**Corporate Communication and Communication Law**

Prof. Silvia Biraghi; Prof. Vincenzo Melilli

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims at preparing students to understand how communication and branding can be used to interact with consumers and stakeholders to build strong brands in conversational markets. Classes provide an overview of the most recent development in the practice of communication at the crossroad between markets and society. During classes participants will understand the core elements that characterize the essence of a brand and how to create and protect a brand through communication efforts. The course is inspired by Consumer Culture Theory perspectives to provide a critical overview of the latest trends in the use people, brands, consumers, and prosumers are making of communication, platforms, and marketplaces. In addition, the course will provide a full grasp of the main intellectual property tools applied to trademarks and designs. Then, the statutory law and a selection of the most significant case-law will enhance students’ understanding of branding. Overall, the course will provide full awareness on source identifiers and corporate communication within a proper, legal framework whereas the rule of law will serve creativity.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

* Identify the assets that convey the brand identity, protect those assets, and understand the potential for extension of a brand;
* Analyze brand positioning to understand how points of parity and points of difference can be levered to secure a strong position in the market as well as in the mind of the consumers;
* Understand consumers’ expectations and consumer culture to develop insights, which maximize brand relevance;
* Design and manage communication initiatives and cultural branding endeavors to connect with consumers in conversational markets;
* Identify trademarks and companies’ intangible assets allowing informed choices, according to the rule of law, on selection, protection, and use of distinctive signs as well as ornamental features of products/services;
* Shape strategies on creative assets following basics of rule of law to increase companies’ footprint nationally and globally;
* Avoid intellectual property infringements and unfair competition in the marketplace.

***COURSE CONTENT***

First Module: *Prof. Vincenzo Melilli*

1. Selecting, protecting and using trademarks:

* Trademarks and distinctive signs; vulgarization, secondary meaning and case law; prior rights and conflict between trademarks; patronymic marks; women rights and trademarks; trademarks around the world.

1. Design/Design Patents and ornamental features

* Protecting the appearance of a product; the comprehensive definition of “products”; case law on functionality; trademarks meet designs; copyrighted products and designs.

1. Advertising Law

* Rule of law on ad campaigns; influencer marketing, real time and ambush marketing case law; unfair competition and IP law on greenwashing and diversitywashing.

1. Intellectual Property and new technologies

* Intellectual Property legal frames on Metaverse, NFTs, software generated products and e-platforms.

Second Module: *Prof. Silvia Biraghi*

1. Corporate Communication in the current scenario

* The ever-evolving role of brands
* Brand activism and woke washing

1. Basics of brand management

* Brand identity assets
* Brand positioning
* Achieving differentiation through customer service

1. Co-creating brands in conversational markets

* Insights, trend hunting, and cultural branding
* Opportunities and challenges of participatory culture

***READING LIST***

For the first module, the professor will post course materials after each class. Presentations, statutory and case law readings will be available on Blackboard for attending students. For the second module, the professor will post course materials after each class. Presentation decks, papers, readings, guest speakers’ materials, and links will be available on Blackboard for attending students.

As for non attenting students, for the first module, prior to the semester, the professor will provided details of text books and course materials via Blackboard. For the second module the reading list includes the following books:

J. Cornelissen, *The new Corporate Communication. A guide to theory and practice, Sage Publications, 2020.* (part 1, part 2, part 3)

J.N. Kapferer, *The new strategic brand management: Advanced insights and strategic thinking,* Kogan Page Publishers, 2012. (capitoli Introduction, 1, 2, 4, 7, 12, 13).

***TEACHING METHOD***

The first module is based on lectures mainly focusing on case law and practical legal issues. In particular, during each class the professor will guide students to the essentials of intellectual property and marketing law by discussing the major cases having an impact on branding and design issues. Students’ participation is encouraged through interactive learning and, during the semester, an in-class team project will be held. Guest speakers from significant industries will additionally help students apply the rule of law to work-related best practices and knowledge.

The second module is based on lectures in order to provide a conceptual framework of the topics listed above, on critical discussions/forums, and on group assignments in order to facilitate and activate the learning process. Guest speakers will share with the class case study presentations. Students will also be involved in a team project that is designed to enable them to face the challenges of communication and brand management in practice.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will sit for an individual exam that consists of a written test related to the topics discussed in class during the first and the second module and Blackboard materials. Students will also be involved in a team project as part of the grading process of the second module. Students will be evaluated based on their ability to envision creative and managerial solutions to handle brand communication projects. Students who participate in the team project are expected to complete their evaluation process during the official exam sessions scheduled in January and February 2023.

For those students who will not participate in the classes and carry out the team project work the exam consists in a written test based on open-ended questions related to the topics illustrated in the books included in the reading list. The exam covers a blend of theoretical questions and managerial and critical musings on the focal topics of the course. Make sure to check for updates about the first module reading list.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Place and time of consultation hours*

Prof. Vincenzo Melilli meets students in person or via MicrosoftTeams upon appointment.

Prof. Silvia Biraghi meets students at LABCOM, via Necchi 9 or in MicrosftTeams. Students should schedule an appointment in advance via e-mail.