

Department	International College of Liberal Arts		
Semester	Spring 2026	Year Offered (Odd/Even/Every Year)	Every Year
Course Number	BUSN335		
Course Title	Brand Management		
Prerequisites	BUSN235 Foundation of Marketing OR ECON260 Marketing		
Course Instructor	LI Jiamin	Year Available (Grade Level)	3
Subject Area	Global Business & Economics	Number of Credits	3
Class Style	Lecture	Language of instruction	English

(NOTE 1) Depending on the class size and the capacity of the facility, we may not be able to accommodate all students who wish to register for the course

Course Description	<p>"Why would you see Lenovo and Louis Vuitton logos on Formula 1 races?" "Red Bull sells energy drinks, yet its name dominates extreme sports. Does that really sell more cans, or is something else going on?"</p> <p>This course unpacks how brands create meaning beyond products, exploring how companies build identities that shape how we think, feel, and act. While Foundations of Marketing taught you how to segment, target, and position products, Branding Management goes deeper: how do brands become symbols of lifestyles, cultures, and aspirations? Through storytelling and real-world cases, from Tesla's mission-driven brand to LEGO's creative universe, you'll learn how to craft and manage brands that stand the test of time. Topics include brand identity, storytelling, extensions, global branding, digital presence, and strategies for building trust and resilience. Along the way, you'll discover how branding links to what you learned in Digital Marketing (platform expression), Consumer Behavior (emotional meaning), and Marketing Research (brand health metrics). By the end of the course, you'll be able to analyze iconic brands, diagnose their strengths, and design your own brand strategy grounded in both creativity and insight.</p>
Class plan based on course evaluation from previous academic year	N/A
Course related to the instructor's practical experience (Summary of experience)	This course is taught by an instructor with practical experience. I will apply my professional expertise in branding using digital tools to the course, providing students with real-world context for how marketing strategies are executed in high-stakes environments.
Learning Goals	This course teaches you how to turn a simple product into something people actually care about and identify with. You will learn how to build a brand's "personality" so it feels more like a friend or a statement of who you are, rather than just a name on a shelf. We will explore why we are willing to pay more for certain labels and how big companies tell stories that keep us loyal for years. By the end, you'll know how to keep a brand's heart the same even when it travels to different countries or faces a big mistake, and you'll even get to design your own brand strategy from scratch using real-world examples like Nike, Apple, and Starbucks.

iCLA Diploma Policy	DP1/DP2/DP3/DP4
---------------------	-----------------

iCLA Diploma Policy

(DP1) To Value Knowledge – Having high oral and written communication skills to be able to both comprehend and transfer knowledge

(DP2) To Be Able to Adapt to a Changing World – Having critical, creative, problem-solving, intercultural skills, global and independent mindset to adopt to a changing world

(DP3) To Believe in Collaboration – Having a disposition to work effectively and inclusively in teams

(DP4) To Act from a Sense of Personal and Social Responsibility – Having good ethical and moral values to make positive impacts in the world

Active Learning Methods	Problem-Based Learning/Discussion, Debate/Group Work/Presentation/Workshop, Fieldwork				
More details/supplemental information on Active Learning Methods	To make sure students actually learn how to build a brand, this course uses a hands-on approach. We start with Problem-Based Learning, where students act as "brand doctors" to fix a famous brand that has lost its spark or feels out of date. Through Discussion and Debate, groups pick sides between rival brands—like Apple versus Samsung—to argue whose personality is more likable and why. Students work in permanent Group Work teams, sitting together every week to act like a real creative agency and build a brand strategy together. This leads to Presentations where they pitch their brand's story and explain how they would protect its reputation if something went wrong. Finally, every week features a Workshop called a "Tangible Task," where students grab everyday objects like a snack bag or a water bottle and take it apart to see how the colors, the feel of the material, and the logo all work together to send a specific message to the person buying it.				
Use of ICT	Videos and interactive polls will be used during class.				
Contents of class preparation and review	Class Preparation (2 Hours): You will spend this time exploring "Brand Deep-Dives." This involves reviewing the uploaded class slides and watching assigned short videos or "mini-documentaries" about iconic brands like Nike, Tesla, or LEGO. Your goal is to look past the products and identify the core story and personality the brand is trying to project so you are ready for the week's "Tangible Task." Class Review (3 Hours): After each session, you will perform a "Brand Spotting" exercise. You must find one real-world example—a social media post, a new logo, or a specific store layout that matches the "personality" we discussed in class. Be ready to explain why that specific example helps (or hurts) the brand's reputation and how it builds trust with people.	Hours expected to be spent preparing for class (hours per week)	2 hours	Hours expected to be spent on class review (hours per week)	3 hours
Feedback Methods	Class Discussions: During our brand debates, I will give you instant feedback to help you sharpen your brand's voice. This makes sure your ideas stay clear and don't become boring or "just like everyone else." Workshop Reviews: After each hands-on task, we look at your work together. We will talk about why certain brand symbols worked and why others might be confusing, so you understand exactly how logos and colors send messages to people. Office Hours: Think of this as a "Strategy Session." You can meet with me to get one-on-one advice for your own project or interest, making sure your understanding of brand story is strong and your final project is ready for the real world.				

Grading Criteria		
Grading Methods	Grading Weights	Grading Content
Individual Brand Analysis Report	30%	Individual project on a brand's personality, story, and digital presence.
Final Group Brand Strategy Project	50%	Team project designing a plan to build and sustain brand meaning.
Active Participation	20%	Weekly hands-on workshops and brand debates where you apply the day's lesson to real products.

Required Textbook(s)	Since Foundations of Marketing is a prerequisite, you should refer back to your assigned chapters in Principles of Marketing. However, your task now is to look at those core concepts through a broader branding lens rather than just a marketing one. You aren't just looking at how to sell a product; you are looking at how to build its soul.
----------------------	--

Other Reading Materials/URL	You will encounter branding every day while using Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, or Google. Your “reading” for this course includes paying attention to these platforms to recognize the logic behind why brands choose a specific color, slogan, or logo to win your attention.
Plagiarism Policy	Academic integrity is vital for any professional marketer: therefore, plagiarism in any form, including direct copying without citation, submitting AI-generated content as your own original work, or “double-submitting” projects from other courses, is strictly prohibited. Any confirmed act of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failing grade (F) for either the assignment or the entire course, depending on the severity of the offense. Additionally, all violations will be formally reported to the University for further disciplinary review and potential penalties.
Other Additional Notes (Outline crucial policies and info not mentioned above)	<p>Using AI Wisely: In the branding world, tools like ChatGPT are used daily for brainstorming and research, so we will do the same. Feel free to use AI for class tasks or pitches, but you must show your “workings.” Always include your prompts as an appendix so we can discuss how to use these tools to sharpen a brand’ s voice rather than making it sound generic.</p> <p>Share Your Voice: Branding is a conversation, not a lecture. I want to hear about the cool brand stories or weird ads you see on your feed. Do not worry about “interrupting”—jump in anytime to ask a question or challenge an idea. Your curiosity is what helps us figure out what makes a brand actually work in the real world.</p>

(NOTE 2) Class schedule is subject to change

Class Schedule	
Class Number	Content
Class 1	Symbols of Power Why logos like Lenovo and Louis Vuitton appear on Formula 1 cars.
Class 2	The Meaning Beyond the Can Red Bull and the transition from selling energy drinks to owning extreme sports culture.
Class 3	Brand Identity vs Marketing Actions Shaping long term meaning through Nike’ s “Just Do It” belief system.
Class 4	The Social Contract of Branding How brands become symbols of lifestyles and aspirations rather than just tools.
Class 5	Character Sketches Building a brand personality: the Starbucks “Third Place” case study.
Class 6	The Anatomy of Perception How symbols, tone, and physical experiences form a cohesive brand identity.
Class 7	The Battle for the Mind Why consumers choose Coke over Pepsi when the product is nearly identical.
Class 8	Competitive Meaning Using positioning maps to compete on emotional territory rather than features.

Class 9	The Trust Bank Defining Brand Equity as the financial and emotional value of a name.
Class 10	The Premium of Belief How Apple's brand equity allows for premium pricing in a commodity tech market.
Class 11	Brands as Identity Markers Why we wear brands like Patagonia to signal who we are to the world.
Class 12	Tribes and Loyalty Moving from transactions to emotional relationships with a consumer "tribe."
Class 13	Iconic Elements The three rules for brand assets: memorable, meaningful, and flexible.
Class 14	Visual Shifts The Airbnb "Bélo" case: how a symbol can shift a global brand's entire mission.
Class 15	The Hero's Journey Using the Story Arc (Hero, Conflict, Resolution) to build brand narrative.
Class 16	Narrative Momentum Tesla and the story of the future vs the past.
Class 17	Midterm Brand Audit I Analyzing brand health: Identity, Consistency, and Reputation.
Class 18	Midterm Brand Audit II Rivalry analysis: comparing the brand strength of Uniqlo vs Zara.
Class 19	Architecture of Meaning Understanding the "Branded House" vs the "House of Brands."
Class 20	The Disney Universe Managing a portfolio that spans Pixar, Marvel, and Star Wars.
Class 21	Industry Invasion How Yamaha manages the mental slot for both motorcycles and pianos.

Class 22	Cross Border Combat The Michelin Guide vs Google Maps: how brands attack new categories.
Class 23	The Global Mental Slot Maintaining a core identity while adapting to local cultural flavors.
Class 24	Glocal Strategy Uniqlo' s expansion: how to cross borders without breaking the brand.
Class 25	Humanizing the Digital Why Wendy' s Twitter personality outperforms traditional fast food advertising.
Class 26	Digital Presence Strategy Navigating Owned, Shared, and Earned media in a digital first world.
Class 27	The Brand Health Dashboard Measuring success through Awareness, Love, and Trust metrics.
Class 28	Netflix vs Disney Tracking "time spent" versus "brand love" as indicators of future growth.
Class 29	The Trust Shield Why Johnson and Johnson survived crisis while others failed.
Class 30	Building from Zero Final Project: designing a brand blueprint for community first growth.