



TEACHING GUIDE - 2026-2027

Digital Communications

UGRA_014121

Departments	Department of Marketing
Teaching Languages	English
ECTS	2
Teacher responsible	Ana Maria Varela Otero - ana.varela1@esade.edu

Course Goals

Objectives

1.- Strategic & Business-Oriented Goals

- Understand the role of digital communication to drive business growth, not just marketing outputs
- Link brand strategy to real KPIs (revenue, customer acquisition, retention, ROI)
- Develop the ability to identify digital opportunities from market trends and data
- Integrate digital communications tools in a fully comprehensive communications strategy

2.-Creative & Content Thinking

- Analyze creative communication ideas rooted in strategy
- Learn how to build engaging storytelling for brands in digital environments
- Translate brand positioning into compelling content formats (video, social, interactive)

3.- Data & Analytical Mindset

- Interpret brand and communications metrics and dashboards
- Evaluate campaign performance across the funnel
- Use basic analytics tools to improve decision-making

4.- Execution & Professional Skills

- Search information & Design and present impactful and powerful presentations
- Work in teams simulating agency or client environments

- Communicate ideas clearly, persuasively, and visually

5.- Critical Thinking & Adaptability

- Evaluate emerging trends (AI, influencers, privacy, Web3, etc.)
- Develop the ability to adapt strategies in a fast-changing digital ecosystem
- Build a learning mindset for continuous upskilling

Previous knowledge

at least 1 marketing course

Teaching methodology

This course follows a highly interactive, practice-oriented, and student-centered approach, combining conceptual frameworks with real-world application.

1. Case-Based Learning (Real-World Focus)

Students will analyze iconic brand cases across industries to understand how companies design and execute integrated on/off communication strategies in practice.

- Each session introduces a real business challenge
- Students apply frameworks to assess strategy, execution, and results
- Emphasis on critical thinking and decision-making, not just description

2. Flipped Classroom Approach

Students prepare key materials before class, allowing in-class time for deeper discussion and application.

- Pre-reading, market research, and short exercises
- In-class sessions focused on debate, problem-solving, and feedback
- Active student participation is expected and assessed

3. Collaborative Learning (Teams & Peer Learning)

Students will work in teams to enhance:

- Teamwork and leadership skills
- Exposure to different perspectives and approaches
- Ability to present and defend ideas

Each student will take turns acting as group spokesperson, ensuring active involvement.

4. Industry-Oriented Perspective

The course connects academic learning with professional practice:

- Use of current tools, formats, and trends
- Exposure to best practices and real campaigns
- Deep professional knowledge from speakers or examples from industry

5. Reflective Learning

Students consolidate learning through individual reflections:

- Key takeaways after each session
- Personal insights on strategy, creativity, and execution
- Development of a critical and adaptive mindset

6. Balance of Key Competencies

The methodology is designed to develop a balanced skillset across:

- Strategic thinking (analysis & planning)
- Creativity (content & storytelling)
- Technology awareness (platforms & tools)
- Analytics (measurement & optimization)

Description

Course contribution to program

The Course: Digital is the New Black: How to Succeed in Brand Communication Today in a Connected World, Brands Must be Always-On Introduction

This course enhances core BBA competencies by combining strategic, analytical, and creative skills with hands-on experience in digital communication, preparing students for careers in a technology-driven business environment.

The course strengthens key program competencies, including:

- Strategic thinking: Students learn to analyze business and brand challenges and develop data-driven communication strategies
- Analytical skills: Interpretation of digital metrics and evaluation of performance across the customer journey
- Creativity and innovation: Development of engaging communication ideas adapted to digital environments
- Communication skills: Clear and persuasive presentation of ideas in both written and oral formats
- Teamwork and collaboration: Working in groups simulating real business and agency contexts

The course enhances students' readiness for roles in:

- Marketing and brand management
- Digital marketing and social media strategy
- Consulting and business development
- Startups and entrepreneurial ventures

Students develop practical, transferable skills such as campaign planning, content strategy, and performance analysis.

The course bridges academic concepts with real business application by:

- Using real company case studies to illustrate best practices
- Developing hands-on projects simulating professional environments
- Applying frameworks to current digital ecosystems and challenges

The course supports the program's goal of preparing students for a technology-driven business landscape:

- Understanding how digital platforms shape business and customer behavior
- Gaining familiarity with digital tools, content formats, and data usage
- Developing adaptability to emerging trends (AI, new media, evolving consumer expectations)

The course reinforces the program's international outlook and relevance. Students are exposed to:

- International brand cases across industries
- The dynamics of global digital ecosystems
- Diverse consumer behaviors in a connected world

Short description

In a world where attention is scarce and brands compete across multiple platforms, this course teaches students how to build impactful integrated and communication strategies. From insights to ideas to execution, students will develop the skills to create, manage, and evaluate campaigns that drive real business results.

This course explores how brands design and execute effective communication strategies in today's digital ecosystem. Students will learn to analyze market challenges, create engaging content, and measure performance across platforms, combining strategic thinking, creativity, and data-driven decision-making. In the age of the attention economy, brands must be always on, relevant, and engaging. This course prepares students to navigate the digital landscape by combining strategy, storytelling, and data to build strong, meaningful brand connections.

Activities

In-class discussions and debates

During the session, the case is discussed collectively:

Groups present key findings and insights

The class examines:

The strategic problem or opportunity

The digital communication approach used by the brand

The effectiveness of content, channels, and execution

The instructor facilitates discussion, introduces frameworks, and connects practice with theory

Teamwork

Teamwork is a central pillar of the course and is designed to simulate real professional environments where collaboration, coordination, and shared accountability are essential. Teamwork in this course emphasizes collaboration, shared responsibility, and professional delivery, enabling students to develop both interpersonal and strategic skills in a simulated business environment.

All team members are expected to: Contribute actively and consistently to group tasks, Take responsibility for specific roles or deliverables, Ensure that the final output reflects a collective effort, not individual contributions

Effective teamwork requires: Open communication and respect for diverse perspectives, Ability to build on others' ideas, Constructive feedback and conflict resolution, Commitment to common goals

Teams must: Meet deadlines for preparation, submissions, and presentations, Coordinate efficiently outside of class, Ensure quality and completeness of deliverables

Team deliverables should demonstrate: Clear structure and organization, Strong analysis and strategic thinking, Creativity and relevance of ideas

Professional quality in presentations and reports

To ensure fairness: Students may assess teammates' contributions through peer evaluation, Individual effort within the group is considered in grading

Group presentations

Students are assigned to small working groups (typically 4–5 members)

Each group prepares and delivers presentations throughout the course, linked to:

Case study discussions

Industry/category analyses. specifically to provide a concise overview of: Market dynamics, Key competitors, Trends and consumer behavior and help frame the context for case discussions

Essays

Individual essays are designed to complement group work by ensuring that each student develops independent thinking, critical analysis, and personal reflection on the course content.

Individual essays require students to reflect on and apply course concepts, fostering critical thinking, independent analysis, and clear written communication

The individual essays aim to: Reinforce understanding of key concepts and frameworks, Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, Encourage students to form their own perspectives on digital communication strategies, Foster the ability to link theory with real-world applications

Reflection Essays. Students reflect on a session or case:

Key learnings and insights

What worked well (or not) in the strategy analyzed

Personal perspective on how the case could be improved

Individual essays are assessed based on:

Depth and quality of analysis

Use of course concepts and frameworks

Critical thinking and originality

Clarity and coherence of argumentation

Quality of writing and structure

Case study analyses

Case studies are a central component of the course and are designed to develop students' ability to analyze, interpret, and solve real-world digital communication challenges.

Case studies are analyzed through pre-class preparation, in-class discussion, and structured frameworks to develop students' ability to apply theory, evaluate digital strategies, and propose actionable solutions.

Content

#	Topic
1	1. Mass media/Consumer/Organic Networks/Social Listening
2	2. Brand building/Natural trends/stakeholders/integration/POS
3	3. Omnichannel/Brand Experience/Touchpoint/Digital Leadership
4	4. Crisis Management/Institutional Comms/Consumer Generated Content
5	5. Celebrity Sponsorship/Brands with Purpose/Opinion/Brand Engagement/ Polarizing Opinions
6	6. Digital Native Brands/Cult Brand/Community & Conversation/R&D Cocreation

Assessment

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
In-class analysis and discussion of issues	Class contribution and participation	Ordinary round	20.00%
Individual or team exercises	Individual exercise, analysis and take-aways. Written report hand-ins	Ordinary round	40.00%
Other	specific retake project	Retake	100.00%
Individual or team exercises	Preparation Group Exercises previous & during class	Ordinary round	40.00%

PROGRAMS

B13-Exchange Program Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
B13 Year 1 (Optative)

B13S-Exchange Program Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
B13S Year 1 (Optative)

BBA20-Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
BBA20 Year 4 (Optative)
BBA20 Year 2 (Optative)
BBA20 Year 3 (Optative)

BBA23-Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
BBA23 Year 3 (Optative)
BBA23 Year 4 (Optative)
BBA23 Year 2 (Optative)

BBA25-Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
BBA25 Year 2 (Optative)
BBA25 Year 3 (Optative)
BBA25 Year 1 (Optative)

DBAI23-Double Degree in Business Administration and Artificial Intelligence for Business (Undergraduates: Business)

DBAI23 Year 4 (Optative)
DBAI23 Year 1 (Optative)
DBAI23 Year 3 (Optative)
DBAI23 Year 2 (Optative)

DBAI25-Double Degree in Business Administration and Business and Artificial Intelligence (Undergraduates: Business)

DBAI25 Year 4 (Optative)
DBAI25 Year 2 (Optative)
DBAI25 Year 3 (Optative)

GBD20-Double Degree in Business Administration and Law (Undergraduates: Law)

GBD20 Year 3 (Optative)
GBD20 Year 1 (Optative)
GBD20 Year 4 (Optative)
GBD20 Year 2 (Optative)