



## **COM238 Section 1: Introduction to Advertising Spring 2026 Course Syllabus**

**Class Meetings:** Tues/Thurs 11:00 – 12:15 pm in Fell Hall 180

**Instructor:** Dr. Fan (“Ellie”) Yang

**Office:** 460 Fell Hall

**Office Hours:** Tues/Thurs 3:30 – 5:30 pm or By Appointment

To make an appointment, go to

<https://calendly.com/fyang8-ilstu/30min>

**Email:** [fyang8@ilstu.edu](mailto:fyang8@ilstu.edu)

**Office Phone:** (309) 438-3671

### **Course description:**

This course introduces and applies the fundamental concepts and processes of advertising and the advertising industry. Critical thinking and application are emphasized.

### **Textbook and supplementary materials:**

#### Textbook

Scheinbaum, C.A., O'Guinn, T. C., & Semenik, R. J. (2022). *Advertising and Integrated Brand Promotion* (9th edition). Cengage Learning.

There are some weeks when the reading materials are not from the textbook and can be accessed in an electronic course packet. You can download these readings from the class CANVAS page.

Internet Access

### **Learning objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Define the basic concepts of advertising
2. Critically analyze the role of advertising in our culture, society, and economy
3. Understand the complementarity of advertising and integrated brand promotion
4. Demonstrate a basic understanding of advertising message design and creative strategy
5. Be able to apply brand segmentation, targeting, and positioning to the creation of a creative campaign

### **Instructional methods:**

This class is typically scheduled and designed as an in-person class. Some of the materials and assignments are delivered electronically. Additionally, I will share materials, including readings, assignments, feedback, and more through our course site. Check regularly for updates! If you have questions about the materials or an assignment, please post your question to the Questions



and Answers discussion forum on CANVAS. If your question is about your work or does not pertain the course generally, please email me directly ([fyang8@ilstu.edu](mailto:fyang8@ilstu.edu)).

This course centers around the basic understanding of the advertising field. We will complete multiple projects that include analysis, planning, development, and more. To successfully complete this course, students will do the following:

- Read assigned chapters.
- Watch additional media.
- Participate in discussion topics.
- Participate in assigned group projects.
- Complete quizzes and exams.
- Complete project reports and reflections.

### **Learning assessments:**

Your success in this class depends greatly on you completing the assigned readings, participating in class discussions about the readings, applying lessons to other courses, working well with your peers, following directions, and, ultimately, producing great products for the assignments.

Assessment of students' learning against the course's objectives shall be done through a combination of learning assessments, which fall in the following five parts:

#### ***1. Quiz and online discussion (50 points, 40%)***

There will be three quizzes (30 points) and two online discussions (20 points) on readings and course content on CANVAS. Discussion assignments are designed so we can ask questions, consider possibilities, and develop a better understanding of course concepts. To help develop the skills needed for larger projects, there will be a variety of activities and 'practice' assignments in class that focus on a narrow set of concepts. These practice assignments will help you practice your creative/analytical skills and become more familiar with specific tools and techniques.

#### ***2. Attendance and participation (15 weeks X 2 point each = 30 points, 10%)***

Attendance is required. Meeting the credit hour standard, the course is scheduled to have two 75-minute classroom lectures. You are expected to attend all class sessions and fully responsible for learning all the lecture materials. Another part of your participation score will be based on your performance in answering questions and group discussion during the lecture time.

#### ***3. Group project – advertising proposal (20 points, 10%)***

The group project revolves around a public service advertising campaign to raise awareness of the importance of reaching out for mental health support. Accordingly, the class will be divided into groups of five to six students who will form a team that will pitch to win the account of McLean County Health Department. Students will be responsible for specific parts of the plan as they work with their team to create an integrated campaign.



***Contextual background – The importance of reaching out for help***

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, live well, and contribute to their community. From the perspective of positive psychology, mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life and to create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. However, it is estimated that more than one in five U.S. adults live with a mental health issue, but plenty of them are not receiving treatment (NIH, 2024). The issue also affects millions of non-adults in the U.S. every year. In 2023, two in five high school students reported struggling with persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Factors that contribute to the avoidance of seeking mental health support include but are not limited to the stigma around mental illness, the lack of social support, sexual or racial minority identity, and lack of supportive sources. One of the biggest challenges is that many people feel that asking for help is a sign of weakness. In reality, reaching out for support is an effective strategy for healing. To raise awareness of seeking appropriate support resources, one promising approach is to launch public service advertisements that promote public awareness of supportive recourses in online and offline communities to cope with mental health challenges.

References

NIH. (2025, January 14). *Mental Illness*. [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness#part\\_2540](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness#part_2540)

***Project components***

The group project will involve the following activities: 1) Advertising Proposal and 2) Peer Evaluation.

Your advertising campaign should aim to **one of the three goals**:

1. Improve your target audiences' awareness of the importance of seeking out for help when going through mental health challenges.
2. Improve your target audiences' awareness of the accessibility of mental health support sources.
3. Improve your target audiences' awareness of the availability of online mental health support sources.

1) Advertising Proposal

The Advertising Proposal should be detailed and highly polished. It will be graded for evidence of critical thinking, problem solving, and the integration of ideas from the course. Strategic decisions should be clearly identified and substantiated by research and reasoning.



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The group grade will be based on the totality of the proposal. Relevant questions: Do the advertising design and placement make sense? Are there innovative and creative ideas present? Did your group work well together? Were you able to effectively resolve conflicts?

## 2) Peer Evaluation

The peer evaluation will be an evaluation of your contribution and performance on the group project by the rest of the members of your group. At the end of the final exam, each group member will fill out an evaluation of all other group members, excepting themselves.

You overall grade of this group assignment will be a combination of the proposal grading and peer assessment.

## 4. *Midterm exam (100 points, 20%):*

The midterm it will take place in class. You will have 60 minutes to complete the exam on CANVAS.

## 5. *Final exam (100 points, 20%):*

The time and location will abide by the school policy.

### **Additional resource**

All written work in this class is to be in APA format with APA-style in-text citations for sources. Please use either the APA Sixth Manual (required for many of the 297 sections) or the Purdue Owl website as a resource to figure this out.

The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

### **Grading scale:**

There is no curve for grading. Rather, grading is based on a point-system in which you work toward 300 total points. They are distributed as follows:

<b>Components</b>	<b>Number of Points</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Three Quizzes & Online Discussion	50	40.0
Attendance & Participation	30	10.0
Group Assignment & Peer Review	20	10.0
Midterm Exam	100	20.0
Final Exam	100	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

We encourage you to keep track of your performance based on this point allocation system. This allows you to be aware of your grades throughout the semester and adjust your study strategies if you're dissatisfied with it. The following breakdowns are used to assign letter grades to your performance in this course:

A = 90.00% and greater

B = 80.00% – 89.99%

C = 70.00% – 79.99%

D = 60.00% – 69.99%

F = less than 60.00%

### **Extra credit**

Additional extra-credit opportunities for research project participation may be announced during the semester. There may be the occasional extra credit pop quiz in class. These cannot be made up if you are not present unless you have an excused absence. You can participate in a maximum of three additional extra credit opportunities worth 1 point per opportunity.

Throughout the semester, the instructor will also announce non-research opportunities for extra credit, which may include attending a colloquium, reading a recent article or research paper, or attending an on-campus event and writing a summary of the connection of the event to course content. The instructor will make these opportunities and specific details available as they arise. You are also encouraged to browse SoC Research Announcement Board (<https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies/>) for research participation and keep the participation evidence (e.g., email confirmation from the research investigator) by the end of the semester. The Research Announcement Board is updated as research studies are opened/closed, and it is your responsibility to access the Board and be aware of available opportunities. The extra credit points will be added to your final grade and may not necessarily appear in the gradebook immediately upon your completion of the opportunity.

### **Course outline/major topics studied:**

*Note: Course schedule is subject to change with instructor notification and students will be responsible for abiding by these changes. All reading materials can be accessed on CANVAS. You are highly encouraged to check weekly schedule on CANVAS under the tab "assignment" for the assignment due date.*

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Week 1</b> (Jan 12 - 16)	Course overview and challenges of advertising in 21 <sup>st</sup> century	Course syllabus (on CANVAS)	Group bonding



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<b>Week 2</b> (Jan 19 - 23)	Understanding the ad market.	The world of advertising and integrated brand promotion (Chapter 1)	
<b>Week 3</b> (Jan 26 - 30)	Developing the ad strategy	The structure of the advertising and promotion industry: advertisers, agencies, media, and support organization (Chapter 2)	Quiz 1 (In class, Jan 29)
<b>Week 4</b> (Feb 2 - 6)	History of advertising	The history of advertising and brand promotion (Chapter 3)	
<b>Week 5</b> (Feb 9 - 13)	Legal and ethical issues – Ethics Scenarios & Library Workshop	Social, ethical, and regulatory aspects of advertising and promotion (Chapter 4)	Quiz 2 (In class, Feb 12)
<b>Week 6</b> (Feb 16 - 20)	Understanding the audience Group meeting with the instructor (Thursday)	Advertising, integrated brand promotion, and consumer behavior (Chapter 5)	
<b>Week 7</b> (Feb 23 - 27)	Market segmentation & Documentary day: killing us softly (Thursday)	Market segmentation, positioning, and the value proposition (Chapter 6)	Online Discussion 1 (Due Date: Mar 1, 11:59 pm)
<b>Week 8</b> (Mar 2 - 6)	Midterm exam review: Tuesday Midterm exam: Thursday		
<b>Week 9</b> (Mar 9 - 13)	No Class. Spring Break.		
<b>Week 10</b> (Mar 16 - 20)	Market analysis	Advertising research (Chapter 7)	Group Assignment (Due Date: Mar 22, 11:59 pm)



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<b>Week 11</b> (Mar 23 - 27)	Media planning & Group Assignment Revision with the instructor: Thursday	Planning advertising and integrated brand promotion (Chapter 8)	
<b>Week 12</b> (Mar 30 – Apr 3)	Messaging strategy and the creative brief	Creative message strategy (Chapter 10)	Group Revision Submission (Due Date: Apr 5, 11:59 pm)
<b>Week 13</b> (Apr 6 – 10)	Media buying and execution	Media planning essentials (Chapters 12)	Quiz 3 (In class, Apr 9)
<b>Week 14</b> (Apr 13 – 17)	Interactive strategy – Web, search, and social media & Group assignment day (Thursday)	Media planning: advertising and IBP in digital, social, and mobile media (Chapters 14)	Group Project Peer Review (Due Date: Apr 12, 11:59 pm)
<b>Week 15</b> (Apr 20 – 24)	The future of digital advertising & Guest Speaker	Reading materials are accessed on CANVAS	Online Discussion 2 (Due Date: Apr 26, 11:59 pm)
<b>Week 16</b> (Apr 27 – May 1)	Final exam review: Tuesday Workout day: Thursday		
<b>Week 17</b> – <b>Final Week</b> (May 4 - 8)	Final Exam		

## Due Dates

Class assignments are due according to the assignment due date. Late work when accepted will receive a 20% grade reduction for each day after the deadline. Late group reports do not receive the same full feedback as on-time papers. No emailed assignments will be accepted. If you'd like to discuss your assignments with the instructor, please make an appointment. No assignments are accepted after the final exam.

## Attendance



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Students are expected to attend all classes as specified in the course syllabi for each course. It is the responsibility of each student to promptly notify the instructor when unable to attend class. If you cannot attend class, you are responsible for covering missed material (check Canvas, talk to peers, meet with instructor, etc.). **Absences, on their own, do not justify late submissions.** If you are unable to submit work on time, you must make timely arrangements with me (before the deadline or immediately following an absence) or receive a 0. While I will work with you as best I can, keep in mind that some activities and assignments cannot be recreated or extended (discussions, presentations, etc.).

Only a notification from the Dean of Students Office will provide a basis for exceptions to these policies. If you are sick or if you know in advance of any conflicts that will prevent you from being in class, it is YOUR responsibility to make arrangements to turn in any assignments or lab activities on or before the due date.

If an emergency occurs that prevents the administration of a course scheduled final examination, the final course grades will be calculated based on the work in the course completed to that point in time and the faculty member's considered judgment. Final exams will not be rescheduled, and a grade of "I" will not be given as a result of an institutional cancellation of a final examination. This final exam policy does not apply to online courses.

## **Technology considerations**

As you prepare for this semester, make sure to check out [Redbirds Keep Learning](#) for information regarding CANVAS and other technology-related questions. If not have access to the technology needed to be successful in this class, please let Dr. Yang know and contact the [Technology Support Center](#). The staff at the TSC will work with you try to solve your issue through technology-based solutions (i.e. updated software/operating system, walking you through WiFi options, etc.). If the staff at the TSC recognizes that it is not an issue they can solve or that you have expressed financial need, you can contact the [ISU Tech Zone](#) for assistance regarding technology acquisition of items. You can also visit [ISU IT Help](#), email [SupportCenter@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:SupportCenter@IllinoisState.edu), or call (309) 438-4357 with your name, ULID, and phone number to have campus tech support help you find equipment. Students from families with Zero Expected Family Contribution on their FAFSA can also contact financial aid for computer purchases.

## **Course communication policy**

All students enrolled in this course have access to the course website on CANVAS. Readings, assignment instructions, and assessments will be available through CANVAS. Important course announcements will be made in class and via announcements on CANVAS. It is YOUR responsibility to check both CANVAS and your ISU email on a regular basis. If you need to contact Dr. Yang by email, please feel free to do so at his Illinois State email address ([fyang8@ilstu.edu](mailto:fyang8@ilstu.edu)). As a student of higher education, it is expected that all of your communication is of professional quality. To ensure that your email is given full consideration, please identify the subject matter in the subject line of the email and identify your section



number. Please be sure to address Dr. Yang in a professional manner. Always sign your name in your email messages. Expect one to two full business days for a response.

### **Academic integrity & Classroom behavior**

You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and any additional syllabus language. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism. Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper attribution or authorization would also be a form of plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to me to discuss it as soon as possible. Any allegation of a violation of this section may be referred to [Student Conduct and Community Responsibilities](#), a unit of the Dean of Students Office for possible sanctioning. In addition, a grade penalty can also be applied.

### **Mental health and Student well-being**

Life at college can get complicated. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, lost, anxious, depressed or are struggling with personal issues, do not hesitate to call or visit [Student Counseling Services](#) (SCS). These services are free and completely confidential. SCS is located at 320 Student Services Building, 309-438-3655. It's hard to learn if you're hungry or couch surfing. If you are having difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or securing a safe and stable place to live, help may be available. Contact [the Dean of Students Office](#) to learn more.

### **Campus safety and security**

Illinois State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Please take a few moments to make sure you are signed up for ISU Emergency Alerts at [IllinoisState.edu/EmergencyAlert](https://illinoisstate.edu/EmergencyAlert). Additional safety information is available on the Campus Safety and Security website, [Security.IllinoisState.edu](https://Security.IllinoisState.edu).

### **Student access and Accommodation services**

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 308 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit Student Access and Accommodation Service online at <https://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/index.php>.

### **Religious observances**

It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. You may arrange to take an exam on an



alternative date if the exam falls on a religious holy day. Let your instructor know in the first two weeks of the semester if any exam date or other due date falls on a religious holy day.

### **Notice of recording a class session**

COM 218 class sessions may be recorded by your instructor for later use. Any recordings that are made available are for use by students enrolled in the class and are for the purpose of individual or group study only. The recordings may not be reproduced, shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. Please do not independently record the course without prior authorization from your instructor or an approved accommodation from [Student Access and Accommodations Services](#). Students may not record class sessions without prior written approval from Dr. Yang.

### **Constructive conversations**

Engaging in civil discourse is both a privilege and a responsibility of living in a democratic society. This class will provide both anticipated and unexpected opportunities to engage in conversations about controversial topics. Thus, when these topics emerge, we will work to agree on a set of guidelines that ensures that our civil discourse remains civil.

### **This syllabus is subject to change**

Any aspect of this syllabus, including policies, due dates, content, and course calendar, may be adjusted to meet the needs and pace of the class. Changes will be announced via class, Email, or CANVAS. It is YOUR responsibility to regularly check your ISU email and CANVAS accounts.