

MMC 5436 Messaging Methodologies and the Practice of Conversion Optimization

Spring 2018
3 Credit Hours

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Website: <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>

Course Access Information

This course is accessible within the Canvas Learning Management System (UF e-Learning). To access it, go to <http://lss.at.ufl.edu>. Click the blue e-Learning button. Login with your GatorLink account. Your course will be listed in the Courses Menu within the navigation located on the left-hand side of the page. You may have to click the “All Courses” link at the bottom of this section depending on the number of previous course you have taken at UF.

Contact UF Helpdesk <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu> (352) 392-HELP (4357) if you have any trouble accessing your course.

Course Overview

The essence of marketing is the message. So, what makes an effective message? What makes a headline impactful? What makes a call-to-action powerful? How can copy be crafted to generate the greatest number of responses from customers?

This course provides a systematic methodology for increasing the probability of a customer response. Students will learn to apply the critical concepts and theories of offer response optimization, including techniques for creating compelling offers to optimize responses in both digital and mobile environments.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Summarize the MECLABS Conversion Heuristic and label the key elements of offer response optimization.
- Define the term Conversion within the context of marketing.
- Extrapolate a customer's core motivation in response to a specific offer.
- Analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic value present within every purchase decision.
- Assess the potential effectiveness of a company's messaging by measuring the force of a value proposition using the Value Dyad and the Acceptance Dyad.
- Distinguish between rational and irrational anxiety in message response.
- Identify the elements of an offer that generate psychological friction or anxiety in customers' minds.
- Determine the ideal incentive for a specific audience as well as the appropriate stage to employ it to increase customer motivation.
- Compose copy that effectively conveys a company's value proposition argument in both long and narrative forms from a short-form argument.
- Conduct a Conversion Index Analysis (CIA) on marketing collateral.
- Identify one possible source of the marketers own bias in the process of offer response optimization.

Required Texts

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *The Marketer as Philosopher: 40 brief reflections on the power of your value proposition*, 2014.
- McKee, Robert. *Story: Style, Structure, Substance and the Principles of Screenwriting*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.
- Additional readings are assigned throughout the term and are available in digital format on Canvas in their respective assigned weeks.

Supplemental Texts

- McKee, Robert. *Dialogue: The Art of Verbal Action for Page, Stage, and Screen*. New York: Twelve, 2016.
- Truby, John. *The anatomy of story: 22 steps to becoming a master storyteller*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2008.

Course Philosophy and Expectations

Mastery in this class requires preparation, passion and professionalism. Students are expected, within the requirements allowed by university policy, to attend class, be on time and meet all deadlines. Work assigned should be completed as directed. Full participation in online discussions and activities is required.

My role as the instructor is to identify critical issues related to the course, direct students to and teach relevant information, assign appropriate learning activities, create opportunities for assessing student performance, and communicate the outcomes of such assessments in a timely, informative and professional way. Feedback is essential for students to have confidence that they have mastered the material — and for me to determine that students are meeting all course requirements.

At all times, it is expected that students will welcome and respond professionally to assessment feedback, treat fellow students, instructors and assistants with respect, and contribute to the success of the class to the best of their abilities.

Ownership Education:

As graduate students, you are not passive participants in this course. This class allows you to not only take ownership of your educational experience, but to also provide your expertise and knowledge in helping your fellow classmates. The Canvas shell will have an open Q&A thread where you should pose questions to your classmates when questions relating to an assignment or an issue come up at work. Your classmates, along with your instructor, will be able to respond to these questions and provide feedback. This also allows everyone to gain the same knowledge in one location rather than the instructor responding back to just one student, which limits the rest of the class from gaining this knowledge.

Course Specific Policies

Attendance Policy:

Requirements for class attendance, exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies unless specifically stated within this syllabus. These university policies can be found in the online catalog at:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Due to the delivery mechanism of this course, through an online asynchronously manner, attendance in the form of calling roll will not occur. However, students are

expected to sign onto the course site at least once each day, Monday - Friday to check for course updates in the announcements and discussion sections of the site.

Coursework Submission Policy:

Students are expected to submit all coursework through the Canvas Learning Management System unless otherwise approved in advanced by the instructor.

Late Work Policy:

Students are expected to complete assignments by the day and time they are scheduled. The following penalties will be applied to all work that is late for any reason — other than those identified by the university policies, which can be found online at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Point Deduction	Duration of Lateness
5 Points	Less than an hour
10 Points	Greater than one (1) hour but less than 24 hours
15 Points	Greater than 24 hours but less than 48 hours
25 Points	Greater than 48 hours but less than one (1) week
50 Points	Greater than one (1) week but before the end of the semester

Technical Issue Policy:

From time to time the Canvas E-learning system will undoubtedly experience technical issues. However, in most instances, technical issues when uploading work for a grade will not constitute a valid excuse to submit work late without penalty.

Students are expected to compensate for technical difficulties by not waiting until the last minute to submit work. Additionally, students are encouraged to submit completed work to the instructor via UF email should they suspect there is a technical issue within the Canvas E-learning system.

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST email your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu

- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Emergency and Extenuating Circumstances Policy:

Students who face emergencies, such as a major personal medical issue, a death in the family, serious illness of a family member or other situations beyond their control should notify their instructor immediately.

Additionally, Students are advised to contact the Dean of Students’ Office if they would like more information on the medical withdrawal or drop process:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/care/medical-withdrawal-process/>.

Lastly, students MUST inform their academic advisor before dropping a course, whether for medical or non-medical reasons. Your advisor will assist with notifying professors and go over options for how to proceed with classes. Your academic advisor is Tiffany Robbert, and she may be reached at trobber@jou.ufl.edu or at distancesupport@jou.ufl.edu.

Measurement Breakdown

Students’ progress in this course will be evaluated according to the following distribution:

Item	Percentage
Lecture Reinforcement Assignments	30%
Reflection Projects	10%
Reading Reaction Posts	15%
Reading Discussion (Comment Posts & Replies)	10%
Quizzes	10%
Conversion Index Analysis Project (Final Project)	25%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

A (93-100)	B (83-86)	C (73-76)	D (63-66)
A- (90-92)	B- (80-82)	C- (70-72)	D- (60-62)
B+ (87-89)	C+ (77-79)	D+ (67-69)	E (Below 61)

Final grades are rounded to the nearest whole number, therefore 92.7 is an “A,” but 92.3 is an A-. The university policies concerning this grading scale can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Course and Assignment Details

This course is comprised of lectures, readings, online discussions, class assignments, activities and a final research project. Students are expected to watch all lectures and contribute to class discussions by citing examples drawn from professional experience, personal experience and course readings. Additionally, students are expected to complete course assignments, activities and reading discussions. Lastly, a final research project, due at the end of the term, will measure students' mastery of the Conversion Heuristic through the examination of a real-world business case.

Lectures

The instructor will post a lecture video to Canvas for each of the 12 weeks as well as related supplementary videos. For example, one supplementary video will consist of a syllabus review. These videos will vary in length depending on the material but are targeted to take between one hour and 1 ½ hours to complete.

It is the responsibility of the student to watch each of the lecture videos during the week identified in the course schedule. Although it is possible to watch the videos at any time and at any pace, keeping up with the videos week-to-week (per the schedule) is vital. The videos are designed to build off each other as well as correspond with the weekly readings and assignments. Lastly, students should be aware that it will be extremely difficult to complete the Lecture Reinforcement Assignments without first viewing the lecture video.

Lecture Reinforcement Assignments

There is a total of seven (7) Lecture Reinforcement Assignments during the twelve-week-long semester. These assignments provide students with theoretical and real-world context for applying the material learned from the lectures. Specific details about each assignment are provided within the "Assignments Tab" of Canvas. **Lecture Reinforcement Assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. EST on the Saturday of the week assigned.**

Each Lecture Reinforcement Assignment is awarded points according to quality of work and completion:

	100-90 Excellent	89-80 Good	79-70 Satisfactory	69-60 Less than Satisfactory	Less than 60 Unsatisfactory
Analysis (30%)	Expertly draws from lectures and outside material using both	Competently evaluates lectures and outside material to	Evaluates lectures and outside material to demonstrate	Evaluates lectures and outside material to demonstrate	Related lectures and outside material are presented

	analysis and synthesis to illuminate the subject	demonstrate a superior level of analysis and synthesis	a reasonable level of analysis and synthesis	a basic level of analysis and synthesis	without analysis or synthesis
Argument (30%)	Compelling and persuasive argument offered through superior writing and conceptualization	Writing is supported by capable argumentation, including conceptualization and understanding of topic	Writing falters at times when making a compelling argument, but the main point is clear and supported	Writing is haphazard with minimal evidence used to support argument	Argument is unclear, either through faulty conceptualization or inadequate framing of arguments
Examination (25%)	All questions or assignment components have been addressed	Almost all questions or assignment components have been addressed	Three quarters of questions or assignment components have been addressed	Between three quarters and half of all questions or assignment components have been addressed	Half or less than half of all questions or assignment components have been addressed
Sourcing (10%)*	Demonstrates superior sourcing of lectures and outside materials that is sufficient to substantiate an argument	Demonstrates competent sourcing of lectures and outside materials that is sufficient to substantiate an argument	Demonstrates basic sourcing of lectures and/or outside materials that is sufficient to substantiate an argument	Minimal sourcing of either lectures or outside material, thus insufficient to substantiate an argument	Sourcing of lectures and outside material is absent and thus insufficient to substantiate an argument
Grammar and syntax (5%)	Precise syntax and superior usage of grammar, punctuation and spelling	Proficient use of syntax, grammar, punctuation and spelling that assists in understanding overall argument	Syntax is clear, and the relatively few grammar, punctuation or spelling errors do not impede understanding	Syntax is at times garbled and includes errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling, which cause some difficulty in understanding	Syntax is sometimes garbled and errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling disrupt understanding

* For any assignments that do not require the sourcing written material, full credit will be granted for this category

Reflection Projects

There are three (3) Reflection Projects throughout the semester. These activities challenge students to apply material they have learned beyond the context in which they were presented. As such, these activities are assessed for critical thinking and the ability to tie together major concepts learned during the semester, which will provide students with an opportunity to explore a topic or develop a better understanding of the course objectives. Specific details about each assignment are provided within the "Assignments Tab" of Canvas. **All Reflection Projects are due by 11:59 p.m. EST the Saturday of the week assigned.**

Each Reflection Project will be awarded points according to quality of effort and level of completion:

	100-90 Excellent	89-80 Good	79-70 Satisfactory	69-60 Less than Satisfactory	Less than 60 Unsatisfactory
Analysis (20%)	Expertly draws from lectures, readings and outside material using both analysis and synthesis to illuminate the subject	Competently evaluates lectures, readings and outside material to demonstrate a reasonable level of analysis and synthesis	Provides basic evaluation of lectures, readings and outside material with some analysis, if not synthesis	Minimal evaluation of lectures, readings and outside material with little analysis or synthesis of material	Related lectures, readings and outside material are presented without analysis or synthesis
Argument (30%)	Compelling and persuasive argument offered through superior writing and conceptualization	Writing is supported by capable argumentation, including conceptualization and understanding of topic	Writing falters at times when making a compelling argument, but the main point is clear and supported by competent writing	Writing is haphazard with minimal evidence used to support argument	Argument is unclear, either through faulty conceptualization or inadequate framing of arguments
Personalization (10%)	Superior linking to real-world scenarios or experiences to illuminate analysis and argument	Analysis and argument provided with a general connection to real-world scenarios or experiences	Analysis and argument draws on little personal experience	Does not link to real-world through personal examples and instead relies on hypotheticals	Analysis and argument lacks a demonstrated understanding of how assignment links to real-world experience
Examination (20%)	All questions or assignment components have been addressed	Almost all questions or assignment components have been addressed	Three-quarters of questions or assignment components have been addressed	Between three-quarters and half of all questions or assignment components have been addressed	Half or less than half of all questions or assignment components have been addressed
Sourcing (10%)*	Demonstrates superior sourcing of lectures and outside materials that is sufficient to substantiate an argument	Demonstrates competent sourcing of lectures and outside materials that is sufficient to substantiate an argument	Demonstrates basic sourcing of lectures and/or outside materials that is sufficient to substantiate an argument	Minimal sourcing of either lectures or outside material thus insufficient to substantiate an argument	Sourcing of lectures and outside material is absent and thus insufficient to substantiate an argument
Grammar and syntax (10%)	Precise syntax and superior usage of grammar,	Proficient use of syntax, grammar, punctuation and	Syntax is clear and the relatively few	Syntax is at times garbled with errors in	Syntax is sometimes garbled and

	punctuation and spelling	spelling to that assists in understanding overall argument	grammar, punctuation or spelling errors do not impede understanding	grammar, punctuation and spelling which cause some difficulty in understanding	errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling disrupt understanding
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* For any assignments that do not require sourcing written material, full credit will be granted for this category

Supplementary Reading Assignments

During each week of the semester students will explore a selection of books, academic journal articles, videos, and/or blog posts. These “readings” are designed to accomplish one of two goals; either they enhance the students’ understanding of the topics covered during the weekly lectures or they present an opposing view. As such, it is recommended that students complete the readings during the week identified in the course schedule. Assessment of reading comprehension is accomplished through a combination of posted reactions and group discussions of the assigned readings.

Reading Reaction Post: LinkedIn Article

Students will generate between 350-500 words of reaction to the reading material per week and publicly share it in the form of an article on LinkedIn. LinkedIn Articles should:

- **Be predominantly comprised of analysis and insights from, or challenges to, the material**
- Be written in a style suitable for the business audience found on LinkedIn (*Remember, this can be an opportunity to build your personal brand*)
- Include properly cited excerpts of the material or any external sources for the audience to understand the context
 - *Note: While students are welcome to use longer quotations, quotations that are more than 40 words in length (Block Quotes in the APA Style Guide) will not contribute to word count requirements.*
- Include experiences from their personal or profession life as appropriate

Additionally, should it be more appropriate for their audience students have the freedom to be hyper-focused on one specific topic or thought provoked by the readings, such as Friction (f), “Clarity trumps persuasion”, or customer choice. Students are not required to cover all assigned reading material in a single LinkedIn article.

To achieve full credit, a hyperlink to the students’ Reading Reaction Post (LinkedIn Article) must be posted to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. EST on the Monday of the week assigned.

Reading Reaction Post: Canvas Post (Alternative Option)

Students will generate between 350-500 words of reaction to the material per week and share it within the canvas discussion system. While reaction posts can provide a short summary of the readings, they should **predominantly be comprised of analysis or insights from, or challenges to, the material.** *Note: Any quoted material that would fit within the following parameter, if treated properly, will not contribute to reaction post word count, “. ”.* Additionally, reaction posts must cover **ALL** the readings assigned for the week to demonstrate that the student has fully completed the assigned readings. Students are welcome to include outside materials such as external readings or experiences from their personal or professional life. Students are expected to source any materials used in their posts in such a way that others can find the source, but are not required to cite using APA or MLA format.

To achieve full credit, students’ Reading Reaction Posts must be posted to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. EST on the Monday of the week assigned.

Each Reading Reaction Post is awarded points according to quality of effort and level of completion:

	100-90 Excellent	89-70 Satisfactory	69-60 Unsatisfactory
Analysis (20%)	Superior evaluation of all reading(s) and provides an insightful assessment of topic(s) covered	Competent evaluation of all reading(s) and provides a sufficient assessment of topic(s) covered	Minimal to little evaluation of reading(s) and provides limited assessment of topic(s) covered
Argument (20%)	Compelling and persuasive argument offered through superior use of both internal and external materials and experiences	Argument is accurately supported by internal material and generally supported by relevant outside materials and experiences	Weak argument is made due to a minimal or haphazard use of internal and external materials or experiences
Sourcing (10%)	Superior sourcing of internal and external material that supports the discussion’s main arguments	Adequate sourcing internal and external material that supports the discussion’s main arguments	Sourcing of internal and external material is absent or haphazard thus insufficient to sustain an argument

Grammar and syntax (10%)	Precise syntax and superior usage of grammar, punctuation and spelling	Syntax is clear and the relatively few grammar, punctuation, and/or spelling errors do not impede understanding	Syntax is, at times, garbled. It includes errors in grammar, punctuation, and/or spelling which impede understanding
Examination (20%)	Post is over 500 words	Post is between 350 and 500 words	Post is less than 350 words

Reading Discussion Comment Posts & Replies

To cultivate an ongoing dialogue about the reading material within the course, students will be required to comment on the Reading Reaction Posts submitted by other students as well as reply to comments submitted to their Reading Reaction Posts. These two activities enable students to learn, not only from the instructor and the course material, but also from each other.

Reading Discussion Comment Posts

Reading Discussion Comment Posts (Comments) must be submitted into at least two (2) Reading Reaction Posts made by fellow students or the instructor each week.

Comments must be at least 100 words in length, but more importantly should add something of value to the conversation (be thought-provoking). The instructor will evaluate the degree to which students' posts add to the conversation in accordance with the rubric. If it is deemed that a comment is simply being offered to fulfill the grade requirement the instructor reserves the right to remove it from consideration. While students are always welcome to submit more than two (2) Comments each week, no more than two (2) comments will be counted toward a student's grade in any single week.

Reading Discussion Comment Posts must be posted in Canvas or on LinkedIn by 11:59 p.m. EST on the Wednesday of the week assigned.

Reading Discussion Comment Replies

Students will monitor the Reading Discussion Comment Posts added to their original Reading Reaction Post and will reply to the first two (2) people to comment, should another student or the instructor respond. If no comments are left in the original Reaction Post by the deadline, students will be awarded full credit for this portion of the assignment.

Reading Discussion Comment Replies must be posted in Canvas by 11:59 p.m. EST on the Friday of the week assigned.

Reading Discussion Comments and Replies are awarded points according to quality of effort and level of completion:

	100-90 Excellent	89-70 Satisfactory	69-60 Unsatisfactory
Comment Contribution (20%)	Compelling and persuasive response offered through superior writing and conceptualization of topic in agreement or disagreement to reactions posted	Provides adequate response to reactions posted or simply signals agreement without further support	Haphazardly written, lacking an evaluative response of the reactions posted; neither indicates agreement or disagreement, etc.
Comment Examination (30%)	Two (2) comments submitted that were more than 100 words in length	Two (2) comments submitted which were 100 words in length	Two (2) comments submitted, both of which were less than 100 words in length or one (1) 100-word comment submitted
Reply Examination (30%)	More than one (1) reply has been made to the first two (2) individuals who submitted a comment or to more than two (2) individuals	At least one (1) reply has been made to the first two (2) individuals who submitted a comment	At least one (1) reply has been made to the first individual who submitted a comment
Discussion Grammar and Syntax (10%)	Precise syntax and superior use of grammar, punctuation, and spelling throughout discussion	Syntax is clear and the relatively few grammar, punctuation, and/or spelling errors do not impede understanding throughout discussion	Syntax is, at times, garbled. It includes errors in grammar, punctuation, and/or spelling which impede understanding throughout discussion

Quizzes

Twice during the semester, students must complete quizzes intended to measure their ability to retain key concepts from the course material. These quizzes must be completed in Canvas during the dates open. See the course schedule for due dates.

Conversion Index Analysis Project (Final Project)

Students will demonstrate their mastery of conversion optimization by performing an in-depth analysis of a given web page (Page of Focus*), providing recommendations for improvement based on the concepts taught during the course and creating a basic web page wireframe that illustrates those recommendations.

This final project is culmination of the students' work throughout the semester. During the semester, students' will complete the Lecture Reinforcement Assignments using the Page of Focus. To receive full credit on the final project students must analyze this work, determine how to best incorporate it into a treatment web page suitable for testing, and visualize it as a wireframe prototype. Lastly, students will deliver their findings via an audio-recorded presentation or directly to the instructor.

To complete the project, students will receive a company brief consisting of:

- Screenshots of the web page (Page of Focus)
- Business background and problem
- Value proposition: question, statement, evidentials and other claims of value
- Product documentation
- Metric options
- Incentive documentation

**Upon approval of the instructor, students may substitute a webpage from either a company at which they are presently employed, one at which they wish to work in the future, or a nonprofit (501c3) organization in place of the Page of Focus. Students may not use any webpage that features a product or service that exclusively leverages a go-to-market strategy consistent with that of a "low-cost-provider."*

Mock Web Page Wireframes

Students must create a wireframe mockup for their "Page of Focus". This wireframe should incorporate various recommendations that they have made throughout the semester. Students will not need any coding or development experience to create wireframes, as digital copies of hand-drawn sketches are acceptable for this project. Students with more advanced skills are welcome to submit their wireframes using common wireframe software, however, students will not receive additional points/credit for using digital software.

Research Presentation

Students will compile their work throughout the semester into an informative presentation with a minimum length of 15 minutes and maximum length of 20 minutes. This presentation should be audio-recorded* and will consist of the following components: (1) A summary of key critique and analysis points from all Lecture Reinforcement Assignments (Weeks 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 10) and (2) detailed recommendations for testing as synthesized directly into the wireframe prototype. Students are encouraged to provide in-depth analysis of the similarities and differences between the Page of Focus and their wireframe prototype, including explanations of the reasoning behind the suggested changes.

Students may submit their video presentations in Canvas via direct file upload, a cloud storage link or YouTube video link. **The final project is to be submitted to Canvas in its entirety by the Friday of WEEK 11 at 11:59 p.m. EST.**

** While students are not required to use Microsoft PowerPoint to complete their research presentation, the Narration feature can be used to accomplish audio recordings suitable for this course.*

The Conversion Index Analysis Project is awarded points according to the following scale:

	Excellent (100-90)	Good (89-80)	Satisfactory (79-70)	Less than Satisfactory (69-60)	Unsatisfactory (less than 60)
Wireframe Design (20%)	Offers superior analysis of web page layout and structure	Good analysis of web page layout and structure	Adequate analysis of web page layout and structure	Insufficient analysis of web page layout and structure	Little to no evaluation is offered and/or otherwise fails to effectively layout web page structure
Heuristic Application (20%)	Compelling and persuasive argument offered through superior use of heuristic	Capable argumentation offered through conceptualization and understanding of heuristic	Reasoning falters at times making a compelling argument due to lack of complete understanding of heuristic	Argumentation offered is haphazard with minimal evidence used to support an understanding of heuristic	Argument is unclear due to a lack of understanding heuristic
Presentation (20%)	Superior presentation that covers all the material from the analysis in a professional and well-thought-out manner	Competently presents all the material from the analysis in a professional and well-thought-out manner	Presents all the material from the analysis in a semi-professional but well-thought-out manner	Presentation is unclear at time of the analysis but conducted in a semi-professional and somewhat well-thought-out manner	Haphazard presentation that hampers ability to present analysis and done in a less-than-professional manner
Examination (20%)	All components and length requirements have been addressed/met	Almost all components and length requirements have been addressed/met	Three-quarters of all components and length requirements have been addressed/met	Half or less of components and length requirements have been addressed/met	Project components and length requirements have not been addressed/met
Sourcing (10%)	Demonstrates superior sourcing of materials that is sufficient to	Demonstrates competent sourcing materials that is sufficient to	Demonstrates basic sourcing of materials that is	Minimal sourcing of material thus insufficient to	Sourcing of material is absent and thus insufficient to

	substantiate an argument	substantiate an argument	sufficient to substantiate an argument	substantiate an argument	substantiate an argument
Grammar and syntax (10%)	Precise syntax and superior usage of grammar, punctuation and spelling	Proficient use of syntax, grammar, punctuation and spelling that assists in understanding overall argument	Syntax is clear and the relatively few grammar, punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding	Syntax is at times garbled with errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling which causes some difficulty in understanding	Syntax is sometimes garbled and errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling disrupt understanding

University Policies

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

Students with Disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) so that reasonable accommodations may be implemented. The DRC is located in room 001 in Reid Hall, or you can contact them by phone at 352-392-8565.

University counseling services and mental health services:

Counseling and Wellness resources

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

352-392-1575

Netiquette

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy along with applicable university policies in all online activities, as these are extensions of the course. The university's Netiquette guide can be found at: <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

Failure to follow these guidelines will result in disciplinary measures, ranging from grade reduction to course expulsion.

Additional Student Resources

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
 - <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
 - 352-392-1575
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course, please contact your program director and/or student support coordinator at distancesupport@jou.ufl.edu or visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process> to submit a complaint.

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct:

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the [UF Student Honor Code](#).

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the

success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1261.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All graduate students in the College of Journalism and Communications are expected to conduct themselves with the highest degree of integrity. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they know and understand the requirements of every assignment. At a minimum, this includes avoiding the following:

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when an individual presents the ideas or expressions of another as his or her own. Students must always credit others' ideas with accurate citations and must use quotation marks and citations when presenting the words of others. A thorough understanding of plagiarism is a precondition for admittance to graduate studies in the college.

Cheating: Cheating occurs when a student circumvents or ignores the rules that govern an academic assignment such as an exam or class paper. It can include using notes (in physical or electronic form) in an exam, submitting the work of another as one's own, or reusing a paper a student has composed for one class in another class. If a student is not sure about the rules that govern an assignment, it is the student's responsibility to ask for clarification from his instructor.

Misrepresenting Research Data: The integrity of data in mass communication research is a paramount issue for advancing knowledge and the credibility of our professions. For this reason, any intentional misrepresentation of data or misrepresentation of the conditions or circumstances of data collection, is considered a violation of academic

integrity. Misrepresenting data is a clear violation of the rules and requirements of academic integrity and honesty.

Any violation of the above stated conditions is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program and will result in revocation of the degree if the degree previously has been awarded.

Students are expected to adhere to the [University of Florida Code of Conduct](#).

If you have additional questions, please refer to the Online Graduate Program Student Handbook you received when you were admitted into the program.

Course Schedule

Calendar

Week	Lecture	Reactions	Comments	Replies	Assignments	Quiz
	Syllabus Introduction					
1	Introduction to Offer-Response Optimization	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
2	Defining Conversion	01/16*	01/17	01/19	01/20	
3	Understanding the Impact of Customer Motivation	01/22	01/24	01/26	01/27	
4	Value Proposition Fundamentals	01/29	01/31	02/02	02/03	
5	Value Proposition Expression	02/05	02/07	02/09	02/10	02/10
6	Addressing Psychological Friction	02/12	02/14	02/16	02/17	
7	Addressing Rational and Irrational Anxiety	02/19	02/21	02/23	02/24	
8	Finding and Adding the Ideal Incentive	02/26	02/28	03/02	03/03	
9	Crafting Effective Copy — Part 1	03/05	03/07	03/09	03/10	
10	Crafting Effective Copy — Part 2	03/12	03/14	03/16	03/17	03/17
11	Application of the Conversion Heuristic	03/19	03/21	03/23	03/24	
12	The Marketer’s Blind Spot	03/26	03/28	03/30	03/31	

*Assignment or activity moved due to a University of Florida recognized holiday.

Weekly Detail

Pre-course: Course Introduction and Syllabus Overview Video

Description

An introduction to the course, instructors and lecturers as well as an overview of what students will learn during the semester.

Week 1: Introduction to Offer-Response Optimization

Learning Objective(s)

Summarize the MECLABS Conversion Heuristic and label the key elements of offer response optimization.

Lecture Description

This week will be an introduction to the concept of offer response optimization. Students will learn what offer response optimization entails and why it is important. Additionally, students will be introduced to the Conversion Heuristic and how it can be used to optimize marketing collateral.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflections 5 & 7.
- Norman, Don. [“The Future of Design: When you come to a fork in the road, take it.”](#)
- Pernice, Kara. [“Difficult Designs Are Better.”](#)
- Norman and Toganzzini. [“How Apple Is Giving Design A Bad Name.”](#)
- Norman, Don. [“The “Science” in the Science of Design.”](#)

Supplemental Reading(s)

- Nodder, Chris. [“User Experience Fundamentals for Web Design.”](#)

Lecture Reinforcement Assignment

Students are to post a short biography about themselves in the Week 1 Discussion Thread. Students can include any personal or professional information that they think other students would find useful as well as a statement about what they hope to accomplish in this course. (Note: This is not a graded assignment.)

Week 2: Defining Conversion

Learning Objective(s)

Define the term Conversion within the context of marketing.

Lecture Description

What is a conversion? Is it a click, a lead, a purchase or something else entirely? Students will learn to how define conversion in the marketing context and discover the five factors that influence it.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflection(s) 27-31.
- Nielsen, Jakob. [“Conversion Rates.”](#)
- Loranger, Hoa. [“Minimize Design Risk by Focusing on Outcomes not Features.”](#)
- Lillis, Ryan. [“What exactly is a ‘conversion’? It’s up to you!”](#) Otimizely Blog
- Swartz, Norman. [The Concepts of Necessary Conditions and Sufficient Conditions](#)
- Lau & Chan. [Necessity and sufficiency](#)
- Harley , A. (n.d.). [Prospect Theory and Loss Aversion: How Users Make Decisions.](#)

Supplemental Reading(s)

- [Fundamentals: Necessary and Sufficient Conditions](#) Khan Academy
- [Fundamentals: More about necessary and Sufficient Conditions](#) Khan Academy
- [Practice: Necessary and Sufficient Conditions](#) Khan Academy

Lecture Reinforcement Assignment

Propose an argument as to which metrics would best fit the “necessary” and “sufficient” conversions for the Page of Focus.

Week 3: Understanding the Impact of Customer Motivation

Learning Objective(s)

Extrapolate a customer’s core motivation in response to a specific offer.

Lecture Description

This week focuses on the impact of customer motivation on conversion. Students will learn why it is the most heavily weighted element in the Conversion Heuristic and how to leverage data to identify and intensify customer's core motivation.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflection(s) 5, 8, 10, 14, 21.
- Meyer, Katie. "[Designing for Young Adults \(Ages 18–25\).](#)"
- Sherwin, Katie. "[Fresh Start Effect: How to Motivate Users with New Beginnings.](#)"

Lecture Reinforcement Assignment

Interpret the degree and nature of the visitor's motivation to the Page of Focus and identify what you would do to intensify the prospect's motivation.

Week 4: Value Proposition Fundamentals**Learning Objective(s)**

Analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic value present within every purchase decision.

Lecture Description

This week, students will discover a working definition of the "value proposition" concept. In addition, students will learn how to leverage the force of a value proposition in marketing collateral.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflection 03-06, 15-18, & 32.

Reflection Project 1

Compare and contrast the force of a given value proposition based on two variables: the prospect and the alternative.

Week 5: Value Proposition Expression**Learning Objective(s)**

Assess the potential effectiveness of a company's messaging by measuring the force of a value proposition using the Value Dyad and the Acceptance Dyad.

Lecture Description

Students will begin to understand the importance of, and difference between, continuity and congruence when expressing a value proposition. Additionally, students will learn how to holistically express a value proposition on a web page and across a website through these principles.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflection 26, 34.
- Schade, Amy. "[Customization vs. Personalization in the User Experience.](#)"
- Schade, A., Cheng, Y., & Sherugar, S., (n.d.). [Top 10 Enduring Web-Design Mistakes.](#)

Lecture Reinforcement Assignment

Critique the force of the value proposition(s) as expressed on the Page of Focus and provide recommendations for improvement.

Quiz One

Quiz 1 due by Saturday at 11:59 p.m. EST.

Week 6: Addressing Psychological Friction**Learning Objective(s)**

Identify the elements of an offer that generate psychological friction or anxiety in customers' minds.

Lecture Description

This week focuses on psychological friction. Students will learn what friction is in the context of marketing and how it impacts the customer's thought sequence in the conversion process. Additionally, students will discover the two most common forms of friction and how to minimize them.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflection(s) 25, 33, 36.
- Pernice and Budiu. "[Hamburger Menus and Hidden Navigation Hurt UX Metrics.](#)"
- Norman, Don. "[Apple's products are getting harder to use because they ignore principles of design.](#)"
- Loranger, H. (n.d.). [Fight Against "Right-Rail Blindness"](#). Retrieved May 11, 2017

- Budiu, R. (n.d.). [Expandable Menus: Pull-Down, Square, or Pie?](#). Retrieved May 11, 2017.

Supplemental Reading(s)

- Deng, L. (2010). "Affect in web interfaces: a study of the impacts of web page visual complexity and order." *Urbana*, 51, 61801.
- Harley, A. (n.d.). [No More Pogo Sticking: Protect Users from Wasted Clicks.](#)

Lecture Reinforcement Assignment

Examine the Page of Focus and provide specific recommendations as to how to minimize any unnecessary friction.

Week 7: Addressing Rational and Irrational Anxiety**Learning Objective(s)**

Distinguish between rational and irrational anxiety in message response.

Lecture Description

This week focuses on anxiety and the emotional response of the customer to elements on a web page. Students will learn the two forms of anxiety experienced by prospects and how to minimize their effect.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflection(s) 25 & 37.
- Sherwin, Katie. ["Hierarchy of Trust: The 5 Experiential Levels of Website Commitment."](#)
- Budiu, Ralcau. ["The Reciprocity Principle: Give Before You Take in Web Design."](#)
- Sherwin, Katie. ["Cultural Nuances Impact User Experience: Why We Test with International Audiences."](#)
- Constantinides, E. (2004). ["Influencing the online consumer's behavior: The Web experience."](#) *Internet research*, 14(2), 111-126.

Supplemental Reading(s)

- Soutar, G. N., and Sweeney, J. C. (2003). Are there cognitive dissonance segments?. [Australian Journal of Management](#), 28(3), 227-249.

Lecture Reinforcement Assignment

Examine the Page of Focus and provide specific recommendations as to how to mitigate any anxiety that could exist in the mind of prospective customers.

Week 8: Finding and Adding the Ideal Incentive

Learning Objective(s)

Determine the ideal incentive for a specific audience as well as the appropriate stage to employ it to increase customer motivation.

Lecture Description

This week focuses on the proper use of incentives in the optimization process. Students will learn what an incentive is in the context of marketing and how to use incentives effectively.

Required Reading(s)

- Zhivago, Kristin. "[Incentives: 5 Cardinal Rules, 10 Great Ideas.](#)" MarketingProfs. N.p., 29 July 2008. Web. 04 May 2017.

Supplemental Reading(s)

- Kalbach, J. (2006). "I'm feeling lucky": The role of emotions in seeking information on the Web." [Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology](#), 57(6), 813-818.

Lecture Reinforcement Assignment

Examine the Page of Focus and provide specific recommendations for arriving at an ideal incentive.

Week 9: Crafting Effective Copy – Part 1

Learning Objective(s)

Compose copy that effectively conveys a company's value proposition argument in both long and narrative forms from a short-form argument.

Lecture Description

Students will learn how to align the copy on a web page with the thought sequence of a prospective customer using the story map framework. Students will explore in-depth the first three steps of this framework.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflection(s) 6, 9-10, 12-14, 25.
- McKee, Robert. *Principles of Screenwriting* — Chapter(s) 01, 03, 06.
- Meyer, Katie. [“How Chunking Helps Content Processing.”](#)
- Nielsen, Jakob. [“Legibility, Readability, and Comprehension: Making Users Read Your Words.”](#)
- Schade, A. (n.d.). [The Fold Manifesto: Why the Page Fold Still Matters.](#)
Retrieved May 11, 2017.

Reflection Project 2

Simulate a moderated user testing session to experience a web page through the eyes of another “user.”

Week 10: Crafting Effective Copy — Part 2

Learning Objective(s)

Compose copy that effectively conveys a company’s value proposition argument in both long and narrative forms from a short-form argument.

Lecture Description

This week students will continue to deepen their understanding of copy writing for marketing collateral through an examination of the final four steps in the story map framework.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflection(s) 11, 14.
- McKee, Robert. *Principles of Screenwriting* — Chapter(s) 10-13

Lecture Reinforcement Assignment

Craft elements of copy for the Page of Focus including headlines, sub-headlines, body copy and the call-to-action.

Quiz Two

Quiz 2 due by Saturday at 11:59 p.m. EST.

Week 11: Optimization of Live Webpages

Learning Objective(s)

Conduct a Conversion Index Analysis (CIA) on marketing collateral.

Lecture Description

This week focuses on the optimization of a selection of real-world web pages. Students will discover a methodology that can be leveraged to quickly examine marketing collateral and identify opportunities for future optimization efforts.

Required Reading(s)

- Laubheimer, Page. [“B2B vs. B2C Websites: Key UX Differences.”](#)
- Whitenton, Kathryn. [“Website Logo Placement for Maximum Brand Recall.”](#)
- Budiu, Ralca. [“Mobile Websites: Mobile Dedicated, Responsive, Adaptive, or Desktop Site?”](#)

Final Project

Final Project due Saturday at 11:59 p.m. EST.

Week 12: The Marketer’s Blind Spot**Learning Objective(s)**

Identify one possible source of the marketers own bias in the process of offer response optimization.

Lecture Description

Is your experience as a marketer hurting your ability to communicate with the customer? How can you tell? Like the blind spot in each of our eyes, our brain elaborately covers up the disconnect, leading us to believe that our best ideas are the best approach for the consumer.

Required Reading(s)

- McGlaughlin, Flint. *Marketer as Philosopher* — Reflection(s) 01-02, 24.
- Nielsen, Jakob. (2007) [“The Myth of the Genius Designer.”](#)
- Sherwin, Katie. (2014) [“Breaking Web Design Conventions = Breaking the User Experience.”](#)
- Nielsen, Jakob. (2004) [“Mastery, Mystery, and Misery: The Ideologies of Web Design.”](#)

Supplemental Reading(s)

- Stockwell, Amanda. [“UX Research Fundamentals.”](#)

Reflection Project 3

Examine any 5 web pages of your own choosing through the lens of the Conversion Heuristic and identify at least 5-7 optimization opportunities per page.

Disclaimers

The instructor reserves the right to make any modification necessary to this syllabus to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes will be communicated via Canvas.

From time to time, students may be required to use tools, programs and websites outside of Canvas to complete course assignments. While students are welcome to use paid versions of these tools, programs and websites, all criteria for assignments will be able to be satisfied using free versions.