



## IB 350 BRAND MANAGEMENT

IES Abroad Milan

### DESCRIPTION:

As a powerful tool for creating lasting value for a company and its customers, the brand is one of a firm's most important assets. Brand plays a central role not only in defining a company's market positioning but also in communicating its identity and differentiating it from competitors. To manage and leverage a brand's force, companies thus must pursue, develop, and implement branding strategies that allow them to successfully highlight and mobilize their values, core competences, and marketing capabilities.

The city of Milan offers a useful entry point for studying branding, as it is home not only to some of the most well-known Italian brands (e.g. Prada, Armani, UniCredit Bank, Campari, Luxottica) but also to the many multinational corporations that have chosen the city as their Italian or European headquarters (e.g. General Electric, Samsung, Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Starbucks, Ikea). Indeed, according to *Il Sole 24 Ore*, Italy's principal financial newspaper, the number of foreign companies who chose to open an office in Milan grew by 7.5% from 2009 to 2016. This reflects how, thanks to its role in hosting the 2015 Expo (World Exposition), Milan has recently rebranded itself as a place, leveraging its greater international visibility to position itself as one of the most vibrant, fast-growing, and trend-setting cities in Europe.

This course will provide an overview of brand management in an Italian context by exploring the key concepts and definitions of branding and by introducing students to branding strategies that foster growth and competitive advantage, even in fast-changing industries and markets. Real world cases and local field studies, as well as investigation of the lessons learned by the city of Milan itself, will allow us to outline best practices, while hands-on assignments and workshops will help us put this knowledge into practice.

**CREDITS:** 3 credits

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45 hours

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** Background in a business-related field is required

**ADDITIONAL COST:** None

### METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Lectures, class discussions, student presentations, case-study analysis, outside research, course-related trips, individual and group projects.

*Please note:* This course uses mostly a **flipped classroom** approach. Students are expected to spend a minimum of **45 minutes** preparing for each class session by studying the instructor's course pack and required readings in order to be prepared for in-class discussion and activities. The structure of the course pack is based on the required textbook (K. L. Keller (2012), *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, 4th Edition), which is supplemented with web resources (contemporary news articles, company web pages, marketing statistics, etc.)

### REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course Participation - 10%
- Midterm Exam - 20%
- Final Exam - 20%
- Individual Assignment - 30%
- Group Project (developed in teams) - 20%

### Course Participation



Class attendance and participation in discussions are essential to profit from this course. Students have to come prepared to class, i.e. preparing the homework for each lecture (e.g. readings, assignments, brainstorming...). Students are asked to be proactive and interact during the lectures, e.g. bringing examples of their out-of-class experiences that can be related to the course. Also, this course is fully integrated with Moodle, the IES online learning platform. Students will be required to actively access and interact with resources on this platform.

For a better understanding of class participation, the grading rubric for student participation is available on Moodle and will be distributed on the first day of class.

### **Midterm Exam**

The midterm exam will be taken in-class (during the course) and will consist mostly of open-ended short answer and essay questions, with a few multiple-choice questions. The topics and materials that have been covered before the midterm will make up this exam.

*Please note:* The midterm exam will take place during Midterm-week; during Midterm-week classes will be held regularly at IES.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will be taken in-class (at the end of the course) and has the same structure as the midterm exam.

*Please note:* The final exam includes only the material covered after the midterm exam.

### **Individual Assignment**

The individual assignment consists in a written Power Point presentation, of a critical analysis of an Italian brand (to be chosen from a panel that will be shared in class).

*Please note:* This assignment is only in a written form, and no oral presentation in class is required.

*Deadline for this assignment:* The deadline to hand in this assignment is **session #12**. The assignment has to be submitted by **midnight of that day**. Approximately two weeks after handing it in, students will receive a grade and feedback to their assignment.

*Additional indications:* Students will work on this assignment both in class, during a dedicated session, and at home (out of class). The length is approximately 10 slides (slides should be self-explaining, without notes, and in a PDF format) – a detailed template to prepare the assignment will be available on Moodle.

### **Group Project**

Students will have to work in teams to create a brand for a specific product category (that will be announced in class) from scratch, developing it in each part: from name and logo, to vision and mission, to its touchpoints and strategies.

*Deadline for the group project:* The deadline to hand in the group project is the night before session 22. The assignment must be submitted by **midnight of that day**. On the following day, each group will briefly present (10 minutes sharp) its project to the other groups.

*Additional indications:* Students will work on this assignment both in class (during dedicated sessions) and at home (meeting outside class to complete the task). The length is approximately 25 slides (slides should be self-explaining, without notes, and in a PDF format) – a detailed template to prepare the assignment will be available on Moodle.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The goal of the course is to give students strategic and technical tools and approaches to understand and manage brands in diverse contexts, industries, and markets. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Utilize the terms, concepts and methods relevant to the brand management discipline;
- Apply branding principles and marketing communication concepts, also in the digital context;
- Develop a consumer-centric approach to building and evaluating strategies that build brand equity for new and existing brands;
- Identify key issues related to defining, planning and implementing brand strategies for different marketing offerings (e.g. corporate company, products, services, industrial goods, etc.);

- Manage brand elements and brand touchpoints from a strategic standpoint;
- Deal with strategic marketing decisions inherent a company's/offering's brand (e.g. secondary brand associations, ingredient branding, rebranding, etc.);
- Understand how to learn quickly from other companies' success/unsuccess of branding strategies;
- Measure brand attitude;
- Gain a hands-on experience of the fundamental steps of the brand naming creation process;
- Be able to leverage on a place's (e.g. city's) strengths in order to improve the place's image and reputation, as well as managing local (small and large) events successfully in order to create value for community and visitors.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Regular class attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend classes each day. IES Abroad Milano allows a maximum of TWO excused absences per course, to be used for emergencies related to health, family, and religion. Each further absence will automatically result in a penalty of 2 points off (2/100) on the final grade. Please note that this rule does not apply to exams: failure to attend your midterm and/or final exam will automatically result in an F grade on that paper/exam. SEVEN absences per course will result in a failing grade (2 excused absences included). Furthermore, absence on the date of scheduled tests, presentations or quizzes does not entitle to recover/reschedule such tests. If using absences for travel, students must be aware that they may remain with no excusable absence in case of illness.

**CONTENT:**

Session	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>  <b>Session 1</b>	<b>Introduction to Brand Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course overview presentation</li> <li>• Individual assignment and group project presentation</li> <li>• Why are brands important?</li> <li>• What is a brand?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus (7 pages)</li> </ul>
<b>Session 2</b>	<b>Introduction to Brand Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion (with quiz) of real-world examples</li> <li>• Why are brands so powerful?</li> <li>• Brands and trends</li> <li>• Common branding mistakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor Course Pack Session 2: read session (45 slides) and take notes</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>  <b>Session 3</b>	<b>The Brand's Role</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main functions of a brand: identification and differentiation</li> <li>• Brand awareness</li> <li>• Mission and vision statement</li> <li>• Article discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor's Course Pack Session 3: read session (25 slides) and take notes</li> <li>• Article - <i>How to write a mission statement worth shouting about</i>, O'Brien 2018: read (5 pages) and answer the questions at the end in bullet points (they will be discussed in class)</li> </ul>

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 4	<b>The Brand's Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand hierarchy and brand architecture</li> <li>Brand elements: a brand's components</li> <li>Brand touchpoints</li> <li>The brand-marketing connection</li> <li>Case study discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 4: read (30 slides) and take notes</li> <li>Case study - <i>A comparison of different multinational companies: Nutella and Oreo</i> – read (6 pages) and answer questions at the end in bullet points (they will be discussed in class)</li> </ul>
Week 3 Session 5	<b>The Brand's Value</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE)</li> <li>The blind test experiment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 5: read (25 slides) and take notes</li> </ul>
Session 6	<b>Brand Attitude</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measuring consumer attitudes towards a brand: why and how</li> <li>The multi-attribute attitude model</li> <li>The role of focus groups, with practical example and exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 6 + 7: read (40 slides) and take notes</li> </ul>
Week 4 Session 7	<b>Brand Attitude</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of survey results, analysis, and managerial implications</li> <li>Case study discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect survey data</li> <li>Case study - <i>Gucci</i>: read (7 pages) and answer the questions at the end in bullet points (they will be discussed in class)</li> </ul>
Session 8	<b>Brand Positioning and Brand Personas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define a brand's positioning</li> <li>What are brand personas and what role do they play for a successful brand positioning?</li> <li>Case study discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 8: read (35 slides) and take notes</li> <li>Case study - <i>Alfa Romeo</i>: read (8 pages) and answer the questions at the end in bullet points (they will be discussed in class)</li> </ul>
Week 5 Session 9	<b>Individual Assignment Session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students bring individual assignment brainstorming and updates to be discussed with the professor and have time to work on their assignment individually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop topic for individual assignment</li> </ul>
Session 10	<b>Review for the Midterm Exam</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content review for the midterm exam</li> <li>Question time for midterm exam</li> <li>Mock exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 10a + 10b: read (about 35 slides on the review + about 15 slides about the mock exam) and take notes</li> </ul>

Session	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 6</b>  <b>Session 11</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Material and topics covered until the midterm are part of the exam</li> </ul>	
<b>Session 12</b>	<b>First Check-in: Group Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students bring group project brainstorming and updates to be discussed with the professor and have time to work in groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop topic for group project</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>  <b>Session 13</b>	<b>Private Labels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The growing role of private labels</li> <li>Private labels' strategies and positioning</li> <li>Case study discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 13: read (25 slides) and take notes</li> <li>Case study - <i>Esselunga</i>: read (7 pages) and answer the questions at the end in bullet points (they will be discussed in class)</li> </ul>
<b>Session 14</b>	<b>Private Labels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field study at <i>Esselunga</i> (out-of class, point of sale visit and investigation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 20 with guideline + questions for the field study: read (12 slides) - you will answer the questions during the field study</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>  <b>Session 15</b>	<b>Branding Strategies: How to Strengthen the Brand Over Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debrief of the field study</li> <li>Secondary brand associations: how to choose and use them</li> <li>Ingredient branding strategies</li> <li>Co-branding strategies</li> <li>Article discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring answered questions about the field study (they will be debriefed in class)</li> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 15: read (30 slides) and take notes</li> <li>Article – <i>The case of "Parmigiano Reggiano" as an ingredient</i>, adapted from Mancini and Consiglieri 2016: read (5 pages) and answer questions at the end in bullet points (they will be discussed in class)</li> </ul>
<b>Session 16</b>	<b>Branding Strategies: How to Strengthen the Brand Over Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand extension</li> <li>Line extension</li> <li>Case study discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 16: read (30 slides) and take notes</li> <li>Case study - <i>Kinder Ferrero ice cream</i>: read (5 pages) and answer the questions at the end in bullet points (they will be discussed in class)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>  <b>Session 17</b>	<b>Brand Naming</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand naming exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 17 read (25 slides) and take notes</li> </ul>
<b>Session 18</b>	<b>Brand Naming</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand naming exercise (cont.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 18 read (30 slides) and take notes</li> </ul>

Session	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 10</b>  <b>Session 19</b>	<b>Second Check-in: Group Projects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students bring group project updates to be discussed with the professor and have time to work in groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring updates on group project</li> </ul>
<b>Session 20</b>	<b>Place Branding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place branding principles and strategies</li> <li>Examples from European cities, with a focus on Milan</li> <li>Case study discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 20: read (40 slides) and take notes</li> <li>Case study - <i>Milan and its rebranding from an industrial city to a modern metropole</i>: read (10 pages) and answer the questions at the end in bullet points (they will be discussed in class)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b>  <b>Session 21</b>	<b>Place Branding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing mega-events</li> <li>The impact of mega-events on place branding, a city's image, reputation and economic growth</li> <li>Case study discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 21: read (25 slides) and take notes</li> <li>Case study – <i>Preparing for 2026: Milan and Cortina's Winter Olympic Games</i> (10 pages) and answer the questions at the end in bullet points (they will be discussed in class)</li> </ul>
<b>Session 22</b>	<b>Group Project Presentations and Review for the Final Exam</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group project presentations</li> <li>Content review for the final exam</li> <li>Question time for final exam</li> <li>Wrap-up of the course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group presentations</li> <li>Professor's Course Pack Session 22: read (about 30 slides on the review) and take notes</li> </ul>
	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Material and topics covered from the midterm onwards are part of the final exam</li> </ul>	

#### COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Esselunga* field study to investigate a private label's branding strategies in the point of sale.

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

##### Textbook:

- K. L. Keller (2012), *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, 4th Edition. (provides framework for the instructor course pack)

##### Articles:

- How to write a mission statement worth shouting about* (O'Brien 2018). Emma O'Brien (2019), "How to write a mission statement worth shouting about", available at: <https://punchy.co/mission-statement-exercise/>
- Mancini, (adapted from) Maria Cecilia and Consiglieri, Claudio (2017), "Innovation and marketing strategies for PDO products: the case of 'Parmigiano Reggiano' as an ingredient," *Bio-based and Applied Economics* 5(2), 153-174.

**Case studies:**

- *A comparison of multinational companies with different structures: Nutella and Oreo* (instructor course pack)
- *Gucci: Luca Solca (2007), "Luxury demand: PPR's Gucci benefitting from emerging markets and aspirational consumers", Bernstein Research Report.*
- *Alfa Romeo* (included in instructor course pack)
- *Esselunga* (included in instructor course pack)
- *Kinder Ferrero ice cream* (included in instructor course pack)
- *Milan and its rebranding from an industrial city to a modern metropole* (included in instructor course pack)
- *Preparing for 2026: Milan and Cortina's Winter Olympic Games* (included in instructor course pack)