

ADV4404 – Cultural Branding
Class# 27303, Section# 32D1
Spring 2026 Syllabus

Instructor: Dan Windels

- **Email:** dwindels@ufl.edu
- **Office:** Weimer 2078
- **Office Hours (in person):** Tues. 10:00 am - 11:00 pm, Wed. 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm (or by appointment)
- **Office Hours (virtual):** Same times as above.
 - Please send me an email indicating you'd like to meet for virtual office hours before joining on Zoom. I may be meeting with another student at that same time.
 - Zoom Link (for office hours only): <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/8211738258>

Class Meeting Times & Location

- Monday: 10:40 am – 1:40 pm, Fine Arts C (FAC 0120)

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructional Format: In-Person only

- This class has been scheduled as an in-person only class.
- Class materials such as PPT presentations (slides), assignments, additional reading, and exam study guides will be posted and available through Canvas.
- Lectures will not be recorded or posted to Canvas.

Course Communication

Please email me using the subject line “ADV4404” with any questions about assignments, class content, or if you just want to talk advertising. I spent years working in advertising agencies across the country, so I love talking about advertising! Please include as much information as possible in your email so I can provide you with an accurate response. Contacting me through Canvas email is the most efficient way to communicate. I will make every effort to respond to your email within 36 hours of you sending it.

I’m happy to talk about this course, internships, or potential career directions.

Course Description

From a business perspective, Nike sells shoes, Starbucks sells coffee, and Vineyard Vines sells t-shirts. But each of these companies also sells a well-defined experience that resonates with distinct consumer groups or subcultures. How did these well-defined experiences come to be? From a communications perspective they can be traced back to great branding and advertising! A brand, in its purest form, represents our collective thoughts and feelings about a company over time. When great branding is coupled with great advertising, a seemingly everyday product (like shoes, coffee, or t-shirts) can be transformed into an iconic brand that has special meaning for its core customers.

Through a series of real-world projects, Cultural Branding will explore the sources of great branding and advertising. We will leverage exploratory research methods used by the ad industry to identify distinct consumer groups or subcultures. We will then learn how to develop meaningful connections between these subcultures and brands. At the heart of this process will be curiosity. You will be challenged to look at the

world through a new lens. To expand your critical thinking abilities in ways that can help bring meaningful communication solutions to the table.

Course Objectives

- Develop a deep curiosity for people and how they interact with both the world, and the brands, that intersect their lives.
- Analyze techniques for uncovering consumer wants and needs
- Design successful qualitative research that can be engaging and informative
- Practice trust building techniques that can improve in-person qualitative research outcomes
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Formulate relevant creative insights based on qualitative data
- Create engaging branding recommendations and presentations

My Role

As the instructor, my role is to identify critical issues related to the course, direct you to resources, teach relevant information, assign appropriate learning activities, create opportunities for assessing your performance, and communicate the outcomes of such assessments in a timely, informative, and professional way.

Feedback is essential for you to have confidence that you have mastered the material and for me to determine that you are meeting all course requirements. At all times it is expected that you will welcome and respond professionally to assessment feedback, that you will treat your fellow students and me with respect, and that you will contribute to the success of the class as best as you can.

Your Role

- Attend all classes. I promise this class will be much more enjoyable if you do!
- Actively participate in class discussions. These discussions are typically the most rewarding part of the class!
- Be respectful to the diverse range of opinions during any online discussions or group activities.
- Responsible for all materials covered in class (lectures, discussions, videos, etc.) as well as all assigned weekly reading.
- Complete readings BEFORE the class in which they are discussed.
- Check Canvas frequently for the latest class information and updates.
- Any disagreements with grades must be submitted in writing within 5 days of when the grade is posted.

Canvas

All course communication, announcements, assignments, and grades will be posted on Canvas. Please confirm that you have a valid and correct email address connected to your Canvas account. It is your responsibility to check Canvas regularly <https://elearning.ufl.edu>.

- UF Help Desk, available 24-7 - <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>

Academic Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) by visiting their [Get Started](#) page.

- The DRC 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 during the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Content

Course content includes the following: lecture materials (slides) which will be posted to Canvas, in-class discussions, assigned readings posted to Canvas, and content shared by guest speakers.

NOTE: Lecture materials, discussions will often have information that is not included in your assigned course readings.

Course Reading Materials:

- There is no textbook
- All course reading materials will be made available on the Modules section of Canvas
- Come prepared to discuss the reading assigned for that specific week
- We will have periodic in-class quizzes over the reading assigned for that specific week

Attendance & Participation:

Attendance will not be taken this semester. However, we will periodically have unannounced in-class activities and short quizzes. In-class activities and quizzes will be graded and account for 10% of your grade. We have a “Drop 1” rule in place for the “Quiz & Activity” section of Canvas. The lowest single grade you have in this section will automatically be dropped. The “Drop 1” rule was put in place to help account for absences due to unplanned or extenuating circumstances.

Participation - I realize that not everyone likes participating. Here’s my challenge. Try to raise your hand and ask at least three questions during our class this semester. Here’s why. First, your questions are important! They not only help guide our discussions; they also make our class more interesting! Second, asking questions in group settings will help prepare you for future work situations where these questions are used to help solve challenges.

Grading Components

Student development and mastery of skills will be assessed based on the following items:

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|--------------------------|-----|
| • Quizzes/Activities | 20% |
| • Individual Assignments | 30% |
| • Subculture Project | 40% |
| • Presentations | 10% |

I accept late assignments. Assignments that are not submitted by the posted due date and time will incur a 10% grade reduction for each 24-hour period that it is late, up to five days. After five days, no late homework will be accepted.

The (1) lowest score from the “Quizzes & Activities” section of Canvas will be dropped at the end of the semester. This allows you to miss one of these graded opportunities with no penalty.

Final Course Grading Scale

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

NOTE: All grades are based on the whole number score that you receive. There will be no rounding of grades. For example, an 89.1, 89.5, and 89.9 are all considered below 90, and therefore a grade of B+.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

University Policy on Academic Misconduct:

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

University Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism Definition - A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authorized by the student.
- Unauthorized use of materials or resources.
- Prohibited collaboration or consultation.
- Submission of paper or academic work purchased or obtained for an outside source.

Students should be familiar with and understand UF's Plagiarism Policy as found in the [UF Student Honor Code Student Conduct Code](#).

Make Up Policy Using the UF [Instructor Notification Process](#)

We will follow [UF Attendance Policies](#) as it pertains to attending class, assigned work, quizzes, and exams. Unless you notify me in advance and have a documented reason for why you cannot complete an assigned element of this class in a timely manner it will not be accepted. Missing a quiz, activity, or exam without approved documentation results in a zero.

Under circumstances where the student misses a quiz, activity or exam due to unanticipated reasons, students will have 2 business days (i.e., 48 weekday hours) to inform the instructor and to negotiate a make-up opportunity. In either case, after notifying the instructor, the student must obtain valid, verifiable documentation from the Dean of Students office in order for an absence to be excused.

Students can request this documentation by using the UF [Instructor Notification process](#) through the CARE group within the Dean of Students Office. The [Instructor Notification process](#) includes a list of approved documentation that can be uploaded as part of this submission.

Zoom Video/Web Conferencing:

If any Zoom meetings occur during the semester, please be aware that they may be audio visually recorded

- Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded.
- If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image.
- Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded.
- If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.
- As in all courses, unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Student Recording of Lectures

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational

use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited.

Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course.

A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section.

Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services.

A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.”

University of Florida Campus Resources:

Below is a list of campus resources that may be helpful over the course of the semester, or during your time at the University of Florida.

Health and Wellness Resources:

- [U Matter, We Care](#) serves as the umbrella program for the caring culture at the University of Florida. If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact 352-294-CARE (2273), or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- [Counseling and Wellness Center](#): Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- [Student Health Care Center](#): Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- [University Police Department](#): Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- [UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center](#): For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.
- [Gatorwell Health Promotion Services](#): For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the Gatorwell website or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources:

- [E-learning technical support](#): Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- [Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- [Student Complaints On-Campus](#): Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.
- [On-Line Students Complaints](#): View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.

Student Evaluations - GatorEvals

As an instructor, I appreciate hearing your feedback on this course. Feedback is encouraged and can be provided online through evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Look for an email during this time period from GatorEvals or for the GatorEvals link under our Canvas course menu. Results of all course assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR COURSE SCHEDULE:

Course Schedule: The course schedule lays out the broad topics that we will be covering this semester. If there is any need to adjust the schedule you will be notified in advance both in class and through Canvas.

Week	Day / Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
1	Mon. 1.12	Introduction to class Why curiosity matters	Canvas reading on curiosity	Curiosity Journal handed out Curiosity Journal Activity #1(in class)
2	Mon. 1.19	NO CLASS – MLK DAY	Canvas reading on curiosity	
3	Mon. 1.26	The power of observation	Canvas reading on curiosity	Quiz over curiosity reading (in class) Curiosity Journal Activity #2 (in class)
4	Mon. 2.2	Creative secondary research	Canvas	Curiosity Journal Activity #3 (in class) Assignment #1 due
5	Mon. 2.9	The art of listening	Canvas	Curiosity Journal Activity #4 (in class)
6	Mon. 2.16	Creative primary research	Canvas	Curiosity Journal Activity #5 (in class) Subculture Project Step #1 Assignment #2 due
7	Mon. 2.23	Exploring tips, tools, and tricks for conducting qualitative conversations	Canvas	Curiosity Journal due Subculture Project Step #2
8	Mon. 3.2	Finding opportunities within data	Canvas	Subculture Project Step #3
9	Mon. 3.9	Leveraging evaluation tools and campaign learning for continuous improvement	Canvas	Work on Subculture Project
10	Mon. 3.16	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK		
11	Mon. 3.23	The Creative Brief: Uncovering a true insight and big idea	Canvas	Subculture Step #4
12	Mon. 3.30	Turning your creative brief into ideas		Work on Subculture Project
13	Mon. 4.6	Fine tuning creative ideas Presentation prep		Subculture Project Step #5

14	Mon. 4.13	Fine tuning presentation		Work on Subculture Project
15	Mon. 4.20	Final Subculture Branding Presentations Post presentation discussion.	Final Presentations	Final Presentations
16 FINAL EXAM WEEK	Wed. 4.30 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	HOLD FINAL EXAM TIME: Only needed if we fall significantly behind schedule to due to unanticipated campus closures.		