COMM/BUS/FSST 355

Digital Marketing: Wines and Wineries of Central Italy

Course Syllabus
Fall Semester 2025

Instructor: Jacopo Cossater, M.A.
Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Prerequisites: none
Class Meeting Days & Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 4:00-5:30 pm
Office Hours: by appointment before or after class

Course Type: Course with Service Learning component
Course Fee: USD$120

Course Description
This course offers an overview of the most important digital marketing theories and techniques as applied to wine, with a special focus on wines from Central Italy. Students will analyze the wine markets of the world, consumer segments, companies' communication and will participate in a practical exercise designed to give them the opportunity to shape a real online marketing plan for a prestigious Umbrian winery. In addition, students will learn the importance of describing the sensory experience of wine and acquire the particular vocabulary necessary to describe wines from Central Italy to potential customers.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures
Below are the course's learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *Compare and differentiate* the concepts of social media marketing, email marketing, influencer marketing, content marketing, branded content (Class Participation and Activities);
- *Explain* the basic role, processes, and purpose of digital brand management in the wine business (Readings, Class Participation and Activities, Field Trips);
- *Explain* the basics of wine promotion strategies (Readings, Class Participation and Activities, Field Trips, Service Learning Project Marketing Plan & Presentation);
- *Identify and classify* wines from Central Italy (Readings, Class Participation and Activities, Field Trips);

Course Materials
Readings
A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course's Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

Assessment

Attendance	10%
Course Journal	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Service Learning Project Marketing Plan	20%
Service Learning Project Presentation	5%
Final Exam	20%
End of Semester Community Engagement Presentation	5%

Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% -89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Please note: *decimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.*

Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is an essential part of this course. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences per course without penalty, per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Course Journal (20%)

Students will be provided with a notebook at the start of the semester, which they will use as a personal space through which to reflect on course material and ideas. In-class assignments (e.g. summaries of assigned readings, analyses of primary sources, mental maps, reflections, predictive exercises) will be regularly scheduled and graded twice throughout the semester, i.e. before the mid-semester break (Week 6) and at the end of the course (Week 12). Each of these checks is worth 10% of your grade, for a total of 20%. Students will find the full prompt on Moodle for more information.

Service Learning Project Marketing Plan (20%)
Students will work in groups to design a real digital marketing plan for **Cantina Montemelino** (Lago Trasimeno, Italy). After a brief market survey and a field trip to the company estate, students will study how to develop Cantina Montemelino's online presence. Guidelines for the writing of the marketing plan will be distributed in class.

Service Learning Project Presentation (5%)
Each group will prepare a 10-minute oral presentation to share the marketing plan created for **Cantina Montemelino**. Use of PowerPoint slides or other presentation software is highly recommended. All students are responsible for presenting their group's research and answering questions from the audience.

Midterm and Final Exams (20% + 20%)
The midterm and final exams will consist of multiple choice and essay questions of variable length. The questions will be drawn from mandatory readings and in-class presentations.

End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations 5%
During Special Academic Events Week, the class will present a 15-minute summary of the project experience to the Umbra community during the Community Engagement Presentations on **Wednesday, December 10**. Students will receive the guidelines and presentation order after the mid-semester break. Participation in this event is MANDATORY and an integral part of the community engagement grade.

Course Content Disclaimer
<u>This is explicitly not a tasting course</u>. There is absolutely no requirement to try any wine at all for full credit in this course. Tasting is optional; wine is utilized in very small amounts and for academic purposes.

Extension & Submitting Late Work
Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment but the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

<u>Attendance Policy</u>
Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. <u>The first two absences per course due to illness will be considered excused "sick days" and do not require medical documentation</u>. To receive additional excused absences due to illness, students are required to see a local physician or request a letter from an Institute-approved doctor documenting they should be excused from class for illness.
<u>Unexcused absences will adversely affect a student's academic performance and will result in a reduction of the student's final course grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%</u>. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.
If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class. Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. <u>Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade</u> (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).
Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness include death in the immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, and medical appointments that cannot be

rescheduled.

Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director, but only if a medical certification is provided. Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence. Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines. Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the generation of content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism. Should the Institute become aware of a student's use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set on silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices for example, ear buds) cannot be used during class lectures and discussions, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

Laptop/Smartphone Policy

I as an instructor and as a person am dependent on both my computer and my telephone. That said: An ever-increasing body or research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, I have a physical notebook policy: I ask you to leave your computers in your bags and phones in your pockets and use a regular notebook. There are four exceptions: 1) if you have a vision or other accommodation; 2) if you are using a tablet to take notes, one which is not connected to the internet; 3) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools; or 4) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer;

U.N. Sustainable Development Goals

This course contributes to the achievement of one or more goals of U. N. Agenda for Sustainable Development:
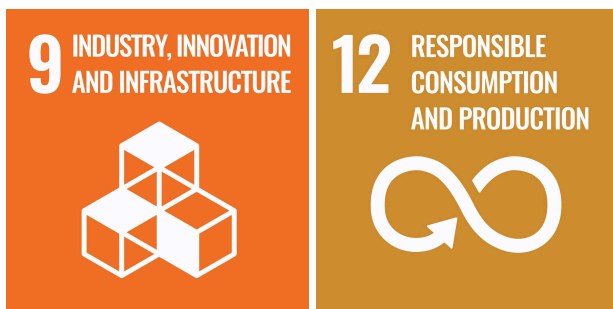
Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Introduction to the course and the culture of wine

Meeting 1: *Course Introduction*

> *Introduction of the community engagement service learning project&partner by Umbra staff.*

Meeting 2: *Introduction to Winemaking and Wine Tasting*

Readings:

- J. Cossater, *Wine Sommelier*, White Star/De Agostini, Novara (Italy), 2016, pages 13-47

Introduction to the discipline of digital marketing and the market of wine

Meeting 1: *Digital Marketing/1: 4Ps of marketing - Digital Marketing Essentials*

Readings:

- V. Desai, *Digital Marketing: A Review*, International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development, 2019, pages 196-200 (Fostering Innovation, Integration and Inclusion Through Interdisciplinary Practices in Management)

Meeting 2: *Wine Promotion/1: The World Wine Market*

Readings:

- P. Wagner, J. Olsen, L. Thach, *Wine Marketing and Sales*, Wine Appreciation Guild, San Francisco (USA), 2019, pages 4-23 ("Basic Wine Marketing Principles")

Promoting wine (both offline and online)

Meeting 1: *Digital Marketing/2: Social Media Marketing 1*

Meeting 2: *Wine Promotion/2: Pricing Strategies and Distribution Strategies*

Readings:

- C. M. Hall, R. Mitchell, *Wine Marketing*, Routledge, London (UK), 2007, pages 83-109 ("The marketing dimensions of production processes: adding value to the vine")

Wine Communication Strategies & Wines from Central Italy

Meeting 1: *Digital Marketing/3: Social Media Marketing 2*

Readings:

- Hannah Milnes, *IWSC Market Insight: Social Media Marketing*, The International Wine & Spirit Competition, 2021

Meeting 2: *Wines from Central Italy (Umbria & Latium)*

Readings:
- H. Johnson and J. Robinson, *The World Atlas of Wine*, Mitchell Beazley, London (UK), page 719 and page 395

Email Marketing & Content Marketing + Field Trip to Montefalco
Meeting 1: *Digital Marketing/4: Email Marketing*

Readings:
- Chelsey Church, *The History of Email Marketing*, Brafton, 2023

Meeting 2: *Marketing Plan - Marketing Plan Group Activity/1 (laptops or tablets will be needed)*

Meeting 3: *Friday, October 10 - Field Trip to Lago Trasimeno - Cantina Montemelino & Duca della Corgna. A detailed itinerary will be sent early this week.*

Wine Promotion
Meeting 1: *Wine Promotion/3: Promotion and Communication Strategies*

Readings:
- P. Wagner, J. Olsen, L. Thach, *Wine Marketing and Sales*, pages 144-171 ("Wine Public Relations")

Meeting 2: *Course review - Midterm Exam*

Semester Break

Content Marketing & Wines from Central Italy

Meeting 1: *Digital marketing/5: The Buyer's Journey - Content Marketing vs. Branded Content*

Readings:
- R. Hora & R. Lanari, *How to build brands and create awareness in the world of wine? A conversation with Prof. Larry Lockshin*, Winext, 2020

Meeting 2: *Wines from Central Italy (Tuscany)*

Readings:
- H. Johnson and J. Robinson, *The World Atlas of Wine*, Mitchell Beazley, London (UK), 2019, pages 703-704

Influencer Marketing & SWOT Analysis

<u>Meeting 1:</u> *Digital marketing/6: Influencer Marketing*

<u>Readings:</u>
- Michael Haenlein, Ertan Anadol, Tyler Farnsworth, *Navigating the New Era of Influencer Marketing: How to be Successful on Instagram, TikTok, & Co.*, California Management Review, Berkeley (USA), 2020.

<u>Meeting 2:</u> *SWOT Analysis - Constructing a Digital Marketing Plan and Marketing Plan Group Activity/2 - Online meeting w/Cantina Montemelino (laptops or tablets will be needed)*

<u>Readings:</u>
- Multiple Authors, *Performing a SWOT Analysis*, Chartered Management Institute, Corby (UK), 2007.

<center>**WEEK 9**</center>

Constructing a Digital Marketing Plan and Project Group Work Activity

<u>Meeting 1:</u> *Digital Marketing/7: Digital Marketing Strategies*

<u>Readings:</u>
- Brianne Cohen, <u>*Why Wine Businesses Are Investing in Influencer Partnerships*</u>, SevenFifty Daily, 2024)

<u>Meeting 2:</u> *Wine Promotion/5: How to build a distinctive brand identity in the wine industry*

<center>**WEEK 10**</center>

Public Relations in the Wine Industry and Project Group Work Activity

<u>Meeting 1:</u> *Wine Promotion/5: Magazines, Guides, and Influencers - Midterm check-in with the Community Partner*

<u>Readings:</u>
- K. Storchmann, *Expert Opinion on the Wine Market*, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 2015

<u>Meeting 2:</u> *Marketing Plan - Marketing Plan Group Activity/3 (laptops or tablets will be needed)*

<u>Readings:</u>
- Handouts distributed in class

<center>**WEEK 11**</center>

Wines from Central Italy and Group Work Activity

<u>Meeting 1:</u> *Group Activity - Community Engagement Final Presentation (laptops or tablets will be needed)*

<u>Meeting 2:</u> *Wines from Central Italy (Marche and Abruzzo)*

<u>Readings:</u>
- H. Johnson and J. Robinson, *The World Atlas of Wine*, Mitchell Beazley, London (UK), pages 425-427

<center>**WEEK 12**</center>

Project Group Work Activity

<u>Meeting 1:</u> *Marketing Plan - Group Activity/4 (laptops or tablets will be needed)*

<u>Meeting 2:</u> *Marketing Plans In-Class Presentations w/ Service Learning Project staff & Cantina Montemelino*

<div align="center">WEEK 13</div>

Final Classes, Final Exams, & Special Academic Events

<u>Meeting 1:</u> *Tuesday, April 22, Final Exam*

<u>Meeting 2:</u> *Wednesday, December 10, Special Academic Event, Community Engagement Final Presentation*

BUS/COMM/FSST 355: Digital Marketing: Wine & Wineries of Central Italy
Service Learning Project
Syllabus Appendix

Fall 2025

What is service learning?
Service learning is an important type of experiential education integrated into a course in which:
-   students engage in an organized activity or project aimed to address a community need that is identified in collaboration with the community partner;
-   students critically reflect on the link between the experience in the community, course content, and the learning goals; and
-   there is reciprocal learning both by the students and by the community partners.

Students will need a certain degree of flexibility, creativity, and self-initiative to realize a service learning project. Organization and open communication in-class with the instructor and team members will be key to student success.

Service Learning Project Overview

Community Partner
Montemelino is a 60-hectare organic farm located on the northern hills of Lake Trasimeno, between Umbria and Tuscany, at an altitude of about 300 meters. Set on a beautiful ridge overlooking the lake, the estate has been run by Margret and Guido since 1961, and is now lovingly continued by their daughter Sabina and her partner Pier, carrying on a family tradition driven by passion. In addition to producing high-quality wines and olive oil, the old farmhouses have been carefully restored to welcome guests and friends. Guido's creativity and distinctive style are visible throughout Montemelino, with his many mural paintings making each home truly unique.

Website: https://montemelino.com/en/

Project Description and Goals
Students will participate in a service learning project with Cantina Le Cimate winery where they will be asked to research and develop original digital marketing strategies designed to help improve the online presence of the company.

Based on interviews with the company's manager(s), on-site observations, company material, a review of its digital marketing strategy, and online research, students will deliver a presentation and report for aspects of the company's marketing that they consider important to increase its presence in the target media. Students will also create a formal PowerPoint presentation in class for company representatives. More details about the presentation and report are found below.

Organization, Expectations, and Roles

Student teams will be chosen by the instructor. Teams will be responsible for deciding how to divide the various tasks to ensure members contribute equally throughout the course of the project. An important amount of time will be dedicated to the service learning project's progress in class. If necessary, teams will also be required to meet outside of class each week for approximately 1-2 hours.

In-Class Presentation for Community Partner

Each team will create and present a final detailed presentation based on its findings and recommendations to a company's representative, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. Audience members will be expected to ask questions to the other teams presenting to promote a community of learning and support.

Guidelines:
- PowerPoint or Google Slides (spell-check!).
- 10-15 minutes.
- Each team member contributes to the preparation and delivery of the presentation.
- Rehearse presentation as a group for content, length, and transitions.

Final Report

Students are to assume the role of a team of digital marketing consultants to Cantina Le Cimate. Students have been asked by the management to complete a digital market analysis and to prepare a digital marketing plan to expand their digital presence. Students will apply analytical methods and concepts developed in class to provide an original report and set of recommendations.

Community Engagement Final Presentation

During Special Academic Events Week, the class will present a 15-minute summary of the project experience to the Umbra community during the Community Engagement Presentations during the last week of the semester, on **Wednesday, December 10th.** Students will receive the guidelines and presentation order after the mid-semester break. Participation in this event is MANDATORY and an integral part of the community engagement grade.

Grading Rubric

The service learning project is worth a total of 30% of the final course grade, which will be divided into three categories:
1. Marketing Plan (20% of the final course grade)
2. In-class presentation for partner (5% of the final course grade)
3. End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations (5% of the final course grade)