Imagination, Creativity & Commerce (MARK 30550)

Just as indispensable to our managerial enterprise as its quantitative counterpart marketing analytics is the discipline that I call marketing ludics. Ludics is the playful impulse arising in embodied imagination that seeks insight in divergent thinking and ensouls the data mine through story. It is a rigorous approach to discovering and cultivating the creative capacity of individuals, organizations and cultures in the service of transcendent consumer experience. The precursor of innovation, ludics challenges conventional wisdom and accepted practice in favor of relentless curiosity and provocative improvisation. I will help you harness the power of ludics in this course. I will show you how to engage your imagination in a holistic fashion, and apply it to a range of managerial challenges. We will awaken your dormant creative faculty through a host of experiential exercises such as lateral thinking, artful ideating, brain/heart-storming, brandscaping, storytelling, zone tripping, dream mapping, ethical borrowing, introspective journaling, and mindful apprehending. You will develop skills for problem finding as well as problem solving. The course will observe a seminar-workshop-studio format. Class will depend for its energy upon the practice and elaboration of creative techniques and the discussion of project outcomes. Our goal is to enable you to engage, enrich, express, extend and enjoy your creative capacity on a regular basis. This is an extremely interactive course that should be as much fun as it is demanding. This course will be immediately useful to careers in any field you choose to pursue, as well as to your life at large.

Channeling Customer Experience (MARK 70150)

Variously described as “Ethnographic Consumer Research,” “Design Thinking,” “Customer Experience Management,” “Voice of the Consumer Audit,” “Contextual Inquiry,” “Customer Journey,” “Alternative Brand Paradigm,” or sometimes simply as “Deep Dive,” this qualitative approach to insight generation is characterized by close observation, prolonged immersion and empathic response. Our expectation is that holistic comprehension of stakeholder experience will lead to more enlightened managerial intervention, as we translate our intellectual and embodied understanding into delightful solutions. Qualitative research methods have spread rapidly among firms across industry boundaries, in recognition of the fact that managers often have no systematic intuition about or affinity for the segments to which they cater. As managers are exhorted to "get closer" to the customer, they must divine unarticulated needs, avoid unintended consequences, and anticipate intersections of their own industry with others. This course is designed to help you distinguish the actual lived experience of stakeholders from the assumptions of the firm. That is, you will seek authentic stakeholder insight. Our emphasis is on the managerial implications of prolonged engagement with stakeholders. You will analyze and interpret the functional, behavioral, aesthetic and ecological dimensions of product/service/brand/organization essence. You will learn to conduct rapid appraisals using qualitative methods, and to supervise diagnostic research into business problems. The class will observe a seminar-workshop format, and depend for its energy upon discussion of ongoing field research projects that student teams will conduct in naturalistic settings. This course will be immediately useful to careers in consulting and entrepreneurship, technology, category and brand management, new product development, advertising and marketing research.

Culture, Consumption and Marketing (MARK 70550)

Consumer culture theorists increasingly recognize that the domains of marketing and society are so thoroughly interpenetrating as to be virtually indistinguishable from one another. That is, culture, consumption and marketing form a fundamental, co-constituting identity. Contemporary marketing requires a holistic understanding of materiality, imagination and behavior as they interact in marketplaces around the globe. This course will help you comprehend, stimulate, manage and resist desire as you unpack the forces that shape and reflect the culture(s) of consumption. You will grasp the market as a
complex system of material and metaphysical interactions, and learn to manipulate these interactions in a prosocial, ecologically considerate, ethical manner. Tempering interdisciplinary perspectives with a symbolic cast and combining the techniques of systematic introspection with participant observation, you will examine the many ways that consumption ramifies throughout daily life. Marketer and consumer misbehavior will also be probed. Cultural, subcultural, generational, class, lifecourse and group influences on marketing and consumption will be investigated. Semiotic interpretation, design thinking, cross-cultural analysis, scenario planning, trend projection and other frameworks are employed throughout the module. We will dwell especially upon the creation of cultural strategies as an alternative to red ocean business-as-usual practices. I will help you become a more interesting and dimensional instrument in interpreting and influencing the ethos of the market. This course is especially useful if you want to comprehend the "human" aspects of marketing, especially as they influence the "technical", and if you seek insight into the deep structure of your own motivations. Its most immediate relevance is to careers in consulting and entrepreneurship, category and brand management, new product development, advertising and multicultural marketing.