Objective

The purpose of this seminar is to give you an overview of behavioral foundations of marketing strategy research and to expose you to new methods used in marketing strategy research. My goal is that you will finish the course with a deep understanding of the literature as well as how you might contribute to it. I believe your most important skill as a scholar is the ability to create new ideas. We will focus on developing this skill throughout the term.

Pedagogical Approach

One commonly held assumption I hope to disprove is that marketing strategy is not theoretical. You will find that marketing strategy is inherently interdisciplinary and so we will examine theories emanating from economics, sociology, psychology, strategy, and organizational sciences, as well as marketing.

There are many interesting levels of analysis in marketing strategy research, including individual, dyadic, group, firm, interorganizational, and industry level. You will likely find yourself gravitating to a level you prefer throughout the course, but I hope you will remain open to numerous levels of analysis and how each might influence your thinking. More importantly, I hope you will consider how your work might span multiple levels of analysis, for example, how firm capabilities affect interorganizational alliance formation or performance.

I will introduce you to a variety of research designs and techniques for doing marketing strategy research. I am fairly agnostic regarding method and we will examine research involving experiments, quasi-experiments, surveys, qualitative data, and secondary data.

Each week we will cover literature on a specific topic. I will provide a number of articles for each topic. I will also be available for consultation on any course-related topic and can provide related articles on any topic for which you would like additional information.

We will meet for three hours once a week. We will take a 20 minute break half way through the three hour period. Feel free to bring food and snacks to class.
Seminar Preparation

As with all seminars, your responsibility is to come to class prepared to discuss each assigned article in depth and to present ideas about the contributions, limitations, and extensions of each paper. Extensions can include straight-line extensions of the work or more innovative linkages with others papers or literatures. I caution you against three tendencies.

- First, I caution against an overly negative approach to dealing with other scholars’ research. In my experience, it is easier to criticize others than to actually do good research. It is important and worthwhile to try to understand what the research is trying to accomplish and whether it is interesting and important as opposed to whether it is perfect in every regard. No research is.

- Second, I caution you against only extending others’ points made in class and not initiating your own ideas. The former is a safe strategy, but it is not particularly interesting in the long-run. Take a risk—put your ideas out there.

- Third, make sure you read and think. Reading is the easy part—it takes time, but it is not very hard. Thinking is the critical part of the quest you are on. Think hard about the validity of the ideas and results as well how you could improve the paper. Finally, think about what a paper might mean for your current research.

I will typically assign approximately 60-70 pages of reading each week. This level of reading will give you the breadth of exposure important to a survey course. I will also sometimes provide background readings if I think some of you need to get up to speed on a topic. You can always ask me for additional readings on any topic. I will bring the readings for each week to the prior class, if not sooner. I am enclosing only the first two weeks of readings on the syllabus. I will complete this as we go and as I sense your needs and your interests.

Research Ideas

I hope you will leave this course with several ideas you can explore in your own research. To that end, you should read as if on a scouting expedition. Pay attention to what you find interesting. Notice when you experience a sense of disbelief or a sense that something is missing. Jot down alternative explanations for what the research suggests is happening. Map out the researcher’s view of the world and question it. Establish what the underlying assumptions are in the research and question them.

Use these activities for your research idea assignments. For these assignments, you will be responsible for writing up a one-page note (double spaced) focusing on one research idea that emanates from the week’s readings. These assignments are required to encourage you to think generatively while reading. You should always be on the look out for great ideas as they occur within and across readings. This write-up will be due at the beginning of each class. While in class, you will get a chance to share your idea. Hence, you should come prepared to share a five minute version of your idea. In these few minutes, describe the problem in the literature or in practice (or both) and the key points of your idea and how it contributes to solving these problem(s). You should feel free to draw your idea on the board if you like.
**Research Paper**

Each student will be expected to do a research paper on a market-strategy related topic. If you decide to work on a paper that is more modeling in orientation, you should present the model and solve it. If you decide to work on a paper that is more behavioral, you could do one of two things. First you could write an integrative conceptual paper that offers a new framework for marketing strategy. This paper would be more in the tradition of conceptual papers published in journals like *Journal of Marketing* (e.g., see Rindfleisch and Heide 1997\(^1\)). Second, your paper could offer predictions and design a marketing strategy study. This could involve an experiment, quasi-experiment, a survey, a content analysis, a meta-analysis, a field study, or an empirical analysis of secondary brand and/or firm data. The paper is due by April 15. No late papers will be accepted.

In order to facilitate the writing of your paper, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- **February 11**: Email me 2-3 topics you find interesting and worthy of pursuing and a paragraph or two summarizing your ideas. I will provide feedback.

- **February 25**: Come to class prepared to present 5-7 slides about your selected topic to the class. Bring your talk on a memory stick and bring copies of the presentations for everyone in the class. We will use this entire class period for these presentations, so the amount of time you have will depend on the number of students that enroll in the class. Note that this class will also allow you to practice your skills at sharing feedback with other scholars. You should be prepared to offer keen insights to your colleagues during this session.

- **April 15**: Email me a final version of your paper in Word so I can track in comments to you.

**Course Grading**

33% quality of your seminar paper  
33% quality of your participation  
33% quality of your weekly one page idea quests

**Session Structure**

Each session is outlined in the remaining pages of the syllabus. For each session, I will list the “primary readings” which you are responsible for reading and thinking about before class. Occasionally I will offer “background readings” for those of you that are new to an area or “method readings” if I think you might need more information. Neither of these is required for the course but recommended if you want to learn more about a technique. I will typically have five or so concepts and/or theory points that I will want to make at some point in the class. Sometimes I will do this at the beginning of class and other times sporadically as we cover topics in which the concepts fit.

I reserve the right to change topics and readings at will during the semester. This is usually not necessary but I would like to have the option if I find a better paper during the term. I have linked

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\(^1\) Aric Rindfleisch actually wrote this paper as a Ph.D. student and it won the Maynard Award (now the MSI/Root Award) at the *Journal of Marketing*. 

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all of the papers to the syllabus at the start of the class. If I change any topics or papers, I will email the syllabus to you again with new links.

**Course Calendar and Topics**

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<td>Class 4</td>
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<td>Class 12</td>
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<td>Marketing Strategy in Non-Profit Settings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Email me 2-3 paper topics (1-2 paragraphs each) and I will provide feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 13</td>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>In-class discussion of paper topics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 14</td>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Present selected paper idea to class in 5-10 PowerPoint slides to get feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paper Due: Email me a final version of your paper in Word</td>
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Session Topics and Readings

Class 1: October 15
Topic: Marketing Resources
Readings:

Background (not required):

Class 2: October 22
Topic: Brands
Readings:

Professional Development (not required):

Class 3: November 5
Topic: Marketing Capabilities
Readings:

² The original paper that Weick draws on that is worth reading is Murray Davis (1971), “That's Interesting! Towards a Phenomenology of Sociology and a Sociology of Phenomenology,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 1, 309-44.

Background (not required):

Class 4: November 19
Topic: Marketing Innovation
Readings:

Background (not required):

Class 5: December 3
Topic: Market Entry and New Products
Readings:

**Background (not required):**

**Class 6: December 10**
**Topic: Marketing Alliances and Channel Relationships**
**Readings:**

**Background readings (not required):**

**Class 7: January 7**
**Topic: Networks in Marketing**
**Readings:**

**Background method reading (not required):**
Class 8: January 14
Topic: Financial Returns to Marketing
Readings:

Background (not required):

Class 9: January 21
Topic: Learning and Knowledge in Marketing
Readings:

Class 10: January 28
Topic: Marketing Leadership
Readings:

Class 11: February 4  
Topic: Salesforce Management  
Readings:

Background method reading (not required):

Class 12: February 11  
Topic: Marketing Strategy in Non-Profit Settings and CSR  
Readings:

Other reading (not required):

**February 13:** Email me up to 2-3 paper topics (1-2 paragraphs) and I will provide feedback about direction I think is most fruitful for your course paper.

**Class 13: February 18**  
**Topic:** Initial topic brainstorming with class  
**Readings:** No assigned readings  
Come to class prepared to lead a 5 minute conversation about your paper topic. Class members will share ideas in the remaining 10 minutes.

**Class 14: February 25**  
**Topic:** Present selected paper idea to class in 5-10 PowerPoint slides  
**Readings:** No assigned readings

**April 15:** Final course paper due