Bocconi

Ph.D. Course code 40181

MARKETING THEORY

Conceptual and Causal Modeling in Marketing

Period: a.y. 2026/2027 – I Sem
Class times:
Tue 10.15 - 13.30
Fri 14.45 - 18.00

Instructor:
Prof. **Andrea Ordanini**
Department of Marketing Room 4C1-03
andrea.ordanini@unibocconi.it

Course Description

This course provides the conceptual foundations of causal modeling and introduces students to the different types of research contributions within the marketing discipline. It has three specific goals:

- Introducing the epistemological foundations of causal modeling
- Understanding the different approaches to marketing research
- Stimulating the conceptual development of research proposals

The first two sessions introduce the general logic underlying conceptual models and discuss the theoretical assumptions of causality. Sessions 3 and 4 introduce students to the main conceptual domains of the marketing discipline. Sessions 5 and 6 discuss the typical contributions in the subfield of marketing strategy. Sessions 7 and 8 discuss the typical contributions in the subfield of consumer behavior. Sessions 9 and 10 discuss the typical contributions in the subfield of empirical modeling. Sessions 11 and 12 explore opportunities for contributions that span multiple subfields and discuss emerging research trends in the discipline. The mix of articles assigned to each session includes both seminal papers and more recent contributions.

PHD SCHOOL

Bocconi

Course Materials

The course materials consist of session content, slides, and assigned readings. The slides and readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Please note that the reading list is preliminary and may be revised during the course.

Syllabus and List of Topics

SESSIONS 1/2 – CAUSAL INFERENCE AND CONCEPTUAL MODELING– *Sep 8th, 10.15-13.30*

- Salganik M., Dodds P., Watts D., 2006. Experimental Study of Inequality and Unpredictability in an Artificial Cultural Market. *Science*, 311, 854-856.
- Varian H., 2016. Causal Inference in Economics and Marketing, *PNAS*, 113(27) 7310–7315.
  - SLIDES

SESSIONS 3/4 – RESEARCH TYPES AND ORIENTATIONS IN MARKETING– *Sep 11th, 14.45-18.00*

- Tucker C., Zhang J., 2011. How Does Popularity Information Affect Choices? A Field Experiment. *Management Science*, 57(5), 828-842.
- Hunt S., 1983. General Theories and Fundamental Explananda of Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 47, 9-17.
- Srivastava R., Shervani T., Fahey L., 1999. Marketing, Business Processes, and Shareholder Value: An Organizational Embedded View of Marketing Activities and the Discipline of Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 63, 168-179.
- Calder B., Tybout A., 1987. What Consumer Research Is …. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14, 136-140.
- Brinberg D., Hirschmann E., 1986. Multiple Orientations for the Conduct of Marketing Research: An Analysis of the Academic/Practitioner Distinction. *Journal of Marketing*, 50(4), 1-19.
  - SLIDES

Bocconi

SESSIONS 5/6 – HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO MARKETING STRATEGY FIELD – *Sep 15th, 10.15-13.30*

- Jindal N. 2020. The Impact of Advertising and R&D on Bankruptcy Survival: A Double-Edged Sword. *Journal of Marketing, 8*4(5), 22-40.
- Garnefeld I., Eggert A., Helm S., Tax S., 2013. Growing Existing Customers' Revenue Streams Through Customer Referral Programs. *Journal of Marketing* ¸ 77, 17-32.
- Ulaga W., Reinartz, W., 2011. Hybrid Offerings: How Manufacturing Firms Combine Goods and Services Successfully. *Journal of Marketing*, 75, 5- 23.
- Tirunillai S., Tellis G., 2014. Mining Marketing Meaning from Online Chatter: Strategic Brand Analysis of Big Data Using Latent Dirichlet Allocation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 51, 463–479.
- Kirca A., Jayachandran S., Bearden W.O., 2005. Market Orientation: A Meta-Analytic Review and Assessment of Its Antecedents and Impact on Performance. *Journal of Marketing*, 69, 24-41.

o SLIDES

SESSIONS 7/8 – HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO CONSUMER BEHAVIOR FIELD - *Sep 18tt, 14.45-18.00*

- Finkelstein S., Fishbach A. 2011. Tell Me What I Did Wrong: Experts Seek and Respond to Negative Feedback. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(1), 22-38.
- Goldstein N.J., Cialdini R.B., Griskevicius V. 2008. A Room with a Viewpoint: Using Social Norms to Motivate Environmental Conservation in Hotels. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(3), 472-482
- Berger J., Milkman K. 2012. What Makes Online Content Viral? *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49 (May), 192–205
- Nan L.X., Park S.K., Yang Y. 2023. Rejections Are More Contagious than Choices: How Another's Decisions Shape Our Own. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 50 (August), 363-381.
- Giesler M. 2008. Conflict and Compromise: Drama in Marketplace Evolution. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (April), 739-753.

o Slide

Bocconi

SESSIONS 9/10 – HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO EMPIRICAL MODELING FIELD – *Sep 22nd, 14.45-18.00*

- Proserpio D., Zervas G. (2017) Online Reputation Management: Estimating the Impact of Management Responses on Consumer Reviews. *Marketing Science*, 36(5):645-665.
- Moorthy K., 1993. Theoretical Modeling in Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 92-106.
- Elberse A., Eliashberg L., 2003. Demand and Supply Dynamics for Sequentially Released Products in International Markets: The Case of Motion Pictures, *Marketing Science*, 22(3), 329-354
- Tucker C., Zhang J., 2010. Growing Two-Sided Networks by Advertising the User Base: A Field Experiment. *Marketing Science*, 29(5), 805-814
- Zhang S., Metha N., Singh P.V., Srinivasan K. (2021) Can an Artificial Intelligence Algorithm Mitigate Racial Economic Inequality? An Analysis in the Context of Airbnb. *Marketing Science*, 40(5), 813-820
- Slides

SESSIONS 11/12 – HOW TO CONTRIBUTE … ACROSS FIELDS … - *Sep 25th, 14.45- 18.00*

- Sandberg J., Alvesson M. 2011. Ways of constructing research questions: gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization*, 18(1) 23–44.
- Berger J., Humphreys A., Ludwig S., Moe W., Netzer O., Schweidel D.A., 2019. Uniting the Tribes: Using Text for Marketing Insight. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 92-106.
- Golder P. N., Dekimpe M.G., An J.T., van Heerde H..J., Kim D.S.U., Alba J. W. 2023. Learning from Data: An Empirics-First Approach to Relevant Knowledge Generation. *Journal of Marketing*, 87(3), 319–336
- Boegershausen J., Datta H., Borah A., Stephen A.T. 2022. Fields of Gold: Scraping Web Data for Marketing Insights. *Journal of Marketing*, 86(5), 1– 20.
- Arora, N., Chakraborty, I., Nishimura, Y. (2025). AI–Human Hybrids for Marketing Research: Leveraging Large Language Models (LLMs) as Collaborators. *Journal of Marketing*, 89(2), 43-70.
- Slides

Bocconi

Assessment Methods.

The course will be conducted as follows. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss all assigned readings and to present those articles specifically assigned to them. Any evidence that a student has not adequately prepared the readings will negatively affect the participation grade.

In addition, no later than two weeks after the end of the course, students are required to submit a brief paper (maximum 7 single-spaced pages) outlining a potential research agenda on a specific marketing topic. Specifically, students are asked to: i) review recent issues of

the *Journal of Marketing* (*JM*), *Journal of Marketing Research* (*JMR*), *Journal of Consumer Research* (*JCR*), and *Marketing Science* (*MKSC*) from the past three to four years and select a topic of interest; ii) develop a short paper proposing a research agenda that extends existing knowledge on the selected topic. The deadline for submission is October 9 at 12:00 noon (Italian time).

Finally, students will present their paper in a 20-minute discussion with the instructor. These presentations are scheduled for October 12 at 9:00 a.m.

Students will be evaluated as follows:

Class participation: max 12 points (out of 31)
Final paper: max 12 points (out of 31)
Final presentation max 7 points (out of 31)

Faculty Bio.

Andrea Ordanini is BNP Paribas Professor of Marketing and Service Analytics at Bocconi University in Milan, Italy. He has been a visiting researcher at the London School of Economics and the University of California, Irvine. His research interests focus on services

marketing and the consumption of cultural goods, spanning both conceptual and empirical research. His work has been published in leading journals in the field, including the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, and *Marketing Science*. He serves on the Editorial Review Board of the *Journal of Marketing*. In 2021, he received the AMA Hunt/Maynard Award for the best conceptual contribution to the marketing discipline.