparation for two high value written case analyses. The high-value cases will serve as your mid-term and final exams.

This course requires students to work in groups and produce a marketing plan for a real world client. We have at least four requests for projects this semester, and may have more once the semester gets rolling. However, if you have small businesses with which you have either personal or employment connections that might benefit from a marketing plan, please let me know and we will consider them if we need extras.
Learning Goals

MK4900 is a demanding course, and we set high expectations for our students. We will review major marketing principles, and probably learn a few as well. However, this is not a lecture course. Active participation in class discussion is a very important part of the class. To avoid anxiety, embarrassment and disappointment get on top of the course from Day #1 and stay on top. If you are having trouble, let me know ASAP.

To complete this course successfully you will need to demonstrate:

- That you can identify marketing problems and issues as set forth in the various cases we will examine.

- That you can apply the analytical tools and marketing metrics you have learned to analyze marketing problems. **Warning: Do Not Neglect This Part.**

- That you can identify and evaluate alternative solutions to marketing problems, and offer specific recommendations that are logical and feasible.

- That you can present and support your point of view clearly, cogently and concisely in the standard English of the business world. And that you can format a case analysis including text, tables and graphs in a professional manner.

- That you can work *successfully with others* to produce a professional marketing plan for a company.

- That you are the kind of student who comes to *every class* prepared to contribute in a meaningful way.
**Evaluation**

| Case Analysis #1 | 50 points |
| Case Analysis #2 | 50 points |
| Case Analysis #3 | 50 points |
| Case Analysis #4 | 200 points |
| Case Analysis #5 | 200 points |
| Group Project | 250 points |
| Class Contribution | 200 points |

Grading Scale

| 97 - 100 | A+ |
| 94- 96 | A |
| 90 - 95 | A- |
| 87 - 89 | B+ |
| 84 - 86 | B |
| 80 - 83 | B- |
| 77 -79 | C+ |
| 74 - 76 | C |
| 70 – 73 | C- |
| Less than 70 | D |
| Less than 60 | F |

I don’t automatically round up. An 89.5 doesn’t necessarily mean you will achieve an A-. Rounding up is a reward for those who consistently do good work, but maybe had a bad day on one assignment. Asking me to round up your grade is a sure way to convince me not to do it.

Below is a brief explanation of grading events. More will be forthcoming as the semester continues.

**3 ANNOUNCED (LOW VALUE ) BRIEF CASE ANALYSES**

In the beginning of the semester, you will complete three low-value case analyses. Your analysis will cover:

1. Key issue/problem to be solved
2. Recommended solution
3. Support for recommendation including evaluation of alternative solutions
4. Supporting graphics/tables etc.

These briefs will be formal versions of what you should be preparing for class discussion each week *anyway*. They must be typed, using 1.5 line spacing and a Memo format. The body of the document *may not exceed* 2-3 pages, not including appendices.

Support material (e.g. tables, graphs, decision trees, decision matrixes) can be placed in the Appendix. The Appendix can be as long as you need it to be, but be reasonable. For each announced, written case analysis, I will issue an information sheet and a grading rubric. So you will always know what is expected of you. **Pay attention to the rubric and the information sheet. Students who haven’t in the past have been sorry.**

The first three briefs have a low point value so that you aren’t dinged too badly as you learn the ropes. However, these assignments are very important. You will be getting feedback on
your thinking, writing, presentation and marketing knowledge that will prove valuable in the two high value case analyses. Turn in your best work from the start. Cumulatively, they are worth 15% of your grade so, taken together, they constitute a large chunk.

**Unannounced Brief Case Analyses**

I expect you to come to class thoroughly prepared to discuss each assigned case, how it relates to theory and practice in marketing and its implications. You need to have a point of view. You need to be ready to recommend a course of action and to defend it using the facts of the case, intelligent use of inference (as in Critical Thinking) and your knowledge of the practice of marketing.

Only those cases announced ahead of time as a turn-in assignment will need to be written *formally* and graded via a published rubric. However, you should prepare a written brief covering key points and analyses for every class. These class discussion briefs should cover the following:

- A statement of the situation and key problem(s) being faced.
- An enumeration and evaluation of alternative solutions.
- A recommended course of action
- Support

I may decide, unannounced, to have you turn in your discussion briefs. If you don’t have one, you will receive only attendance points. If you do have one, even though you haven’t participated in the discussion, you will receive partial discussion points. Those that are turned in need to show evidence of having been completed *before* class, i.e., they were typed.

**CLASS CONTRIBUTION**

I will grade each of you on your contribution to each class session. This means actively participating in discussions of the cases, and that means preparing them ahead of time (see above). Depending on the actual number of cases we finally analyze, these discussions will be worth about 20 – 25 points each toward your final grade on class contribution. Although no single one is critical, cumulatively they represent 20% of the total earnable points.

During discussions, when I call on you, if you immediately start thumbing through the book, I will assume that you haven’t prepared. Now, there are *legitimate* reasons for going to the book. You might want to refer to a table or graph, or you might need to recheck a disputed case fact. That’s no problem. However, if you are groping for an answer because you aren’t ready, I will call on someone else and you will miss out on contribution points.
What is class contribution:

- Contributing insightful analysis and points of view. Cogent, discussion of key issues, alternatives, recommendations and support.
  - Not merely rehashing case facts or rephrasing another’s comments.
  - Not shouting out an answer without being called on.
  - Not reading from the book, simply agreeing with someone else or reiterating what they said.
- **You need to show analytical thinking, which entails implications and conclusions, not just the “facts” of the case.**
- For most cases, there are several reasonable solutions and the “facts” are sometimes open to interpretation. So, you need to develop a point of view, and contribute by being ready to defend your point of view and offering logical critiques of other points of view.

**Name Cards/Seating Charts**
Find a place to sit on day one, and stay there. I will develop a seating chart to use for grading contribution. We all need to get to know each other quickly. Make a two-sided tent card and write your name on it (both sides) in big bold letters so everyone can call you by name. **Bring me a color copy of your ID picture (actual size) by the second class session so I can put names and faces together quickly.**
Contribution Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A to A+</td>
<td>Obviously worked the case and contributed to class learning and insight. Showed critical thinking. Active as a discussion leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B to B+</td>
<td>Worked on the case. Knew the basics and could discuss them. Was able to answer questions, but wasn’t a discussion leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Didn’t do much more than agree or disagree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Showed up for class. But didn’t participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Demonstrated that he/she was unprepared for case discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Wasn’t in class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If I overlook you during a discussion, please let me know. I’ll make sure you get an opportunity next time. I will post your contribution grades on “ULearn” within 24 hours. If you believe I have shortchanged you, contact me within 24 hours after the points are posted and be ready to refresh my memory about the specific contribution you made.

If you are going to be absent from class for a legitimate reason, *and you have notified me ahead of time*. I will allow you to submit your typed notes to me via email. This will prove (assuming they demonstrate that you’ve actually analyzed something) that you worked on the case. They must be emailed to me by the time class begins. This could earn you partial credit rather than a 0.

**Contribution and Attendance**

Obviously, if you aren’t in class, you can’t contribute to discussions. But you also don’t get lots of credit just for attending class.

**FULL CASE ANALYSES (i.e., MIDTERM AND FINAL)**

These will consist of a 3-4 page (maximum) document presenting your recommendations and support for them. I will assign the formal case write-ups at least 1 week prior to their due dates. As with the “low-value cases”, there will be specific protocols for formatting your write up.

A well written document exhibits the following characteristics:
- Well organized, with clear sections that logically hang together
- A logical flow, with smooth transitions between ideas.
- Thoroughly proof-read for grammatical and usage errors.
- Proper citation of source material. **Please don’t test me on this.**
Critical Thinking Means:
• You don’t just rehash the case facts. That’s review, not analysis.
• You make connections within the material you are analyzing, and between the case and outside material.
• You offer insights as to what the facts mean, and their implications for solving the problem at hand.
• You think through the logical implications of the solutions you offer, such as what they will cost, what impact they will have on brand strategy, etc.

Analysis is not simply a rehash of case facts. We aren’t writing elementary school book reports. If you work the assigned cases for class discussion and make an effort in class, you’ll be okay because you will have begun to develop the disciplined approach you will need to do high value cases properly.

The cases we will examine contain both qualitative and quantitative data. You’ll be required to incorporate some marketing math into your analysis. You will need to show your work in tabular/graphic form that is relevant, easy to read and understand. The numbers need to be accurate. And they need to be presented in a useful manner. Just copying a table or a graph from the case and dropping it into the appendix without any specific and analytical tie-in to your case write up does not constitute quantitative analysis. Tables and graphs must be understandable, clearly and properly labeled, and relevant.

I do not accept late assignments unless you have a formal, verifiable excuse that you were ill, genuinely detained by work, or there was a death in your immediate family.

All written assignments must be turned in as a hard copy and an electronic copy posted to a service called “SafeAssign” on Ulearn. You will not receive a grade on an assignment unless you do both.

If you genuinely think your work on an assignment deserves a higher grade than what you got, you may request a review. I will do so, with the following conditions:
  ➢ I if you haven’t even done the numbers, or if they are inaccurate or so poorly presented that they cannot be interpreted, don’t bother.
  ➢ If your paper displays ignorance of basic case facts, don’t bother.
  ➢ If the writing/composition received less than a B grade don’t bother.
  ➢ If I review your paper, we start from ground zero. Your grade could go higher…it could remain the same…or it could go down.
**Group Project (250 Points)**

By the third class session, you will form groups of 5 people. Each group will select a client with whom they will work for the semester. These must be real businesses and organizations that need marketing plans. You will set mutually agreed upon expectations for yourselves. Your deliverables will include the following:

1. A situation analysis and SWOT
2. A statement of marketing objectives.
3. A marketing plan including
   - Target segment definition and profile.
   - Positioning statement
   - Marketing strategy
   - Budget
   - Evaluation mechanisms.

You will produce a written plan and a PowerPoint presentation that you will present both to the client and to the class. At least part of your class presentation will be in the form of a Podcast. I will explain. Each group must schedule a formal presentation to their client, which I will attend as well. This can be either at the client’s place of business or on campus. I can arrange a meeting room.

You must meet with your client at least 2 -3 times during the semester. You will follow each meeting with a contact/action report summarizing what was agreed to, who is responsible for what actions, and timing. The report should be distributed to all group members, the client and me. You will leave Georgia State University with a marketing plan for an actual business that you helped produce.

I will grade your group project using specific criteria and I will ask your client to provide feedback regarding your work and their satisfaction.

**Peer Evaluations**

Each of you will evaluate the contribution of your fellow group members. Each individual’s project grade will be weighted by the average evaluation given by his/her peers. If your average evaluation falls below 90%, I will weight your *individual score for the project* by the average you earned. For example, if your group earns 100 points, and your average peer evaluation is a 70, you will receive a 70 for the project.

If group problems arise that you cannot resolve, inform me and we will deal with them together. Do not wait until the end of the semester. No one may leave or be evicted from a group without my permission. Personality conflicts are not a reason for leaving a group. Disruptive behavior within a group is considered disruptive classroom behavior (see below) and will be dealt with accordingly. Leaving a group means you must find another group to take you on. There is no individual project in this class, under any circumstances.
Ground Rules

- Be in your seat and ready to go when I start the class each week. Take off your ball caps and sunglasses. Get rid of the gum. Sit up and be involved.

- I allow food and beverages in class. Clean up after yourselves or I will revoke the privilege. Chew with your mouth closed.

- If you aren’t in class for roll, you are late or missing. If late, wait until break or after class for getting marked as late but present. If you are late, move quietly and quickly to the nearest available seat. Do not cross in front of the speaker. Wait for a pause. It is your responsibility to make sure I have marked you as present if you come in late. This must be done on the night of class. If you are consistently late, you will make me unhappy.

- No make-ups, no do-overs, no extra credit assignments.

- Read the syllabus. I once had a student demand that our department chair publish our policy on contribution grades. I pointed out to her that my contribution grading policy was very clear and published in the course syllabus. She didn’t make a very positive impression.

- Side conversations are disruptive behavior.

- Texting, tweeting and cell phone calls during class are disruptive and not allowed.

- No laptops unless I ask you to search for something. You’ve already prepared discussion notes and typed them up, so you don’t need your laptops.

- Do not attempt to discuss your grade during a break or after class unless we can do so privately. Federal law and University policy prohibit me from discussing your grades with anyone but you.

- I will give you breaks. Coming and going is disruptive.

- I will return emails within 24 hours. If it is truly an emergency, you may call my cell phone. It had better be very important.

- You do not have my permission to call me by my first name or “Nasser”. You may address me as Dr. Nasser, Professor Nasser, Mr. Nasser or Dr./Professor/Mr. Wonderful, whichever you find easiest and appropriate.
**Disruptive Behavior:** (Go to the website below and read)

**HTTP://WWW2.GSU.EDU/~WWWSEN/MINUTES/2002-2003/DISRUPT.HTML**

The following is from the University’s Disruptive Behavior Policy. Disruptive student behavior is student behavior in a classroom or other learning environment (to include both on and off-campus locations), which disrupts the educational process. **Disruptive class behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor.** Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, verbal or physical threats, repeated obscenities, and unreasonable interference with class discussion, making/receiving personal phone calls or pages during class, leaving and entering class frequently in the absence of notice to instructor of illness or other extenuating circumstances, and persisting in disruptive personal conversations with other class members. For purposes of this policy, it may also be considered disruptive behavior for a student to exhibit threatening, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates outside of class. When disruptive behavior occurs in a class…The instructor will warn the student. The warning will consist of orally notifying the student that his/her behavior is disruptive and that it must cease immediately or the student will face removal from the classes.

**Side conversations disrupt me and your classmates.** You get only 2.5 hours a week to sip the waters from my inexhaustible well of wisdom…don’t waste it. I’m not talking about a word or two, or a quick question (Like “What the hell is he talking about?” or “Gawd, is this guy ever a PITA”) I will give you one warning.

Please also note that uncooperative, or bullying behavior in a group project meeting also constitutes disruptive behavior.
**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY…** [HTTP://WWW2.GSU.EDU/~WWWFHB/SEC409.HTML](HTTP://WWW2.GSU.EDU/~WWWFHB/SEC409.HTML)

This is inexcusable. Go to the website above and make sure you understand the policy. There are no excuses. **NONE.** On group projects, **the entire group will be held responsible for academic dishonesty on the part of one member.**

Ignorance of this policy, or cultural “differences” are not legitimate excuses for academic dishonesty. When academic dishonesty has occurred in the past, the **least painful sanction I have applied has been allowing the student to withdraw from class voluntarily.** If that happens, you won’t graduate.

You will be required to sign forms stating that you have read and agree to abide by the University’s policies on Disruptive Behavior and Academic Dishonesty. These will be due by the 2\(^{nd}\) class meeting.

**Finally**

There is no such thing as a stupid question in my class. I respect students who have the nerve to say, “I don’t understand.” So, don’t be afraid to say so if you are confused about a point. Stupid people are the ones who are too proud to ask questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity/Topics</th>
<th>Assignments/Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1/10  | • Class Introduction  
        • Marketing Decision Making  
        • Case Preparation | Chapter 1          |
| 1/17  | • MLK Day | No Class          |
| 1/24  | • Financial Aspects of Marketing  
        • Form Groups | Chapter 2, Problems 1-8 |
| 1/31  | • |             |
| 2/7   | Opportunity Analysis | Case: Dr. Pepper Snapple Group  
        Chapter 4          |
| 2/14  | Product and Service Strategy | Chapter 5  
        Case: Jones Blair |
| 2/21  | Branding Strategy Decisions | Case: Zoecon Corporation |
| 2/28  | Spring Break |             |
| 3/7   | Integrated Marketing Communications  
        Project Situation Analysis And SWOT Due | Chapter 6  
        Case: Kayem Foods |
| 3/14  | Integrated Marketing Communication | Chapter 6  
        Case: TBD |
| 3/21  | **High Value Case I Due** |             |
| 3/28  | Channel Strategy  
        Target Market Profile and Marketing Objectives Due | Chapter 7  
        Case: Swisher Mower and Machine |
| 4/4   | Pricing Strategy | Chapter 8  
        Case: TBD |
| 4/11  | Marketing Strategy Reformulation  
        High Value Case 2 Announced | Chapter 9  
        Case: McNeill Museum of Art |
| 4/18  | **High Value Case 2 Due** |             |
| 4/25  | Project Presentations In Class |             |
| 5/2   | Final Exam Period |             |