



Selected Topics in Trends

Or:

From iPhone to Instagram and Social Revolutions

How products, services, ideas, and behaviors spread and become popular

Lecturer: Dr. Liraz Lasry

Class hours: Mondays, 14:45-17:30*

Email: lirazl@gmail.com

If need be, I am happy to schedule a personal meeting or conversation about the course material or related topics. Students can also contact me by email. To ensure that you receive a response by the time in which you need it, please email me a number of days, or at least 48 hours prior to the date in which you will need an answer, a meeting, etc.

TA: Maya Goldstein

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: mayagold.tau@gmail.com

Prerequisites:

Course registration will only be given to students that meet the prerequisites of the course as outlined on the faculty website. In cases where the student does not meet the requirements, the system will automatically cancel the registration a few weeks after the beginning of the semester. No exceptions will be made.

Please verify in advance that you are entitled to take this course in this stage of your studies.

About the Course:

Each of us has a product, message, idea, or behavior that we want to spread like wildfire - in the consumer, customer (business or personal), coworker, community or personal social circle.

In other words - we would want to create “trends”.

What is a trend? Why do specific products become popular and others fail? What are the characteristics that can facilitate a trend? What factors affect social adoption? How do groups function? Are there groups of friends, organizations, or communities that affect the success of a trend more than others? These questions are relevant not only for consumer products, but also to a wide variety of fields, bodies, and companies: a trend could also be an idea, technology, service, behavior, social change etc..

This course examines how products, ideas, and behaviors become popular (“trends”) and discuss a number of factors that contribute to the success or a trend, such as characteristics of the product/idea, message characteristics, social-group processes, personal and interpersonal psychological processes, different target audience characteristics and more.

For this, we will review academic literature and current models from the fields of social psychology, cognitive psychology, and marketing. Alongside presenting the theories, models and research, the course will also include practical examples, class discussions, and guest lecturers by professionals and experts in different fields who identified, created, and followed trends in different fields. They will share their experiences.

Course Requirements and Grading Breakdown for Final Grade:

Please note – you must complete all elements of your final grade in order to pass this course. If you cannot do this, please re-consider taking this course.

1. Trend Analysis – Short Personal Exercise (10%)

A personal analysis of successful trend characteristics in accordance with the definition of the trend as presented and discussed in class. Length of assignment – up to one page. The assignment will be submitted as a word file by email to Maya, the TA for the course by **12:00** on the deadline.

mayagold.tau@gmail.com If you did not receive confirmation that the file has been received within 24 hours, then the file was not received.

2. Creating a Trend - Group Project (50%)

Students will be asked to divide into groups of five. Each group will be required to create a trend according to the principles learned in the classroom and build a distribution plan. Length of assignment – maximum 12 pages (you can write less!). Projects will be submitted via email to Maya and Liraz.

3. Exam (40%)

The exam includes 10 short open questions, and the objective will be to test your ability to analyze trends and implement the tools presented in the course. Students will be permitted a one-sided formula sheet. Sample questions will be published prior to the exam.

4. Attendance and Class Participation in Discussions

Participation in classes and discussions indicates the level of the student's involvement in the course, and is important for producing the best curriculum and creating fruitful and interesting discussions for you and your classmates. Students in the class come from very different fields, and therefore, each of you can improve the quality of the course by sharing insights and examples from his/her field and professional experience. **Bonus points (see below) will be based on quality of the comments and not their quantity.**

The course is highly concentrated and an important part of learning stems from the discussions and participation in the classroom. Students, therefore, must attend a **minimum of 5** out of the 6 class meetings.

To create ideal conditions for learning and making the most of each class, students are asked to make an effort to arrive to classes on time. Latecomers are asked to enter the classroom together, fifteen minutes after the beginning of class or after the break. Please respect the time scheduled for class and your fellow classmates who came to class on time. Upon entering the class, please turn off phones and refrain from using laptop computers (individuals can contact me for permission with the appropriate documentation).

Guest lecturers will be integrated into a number of lectures in the course. They will be given by the finest experts in the industry. **Attendance is mandatory for all guest lecturers** (except for a justified absence such as a sickness or reserve duty) and the content is designed to be a part of the course material. Lecture dates will be indicated at the beginning of the course, and students should make a special effort to arrive on time. Students who think they will not be able to meet the attendance requirements should reconsider attending this course.

* The bonus clause will not affect the majority of students in the course. The final grade for the course will be affected by this clause only in cases of especially positive involvement (such as a constant and important contribution to discussions, which will increase a grade), or, alternatively, in the case of particularly negative involvement (such as disruption or being late to class on a number of occasions). This can have a maximum effect of this portion of the final score in the amount of up to 15%.

Grading Policy in Accordance to the Curve

The Recanati Business School has a grade curving policy for all MA/MBA courses. The curve is adhered to the final grade of a course. As such, the average for grades in this course will fall between the range of 83-87%.

Course site and Communication – Moodle

Our course website (moodle) will be the main medium for exchanging information. We recommend that you check it every week before class, and at the end of the course (before the exam). You will find our presentations there

before each class (at least 24 hours ahead of class). In some cases, the online presentations will be slightly different from those presented in class, so that we can have discussion in class. More updated will be sent via email, please make sure we have your current email address.

Every inability to meet a course assignment/requirement requires prior notification (by email) to the TA of the course

Class Schedule*:

Course Subjects
a. <u>Introduction, defining foundational concepts and prediction</u> (Topic examples: What is a popular product? What is a trend? Diffusion of new products, lifecycle of a trend, lifecycles of trends in various fields, defining central influencing factors, differences between momentary trends (Fad)/ continuing trends/classical products, trend prediction)
b. <u>What makes products/ideas “stick”?</u> (Needs and motivation, characteristics and qualities of products with fast social proliferation, “sticky” message creation)
c. <u>Social factors and motives in adoption and abandonment</u> (at the group level) (Social groups and social proliferation, effects of groups, characteristics of groups and social roles)
d. <u>Psychological causes and motives in adoption and abandonment</u> (on the level of the individual consumer)
e. <u>Youth as adopters and creators of trends and social phenomena</u> Challenges, characteristics and motives

***The schedule is subject to change, we will cover all the topics as time permits.**

Schedule

1. Submission of short personal exercise – by the beginning of the third class of the course (3/3/14).
2. Submission of list of group members and creative trends project topic by the beginning of the fourth class of the course. We highly recommend that you start thinking of your projects as soon as possible, and consult us as early as possible.
3. Presentations will be in the last class of the module. Students must submit the presentation via email the day before class, by 17:00.
4. Submission of final assignments – one week after last class of the course.