

Course Syllabus
ISEN 461- Sustainable Branding (1.0 credits)
Northwestern University

Instructor: Jessica C. Adelman - [Bio](#); email: jessica.adelman@northwestern.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Classroom: all class sessions will be hold remotely via Zoom

Class Timing: Spring Quarter, Tu/Th 3:30 to 4:50 p.m. CT, April 1 – June 3

Course Synopsis: This course covers many of the fundamental topics in branding, particularly sustainable branding. Beginning with an exploration of brand strategy and motivations, the course progresses to an understanding of key themes such as brand design and brand architecture. It also discusses assorted topics such as brand auditing, transparency in sustainable practices and the key role of social media in branding today. All topics covered apply a unique sustainability-centered focus, with careful differentiation between B2C and B2B brands in the market. This course employs case studies as the primary mode of assessment to demonstrate the application of course learnings in the real world.

Course Goals:

Among other goals,

- **Understanding Brand Image:** This course aims to provide students with a greater understanding of the brand image as a key deliverable of the marketing process.
- **Understanding Brand Strategy:** Students will understand the process of creating a consistent, applicable brand messaging strategy as well as the particularities of sustainable brands.
- **Understanding Brand Architecture:** Students will understand brand portfolios under a single firm, and will understand how their treatment differs from a single brand.
- **Technology as a Driver for Sustainable Branding:** Students will understand the role of innovation in driving sustainable branding. Additionally, they will understand the importance of cutting-edge technology such as social media in the field of branding and marketing.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on the following:

Component	Weight	Details	Due
Effort and Attendance	30%	Effort will be graded through attendance, class participation and pop quizzes on the readings for the day. This ensures that the readings are done and that students are engaged in work outside the classroom.	-
Written Assignments	45%	Written, individual submissions. Assignments constitute the bulk of the grading for this class and are the primary mode of assessment. Students will be given three written assignments and certain	Assignment 1: Module 3 due on Wed. 4/14 at midnight



		<p>questions pertaining to them, which they will be expected to answer in detail, in 2-5 pages. Submissions should engage with both the specifics of the situation and the broader themes of the class. Details on individual assignments will be in Canvas.</p>	<p>Assignment 2: Module 7 Due on Monday 5/3 by midnight</p> <p>Assignment 3 – Module 8: due on 5/12 by midnight</p>
Final Presentation	25% (15% for presentation, 10% on executive summary)	<p>Students will work in pairs for the final. They will work with the Professor to pick a pre-existing company in a pre-existing industry to focus on. Students will be role-playing as consultants to these companies, analyzing their current branding strategies and proposing solutions that draw from class material or from other research data. This presentation should last no longer than 15 minutes and should be accompanied by a 3-4 page executive summary of the solutions being presented, to be handed in to the instructor ahead of the presentation. Students will not be allowed to select a company that has already been discussed in the form of case studies for class.</p> <p>Students will also be involved indirectly in the presentations of their peers: as their peers are presenting, students will prepare questions about the presentation or the firm’s choices. These will be handed in to the instructor and may be counted as a component of the participation grade.</p>	<p>Week #10</p> <p>Pairs must be selected by Week 5</p> <p>Final date of materials to be submitted: Monday 5/31 by midnight</p>

Grading Policy:

All questions and problems regarding grades must be presented in writing within one week after the test, homework, or project has been returned. The grading scale is fixed, please do not wait until the end of the quarter if you are concerned about the direction of your grade. Grades will be assigned based on all the work you have completed during the semester using the following scale:

A	93.333 to 100	C	73.333 to 76.666
A-	90.000 to 93.333	C-	70.000 to 73.333
B+	86.666 to 90.000	D+	66.666 to 70.000
B	83.333 to 86.666	D	63.333 to 66.666
B-	80.000 to 83.333	D-	60.000 to 63.333
C+	76.666 to 80.000	F	< 60.000



CLASS OUTLINE

Weekly Topic	Description
<p>Introduction to the Course</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Introductions – Professor & Students</i> ● <i>Course logistics and overview, clarification of any questions.</i> ● <i>What will the case exercises look like? How to go about answering case-based questions.</i> ● <i>Set-up Material and topics – methodology and ideology</i>
<p>1: Brand Image & Measurement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is a brand? ● What are the following: Points of Parity and Points of Difference and why do they matter? ● What is a portfolio and what is brand hierarchy? ● What is the difference between pull and push? ● What is a hero brand? Can you come up with another example? ● Why didn't Bic's line extension work? ● What is a brand audit? Come prepared to discuss the Disney example. ● Come prepared to discuss the Top Ten Traits of the world's strongest brands. Have an example for each other 10 that you consider particularly strong. <p>The Brand Report Card: Kevin Kellyer https://hbr.org/2000/01/the-brand-report-card</p>
<p>2: Brand Strategy: Value Proposition and Demographics</p>	<p>The New Rules of Green Marketing: Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to Ottman, what are the 20 New Rules of Green Marketing? Which ones resonate most with you? ● How does a company's Purpose intersect with Brand? ● Be prepared to talk about the historical events that led to an emphasis on sustainability by generation. ● What were some companies Ottman mentions that introduced Green extensions to their brands and how did it go? ● How do demographics of consumers GenX / Millennials / GenZ affect the sustainability value proposition? What are the demographics of consumers likely to consume B2C sustainable brands? ● How did Government intervention shape the rise of sustainable brands? ● Pick a sustainable brand and run it through the checklist on page 21. Be prepared to share it in class.



	<p><u>HBS Case: Tough Decisions at Marks & Spencer (M&S)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What was Marks & Spencers’ Plan A and why did it come to pass? ● How did M&S investor base help their evolution as a sustainable brand? ● What was the big sustainable branding change leaders were worried consumers would balk at? ● Be prepared to argue for Plan A and against Plan A. <p>Leaders Make the Future Introduction – Listening for the Future, Chapter 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does VUCA stand for? Do you agree with the characteristics? Is it a useful framework? ● Be familiar with Johansen’s 10 New Skills leaders can use to make a better future. ● Be familiar with the Foresight -> Insight-> Action Cycle and have a POV if it is relevant. ● Be prepared to discuss Johansen’s concept of the diaspora – both Pre-COVID and Post-COVID.
<p>3: Brand Design</p>	<p>8 Emerging Trends That Can Help Companies Understand Their Future Consumer, Shoshana Berger from IDEO; <u>https://www.ideo.com/journal/8-emerging-trends-that-can-help-companies-understand-their-future-consumer</u></p> <p>Leaders Make the Future – Chapters 8, 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is Rapid Prototyping and how could it help with Brand Design? ● What is the concept of Tuangous and how did it disrupt brands and the user experience globally? Do you know of examples that you use today? <p>Individual Research: Pick a Brand you think is well designed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding the connection between brand design and brand strategy. ● How did you evaluate brand design? ● How does the messaging, the communications, the packaging, the attributes, the points of parity (or difference) support your evaluation?
<p>4: Brand Design & Sustainability</p>	<p>Brady, Arlo. <u>“How to Generate Sustainable Brand Value from Responsibility.”</u> <i>Journal of Brand Management</i>, vol. 10, no. 4, 2003, pp. 279–289., doi:10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540124.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is License to Operate and how does it influence sustainable brand design?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Greenwashing? What is Bluewashing? What is “Sweatwashing” and how did it play out for a major athletic wear company? • Be prepared to comment on the Virtuous Responsibility Circle. <p>Leaders Make the Future – Chapters 5 & 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define Bio-Empathy and why Johansen thinks it is an important dynamic to keep in mind. • What is Constructive Depolarization and Polarity Management. Why would it help with the design of sustainable brands? <p>Growing Green: Three Smart Paths to Developing Sustainable Products, Unruh & Ettenson</p> <p>https://hbsp.harvard.edu/download?url=%2Fcatalog%2Fsample%2FR1006G-PDF-ENG%2Fcontent&metadata=eyJlcjVjck1lc3NhZ2UiOiJZb3UgbXVzdCBiZSBYZWdpc3RlcmVkiGFzIGFgUHJlbWl1bSBFZHVjYXRvciBvbiB0aGlzIHdlYiBzaXRlIHVhZGZlZS9jYXRvciBDdb3BpZXMgYW5kIEZyZWUgVHJpYWxzLiBOb3QgcmVnaXN0ZXJlZD8gQXBwbHkgbm93LiBBY2Nlc3MgZlhwXlJlZD8gUmVhdXRvciBpZm93LiJ9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the three paths that Unruh and Ettenson describe? • For each path, pick a company that has done a good job and come prepared to talk about it.
<p>5: Brand Architecture</p>	<p>Simple Truth, Private Selection and Kroger Branded Products – Discussions with Gil Phipps, CMO</p> <p>https://www.grocerydive.com/news/grocery--not-just-knock-offs-but-knockouts-inside-krogers-private-label-push/534196/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadening the conception of brand strategy to include multiple brands. Understanding brand portfolios along with respective trade-offs. • How are strategic brand portfolio decisions evaluated? • Co-existence of sustainable and conventional offerings within a single brand portfolio. What strategies are used in such a situation? • Applying concepts of messaging and sustainable marketing to a broader portfolio of brands.
<p>6: Brand Auditing and Brand Dynamics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisiting readings from previous weeks, what is a Brand audit and what is the purpose? Basic overview of the

	<p>methodology of performing a brand audit. Do existing methodologies capture sustainability well enough?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing the results of a brand audit / brand dynamics: when and when does it not make sense for a brand to change its value proposition over time? Does it make sense to extend the brand? Trade-offs in brand extension, systematic frameworks to approaching brand extensions as a possibility. <p>Brands for Good: Socio-Cultural Trends 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the Nine Sustainable Behaviors the Harris Poll recently identified? What do you think of slide 9 and the differences between generations and political affiliations leading up to slide 9? What is behind the strong intenders and non-intenders? Nudge Theory? Regulation? Be prepared to discuss.
<p>7: Brand Authenticity & the Role of Transparency</p>	<p>HBR: The Investor Revolution – Bob Eccles and Svetlana Klimenko</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESG – what is it and what does it stand for? Why was the research in Eccles and Klimenko’s article novel? What is the PRI and why does it matter? What are the Seven strategies to sustainable investing? Which ones do you think are best? Why was Serafein’s research important and what other ESG return data is compelling to you? What is “materiality” and why does it matter to sustainable branding? According to Eccles and Klimenko: What are five actions that companies can take to prepare for the new era of sustainable investing? What are the UN SDGS and why did they come to pass? Who uses them and why? <p>Leaders Make the Future – Chapters 6 & 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Constructive Depolarizing and why is it a skill that helps sustainable brands be authentic? What is Quiet Transparency and how would it help sustainable brands and leaders to grow their brands? Think of a leader you know who practices Quiet Transparency – is it effective? Now, think of a leader who doesn’t practice Quiet Transparency – what are the consequences?
<p>8: Sustainable Branding, CSR, Greenwashing</p>	<p>Part 1: HBR: bp and Corporate Greenwash https://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/905C10-PDF-ENG</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greenwashing – what is it? ● Be prepared to talk about the origins of “beyond petroleum” ● Be prepared to argue for it, and against it. ● What was “bp on the street” and how did it play into the re-branding efforts at BP? ● How did BP’s lobbying efforts and activities outside of their sustainable branding efforts either work for or against BP? ● Talk about previous concepts from class – the Brand Report Card, The New Rules of Green Marketing, Growing Green and evaluated BP’s decisions through those lenses. <p>Part 2: HBS: bp – Beyond Petroleum? https://hbsp.harvard.edu/download?url=%2Fcatalog%2Fsample%2FW92C29-PDF-ENG%2Fcontent&metadata=eyJlcjVjck1lc3NhZ2UiOiJZb3UgbXVzdCBiZSB5ZWdpc3RlcmVkiGFzIGFzIGUyHjI1bSBFZHVjYXRvciBvbiB0aGlzIHdYiBzaXRlIHVhZG93LiBBY2Nlc3MgZShwaXJZD8gUmVhdXRvcm93LiJ9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● John Browne – explain his motivations and rationale? ● Be prepared to make the case for John Browne, hero ahead of his time or villain just in for the optics. ● Do you think what happened at BP was a deeply seeded cultural problem or a one off issue of bad luck? How does culture play into brands? ● In pairs, come prepared to give Dudley’s press conference remarks – prepare for 5 minutes opening and then Shareholder questions and media Q&A. <p>A Legacy of Greenwashing Haunts BP’s End-of-Oil Vision: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-09-18/a-legacy-of-greenwashing-haunts-bp-s-end-of-oil-vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Looking back and with the benefit of 10 years, what do you think of BP’s rebranding efforts? ● Overall, what would you have done: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the 2000s ○ After the Spill ○ Today? ● What counter-brands do you think got extra momentum as a result of BP’s mishaps?
<p>9: Leading the Sustainable Brand Forward</p>	<p>Everybody’s Business - https://www.brunswickgroup.com/everybody-s-business-i2162/</p> <p>The Marketing Dive Outlook 2021:</p>



	<p>https://www.marketingdive.com/trendline/marketing-dive-outlook-2021/124/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come prepared to talk about data privacy and what it is doing to brands and marketing in this new decade. • Talk about the role of micro-influencers and celebrity endorsements for branding. Come prepared to think through a spokesperson or celebrity known for sustainable brand alignment. • Bring a sustainable Super Bowl ad example. Use the lens of the class to either justify or criticize the ad spend.
<p>10: FINAL PRESENTATION WEEK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will present their final presentations and will hand in their executive summaries to the instructor.

Additional Information

Statement on Spring 2021 COVID-19 Classroom Requirements

Students, faculty, and staff must comply with University expectations regarding appropriate classroom behavior, including those outlined below and in the [COVID-19 Code of Conduct](#). With respect to classroom procedures, this includes:

- Students, faculty, and staff are required to wear a face covering in all public and shared environments on campus, including during class sessions when others are present.
 - *Disposable face masks will be available at identified building entrances in all campus buildings.*
 - *Clear face coverings may be worn to improve ability to read lips; if an accommodation is needed, please contact [Accessible NU](#) (students) or [Office of Equity](#) (faculty).*
 - *Face shields are no longer allowed as an alternative to a face mask, per guidance from the CDC and Northwestern Medicine. This includes instructional spaces regardless of social distancing.*
- Students, faculty, and staff are expected to observe the rules of social distancing, which require that you are no closer than six feet from other individuals.
- No food is allowed inside classrooms. Drinks are permitted, but please keep your face covering on and use a straw.
- Chairs and tables in classrooms are set to maintain a six-foot distance between individuals. Do not move chairs from their place in the room.
- There will be assigned seating in every class. Instructors may be asked to provide seating information to aid in contact tracing if a student tests positive for COVID-19.
- Class dismissals will start with the seat/row closest to the exit door and be managed by the instructor so as to minimize congestion near the exit.
- Students and faculty will allow those occupying rooms to fully exit before they enter the room.
- Faculty, students, staff and visitors are expected to use the daily symptom check web app for daily health monitoring on days they come to campus.
- As noted below, ALL graduate students must receive a negative test during Wildcat Wellness and before starting in-person classes April 6. Throughout the semester we expect MSES students

to be tested weekly or bi-weekly. Please abide by the email reminders you receive from the testing center.

- The University will again hold a Wildcat Wellness period from March 29 through April 5. During this time ALL graduate students must be tested for COVID-19 and ALL classes will be held remotely.

In the event that a student fails to comply with the [COVID-19 Code of Conduct](#) or other University expectations related to COVID-19, the instructor may ask the student to leave the class. The instructor is asked to report the incident to the Office of Community Standards for additional follow-up.

It is also the policy of the MSES Program that all lectures will be recorded and offered in a synchronous, hybrid format. On in-person days there will always be a synchronous Zoom option for any students that feel ill or are uncomfortable coming to class. If the professor needs to alter this schedule, they will aim to announce the changes at least 24 hours in advance.

Class Recording

This class or portions of this class will be recorded by the instructor for educational purpose and available to the class during the quarter. Your instructor will communicate how you can access the recordings. Portions of the course that contain images, questions or commentary/discussion by students will be edited out of any recordings that are saved beyond the current term.

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact [AccessibleNU](#). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University's [Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

Expectations for Class Participation

Being prepared for class is about more than just showing up, it's also about making sure you've completed the readings, homework, etc. so that you are able to make thoughtful contributions during class. Sitting silently and/or being unprepared can damage your participation grade. When in a virtual class, we expect students to keep their camera and mute on as much as possible. When in the classroom, we expect students to keep their phones off and put away.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is taken very seriously at Northwestern. Students are responsible for reading and understanding Northwestern's Academic Integrity policies. All suspected violations will be reported to the McCormick College of Engineering's Dean's Office. These include cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, unfair advantage, unauthorized collaboration, and aiding and abetting of academic dishonesty. Students found in violation of academic integrity may receive a zero on the assignment or a failing grade for the course and may be suspended or permanently expelled from the University. See [Academic Integrity: A Basic Guide](#) for more information.

**Accessibility Statement**

Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Illness and Medical Leave of Absence

Review the University's [policy](#) on missing academic work due to illness. Your instructor cannot waive an assignment missed due to illness unless the illness can be verified (e.g., by University Health Services or other licensed health professionals).

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Northwestern's Policies on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment apply to all members of the University community, including students, staff, faculty, and third parties. Any student, staff, faculty member, or third party who believes that they have been discriminated against or harassed on the basis of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, genetic information or any other classification protected by law, should contact the Office of Equity at (847) 467- 6571. Additional information about the University's discrimination and harassment policies, including the campus resources available to assist individuals with discrimination or harassment concerns, is available online on the [Office of Equity Website](#). Students, staff, and faculty who report harassment, discrimination, or sexual misconduct are also protected under the [University's Policy on Non-Retaliation](#).

Sexual Misconduct and Reporting

Northwestern University is committed to fostering an environment where students are safe and free from sexual misconduct. [Confidential resources](#) are available to those who have experienced sexual misconduct. Faculty and instructors are not confidential resources and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct, whether discussed in your assignments or in person, to the Office of Equity, which can provide information about resources and options. We encourage students who have experienced sexual misconduct to talk with someone to get support. For more information, including how to request interim protective measures and academic accommodations or file a complaint, see the [Get Help page](#).

Other Resources

Students can find useful resources for safety and security, academic support, and mental and physical health and well-being at the [NUhelp website](#).