NATURE & PURPOSE OF THE CLASS

The primary purpose of the seminar is to provide students an opportunity to become experts in a marketing related topic of their interest. Therefore, the seminar class is designed to allow students to research a marketing problem in greater depth and detail. Typically, an expert would be someone who is extensively familiar with the existing knowledge and practice on a topic. The seminar begins with your selection of a topic of your choice that you would like to investigate and study in depth. The Marketing Management, BUAD880 class is a prerequisite for taking the seminar class. Please note that the term paper is almost the entire class in this seminar and hence it will be more demanding than the papers that you may have done in the past in other classes. Please plan on spending at least the same amount of time as you would on another three-credit class. I have high expectations from you.

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

In order to become an expert, you will be searching for relevant materials in both (i) academic literature and (ii) professional literature. You will find academic literature in published articles in academic journals and books etc. The professional literature refers to the actual practice and body of knowledge of the practicing managers. This will be found in the professional and business publications. In addition to the literature search, you may talk to academics and professionals, to supplement your information on a topic. Basically, the project involves tracking down all that is known about a certain topic. It is very important that you investigate along both the dimensions, i.e., academic & professional, to come to a balanced and holistic view of the topic that you have selected. Towards the end of this project, you are expected to know the theory and the way in which this theory is applied. To do well in this course, you ought to stretch and go beyond the literature review and propose some hypotheses/propositions and/or develop a conceptual model.

In this course each student will select a topic within the area of marketing. This topic may be of interest and usefulness to you and I must approve it. The topic, in most cases, must also have been explored in some detail in both academic literature and professional literature. The topic may directly relate to your current job responsibility or to a potential future position that you hope to hold. However, a suitable project is not the same as what is already being done at the place you are employed. For example, submitting a marketing plan or a marketing research study following existing company practice and procedures is highly unlikely to be found satisfactory.

The limit on page length of the final term paper is set at 20-25 pages, exclusive of exhibits, tables, references etc. Please see the detailed guidelines for preparation of a term paper in a document titled Guidelines for Preparing the Final Term Paper. A copy of the same will be available on the course website at Sakai. If it appears that the length of your final term paper will fall outside this range, please contact me to discuss the reason(s). Please send your final term papers as a single word file attachment at manraia@gmail.com.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Because of the inherent nature of this class and the diversity of the topics we will meet on an individual basis and communicate via e-mail. Thus, the class is organized as a hybrid class, a mix of meetings and consultation in person and via e-mails. Please prepare a personalized timeline for completion of various stages listed below to finish the final term paper and let me know the dates on which you will be submitting the assignments. You may send the schedule for my approval and later all the assignments as e-mail attachments.

PERSONAL MEETINGS

Please meet me at least once in the end of fall 2017 so that we could agree on a timeline and agree on a topic for your term paper. Again, we will meet at least once in spring 2018 when you will be at an advanced stage before completing and submitting your term paper. During January 2018, you may contact me via e-mail. Some students may want to keep a weekly contact, and others may want to do it as and when needed.

It would be great to see everyone complete their project during the term in which you take the class. This, however, is not likely possible for most students. I encourage you to get started as soon as possible and keep at it until it is done. Please do not put off work until the due dates.

TIMETABLE

Stage 1: Meet with me during fall 2017 semester:

Please be prepared to discuss (i) at least two topics, which you may be considering to select the final topic for the term paper, and (ii) timeline to complete the following stages during January 2018 to March 2018.

Stage 2:

Marketing Topic for the term paper. Please select a marketing topic of your choice and submit it as an e-mail attachment. Two steps prior to converging on a final topic are: (i) preliminary literature search, and (ii) discuss with me prior to the selection of a final topic. I must approve your final topic. I would also suggest that you conduct a literature review of any topic you may be contemplating prior to settling with your final choice.

Stage 3:

Bibliography. Please submit it as a word file via e-mail with a list of about 30 articles from both the academic literature professional literature. The final list of references that will appear at the end of your term paper will be somewhat different than the bibliography that you handed in at this stage. It is because of the discovery of new citations and elimination of unrelated citations after you get more familiar with the literature.

Stage 4:

Annotated bibliography. It is an intermediate step towards completion of your final term paper. It consists of preparing a short summary of key ideas from each paper, which may be relevant to your final term paper. It is based on your review and close reading of some of the literature, which you included in your bibliography. As you read the papers and books, you prepare a short summary of ideas critical to your topic. Later, provide a complete citation of a paper and its summary underneath the citation, than assemble all the “citations and summaries” for completion of this assignment. Please have at least 20 articles read and summarized at this point in time.
Stage 5:

Outline of your term paper. It is a list of topics and subtopics to be covered in your final term paper with a brief description in only a few lines of each topic and subtopic.

Deadline for Final term Paper:

Please follow the University Calendar to finish incomplete (Grade I) work:

The drop dead deadline for the final term paper (20-25 pages) is Monday, March 5, 2018. Please send your final term paper as a single word file attachment at manraja@gmail.com. The deadline is based on the date specified in the University academic calendar to finish work for an incomplete class taken during winter 2018. In order to meet the University academic calendar this is the very last date by which incomplete work must be submitted because the grades are due in 2 weeks after the above date. Please do not consider this as the target date to complete your project report. Your target should be to complete your project report as soon as possible. You do not want to be working on this project during most of the following spring term. I encourage you to select a target date as close as possible to the end of the term in which you are taking this class. I will assess a late submission penalty for any papers submitted after March 5, 2018.

Examples of what you are expected to deliver at the end of each of the five stages listed above including final term paper are also available at the course website at Sakai.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Each student will be evaluated on the following basis:

1. Assignments: Timely completion and quality of four assignments discussed above: 20%

2. Final Term Paper: Timely completion and quality of the final term paper as per guidelines: 80%

Because of the inherent compressed nature of this class, students sometimes elect not to finish the term paper by the end of the winter semester and prefer to submit it later as per the deadline discussed above. In line with the UD policy set by the Registrar’s office such students are assigned a letter grade of “I” (for Incomplete) at the end of the winter semester. The letter grade of “I” is later changed to a different ‘earned’ letter grade when the work is completed.

Students who are graduating at the end of this Session must have their papers completed within a time frame that allows a fair evaluation by the professor. Grades must be posted for graduating students during the week following the Session end. If you miss this deadline, you will receive an Incomplete. Note that the students with the “Incomplete” grades on their records are not eligible to graduate. Since University policy requires students to be enrolled in their final semester, you would be placed on Masters Sustaining Status, which is the enrollment status used when all other classes have been completed and incomplete work remains. This status carries a fee of $600 (or more, in future semesters), which must be paid as if it were a tuition bill.

If you have questions regarding this policy, please see Amy Estey in the Graduate & Executive Programs Office. If you have questions regarding your course grade, please contact your professor.

Get a plan. Be diligent. Get done!