Primary Course Objectives:
- Provide a foundation for the understanding of brands and their potential as a business asset.
- Increase familiarity with the core-principles of a consumer-centric approach as they drive the creation and management of powerful brands.
- Encourage students to think creatively and critically, particularly as it relates to the objective evaluation of trends, consumer needs/wants, competitive threats and opportunities, and overall brand traction/equity.

Secondary Course Objectives:
- Improve writing and presentation skills.
- Create a habit of following branding news in order to contribute to each student’s fluency in the industry; and therefore ability to interface with industry professionals.
- Contribute to students’ overall understanding of the marketing and communications industry, including (but not limited to) brand management processes and the various types of roles and responsibilities.

Class Resources/Text:
Only one text is required for purchase: *What Great Brands Do*, by Denise Lee Yohn.

In an effort to create an environment of active learning, we will fuel our discussions and assignments with a some choice chapters from seminal books, contemporary cases, relevant articles and videos, and various handouts.

Assigned reading material will be provided as handouts or uploaded to OAKS – assigned reading to be read by the date it appears in Syllabus and/or Oaks content list.

In addition to assigned readings, students will be asked to regularly check brandchannel.com trendwatching.com Adweek.com contagious.com
School of Business Learning Goals:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Students will demonstrate the ability, via both written and spoken word, to effectively present, critique, and defend ideas in a cogent, persuasive manner.

QUANTITATIVE FLUENCY: Students will demonstrate competency in logical reasoning and data analysis skills.

GLOBAL AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY: Students will be able to identify and define social, ethical, environmental and economic challenges at local, national and international levels. Students will also be able to integrate knowledge and skills in address these issues.

INTELLECTUAL INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY: Students will be able to demonstrate their resourcefulness and originality in addressing extemporaneous problems.

SYNTHESIS: Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines incorporating learning from both classroom and non-classroom settings in the completion of complex and comprehensive tasks.

Course Learning Activities:

In this course, students will work both individually and in teams; will deliver assignments in both written and oral formats; will demonstrate knowledge through in-class discussion as well as formal assignment content; will gather the information necessary to successfully complete assignments through thorough review of recommended reading, regular monitoring of ‘branding’ websites and blogs, online research, customer experience audits, online surveys and in-depth interviews; and will interact with marketing and branding professionals via guest lecturers.

Honor Code:

All students are to abide by the College of Charleston Honor Code as specified in the C of C Student Handbook.

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed by both the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.
Honor Code cont’d: Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive andXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration – working together without permission – is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of assignments is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at: http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php

Student Responsibilities: For a summary of relevant school policies, see: http://catalogs.cofc.edu/professionalstudies/students-responsibilities-and-rights.htm

Class attendance and participation: We will discuss course topics and readings, and work through various cases in class, thus attendance is expected.

Grades: All students are graded with the same standard.

Late Work: All assignment must be handed in, uploaded to Oaks, or presented on time. Late submission will not be accepted. Make-up work is not available to compensate for unexcused absences or low grades.

Disability: Students with disabilities that require special accommodation should contact the Center for Disability Services. When approved to accommodations through SNAP services, please see me to inform me of your needs.

Use of Electronic Devices: Cell phones must be turned off at the start of class. If you use a laptop, iPad or similar device for taking notes, it is expected that you will only be typing notes and NOT IMing, cruising online or checking social media.
**Graded Components:** Your overall grade will rely upon your successful fulfillments of the following assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Presentation of an Influential Trend</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper: Mini Case: Rebranding</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Audit Exercises</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Asset Mapping</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Target Persona(s)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Positioning/Competitive Assessment</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Brand Essence</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper: Convince me, why invest in branding?</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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**Class Participation 10%**

Given the discussion and case review format of this class, it is imperative that you are in attendance at each class. Ideally you won’t just show up, but will come prepared to engage in the material, including asking questions and providing input that facilitates an even deeper, more valuable discussion and/or analysis of the topic at hand.

I tend to be rather punctual and will be prepared to start class on time. And as hardcore as it might sound, I will take attendance at each class. Given our class meets only once a week over the course of sixteen weeks (fourteen classes), **two full absences or three partial absences (coming late or leaving early from the class) are grounds for receiving a failing grade in the class.**

Criteria for receiving the full score in class participation include:

- Appeared to have read the assigned material and most likely checked-in at one or more of the industry news/blog websites.
- Comments and questions consistently show evidence of an increasing understanding of both the issues and circumstances as well as the evaluative tools of branding.
- Comments and questions are consistently relevant and build upon the discussion vs. being well off-point or a distraction.
- Concepts are well reasoned and presented persuasively.

As instructors before me have suggested, it is always a good idea to go for quality, not just quantity.
Conception: for those of us who hire and work with young people entering the industry of brand strategy and brand communications, few things are more frustrating than someone who claims to want to be in the business but who isn’t a student of the business; who doesn’t stay on top of meaningful moves by iconic power brands or the rise of new brands; who doesn’t show an interest in trends that impact the marketplace, whether retail strategies or consumer needs, hopes and fears.

Think: are there any broad-based or even generational trends that are influencing the world, country, consumer, market, products, or brands? Think mood of the country; health and wellness trends; shifts in lifestyle preferences (e.g. tiny house phenomena); fashion trends – trends that might have an impact on a business’ ability to reach its goals.

This exercise is designed to not only provide you with an opportunity to present to your fellow students but to display your increasing command of the language of branding, particularly as it relates to waxing and waning trends. A valuable by-product would be to create regular linkage to branding trends and other business news.

Beginning on February 5th, for as many class meetings as necessary, we will begin class with two (to three), 15 to 20 minute verbal recaps of a trend that is impacting the marketplace. References might include (but are not limited to) an article or blog post from the world of marketing, branding, or trend watching; an article or blog post from the legions of business press or even the world of psychology, sociology, and/or anthropology.

Formal presentation materials such as PowerPoint and Prezi are not required but can be used as the student sees fit. Ideally the trend presentation will 1) be current and relevant; 2) easily connected to our core topics, including (but not limited to) brands, brand positioning, brand management, brand equity and brand value; and 3) yet to be discussed in class.

On the first day of class, you will be asked to 1) select a partner; and 2) sign up for a day/class meeting when the two of you will assume responsibility for a presentation. For the report, be prepared to provide a topline recap of the article or blog post; rationale for why you selected it; why it’s important and how it connects to class assignments and/or recent discussions (or at least why it’s of interest); and the link to the article or post.
Based on your reading and class participation to date AND any primary research you might have conducted, write a 1 to 2 page (double spaced) paper about a brand that has either recently gone through a rebranding (brand refresh) or, based on your growing understanding of branding, is in need of a rebranding initiative.

You choose the brand.

Primary research may take the form of:
• Field research in which you visit a store, restaurant, automotive dealership, fitness facility or interact with customer service personnel, etc. as appropriate for your brand, in order to experience the brand first hand.
• OR, a series of in-depth interviews or an in-person or online focus group(s) in which people are not only asked about their awareness or familiarity with a brand but about their impressions and/or experience with the brand (asking your roommates for their opinions isn’t quite what you need to successfully conduct the needed research/information collection).

Couple of things to remember:
• Brands aren’t just consumable products and services but are destinations, countries, people, political parties, not-for-profit groups and on and on.
• Brands aren’t just the (often) inspiring ideas behind them, but how they actually manifest in the market; how they communicate (what, when, where and even, to whom); how they deliver user/consumer/customer experiences (e.g. quality, consistency); how they live up to their brand promise/mission/vision.
• Feel free to select any brand but keep in mind that you, personally, may not be a prime target audience for that particular brand. So do try to critically evaluate the brand through the eyes of its core constituents. Although if you feel that the brand is missing an opportunity by not speaking to you or any other audience, you are invited to discuss that in your paper.

This is not intended to be a long (or long-winded) paper but instead an early test of your grasp of the criteria of evaluation for successful branding AND your ability to see a brand objectively, including through other people’s eyes. No perceptual maps or formal audit SWOT analyses are required. Just insightful, well reasoned responses to the following question areas. Note, these questions are only designed to serve as a guideline or starting point and do not have to be strictly followed.
Graded Components

Mini Case: Rebranding

Questions (not mandatory, but provided for consideration as a guide):

• What is the brand?
• Has the brand undergone a recent transformation or refresh?
• **If yes**, what is your evidence of this? New logo, messaging, ad campaign, website, social media initiative etc.?
  – Based on your research and/or experience with the brand, how would you objectively describe the old brand and how does it compare to the new-refreshed brand?
  – Does the refresh or rebranding expand the brand’s market potential? It’s potential customer base? Channels of distribution? Online presence? If none of these things, why do you think they revamped their brand?
• **If no**, is it in need for a transformation or refresh? What makes you say that? Lack of resonance in a modern marketplace? Not keeping up with its competitors? Failing to innovate? Is no longer living up to its brand essence (and/or mission and vision). Antiquated website? Absent in social media? Environmentally out of touch (packaging, gas mileage, etc.).
• Finally, based on your research and analysis, do you have any thoughts regarding things the brand (whether refreshed or in need of a refresh) might consider to ensure future/sustained success?
Students will work in teams of two (with the possibility of a couple of three person teams – depending on class size). It is recommended that consideration be given to getting together with team members that have similar schedules, complementary skillsets, and shared goals vs. just those with whom one might be familiar. Teams will be formed, brands selected and submitted during class on Monday, January 29th.

The goal of this series of exercises is to provide each student a hands-on opportunity to objectively evaluate the source and strength of a brand’s equity. Rather than a buttoned and buffed brand audit presentation at the end of the semester, this series of exercises will provide students with more helpful guidance and feedback on how to evaluate a brand’s strength and to plan for building brand equity. The goal is to gather enough information and insight to provide some degree of recommendation for how the brand might improve performance into the future.

Sample tools, models, templates, and framework options will be provided for each exercise. A list of the types of questions that will be answered during each exercise is included in the APPENDIX of this document.

During the target audience persona exercise in particular, in addition to desk research, students may find it helpful to conduct primary research (whether in-depth interviews or an online survey among key consumer/customer groups) in order to gain full insight the audience, including how their brand resonates with these consumers (potential customers).

For each exercise, students will be required to submit their team’s thinking; whether captured as a word. or ppt. doc or a (decipherable) picture/pdf. of a whiteboard session or handwritten work on a page of paper. This will be due prior to the start of class the designated day of the worksession.

During class, each team will take 5 to 10 minutes to present their thinking and to field feedback and questions from the class and instructor.

The grade for each exercise will primarily rely upon 1) the soundness of the thinking and insights; 2) the successful use of branding models, methodology, and templates; and 3) command of the information and ability to address questions and challenges.
Using one of the following three scenarios write a persuasive memo defending the investment of time, money and resources into build strong brands.

Scenario 1: Chief Marketing Officer writing to a Chief Executive Officer in defense of maintaining a strong budget for brand building.

Scenario 2: Brand consultant writing to a Chief Marketing Officer proposing a rebranding exploration/project.

Scenario 3: Chief Executive Officer writing to shareholders, celebrating the benefits of a strong brand.

If you pursue a career in marketing you’re going to inevitably going to have to defend branding at one time or another, so you might as well start right now. Be as creative as you’d like. Use a real or imagined company and situation. But most importantly be persuasive.

HINT: just blah blahing about why branding is so great will not result in a high grade on this paper. READ the assigned reading selections. Make this a professional, business case, not a fan letter for branding.
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT/READINGS DUE</th>
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</table>
| 1  | January 8th| Goals for class. Review of Syllabus Favorite Brands discussion. What is a Brand? Really? | Identify two or three of your favorite brands and be prepared to explain why they are meaningful, important or interesting to you.  
Read: Keller, *Strategic Brand Management* (SBM) pg. 19 and Chapter 1, pgs. 29-48  
*During class*, pick partner AND sign-up for Team Presentation of Influential Trends |
| 2  | Jan. 15th  | NO CLASS: MLK Day                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 3  | Jan. 22nd  | The ‘secret sauce’ of top brands.                                    | Review pdf’s of:  
Interbrand 2016_Anatomy of Growth  
Interbrand Growth Hallmarks_2016  
BrandZ Infographic_2016  
Read: Keller, SBM Chapter 1, pgs. 48-58  
Yohn, *What Great Brands Do*, Chapters 1 and 2 |
*During class*, pick a partner AND a brand you want to focus on for all four Brand Audit Exercises AND discuss parameters of first exercise, Brand Assets Mapping. |
| 5  | February 5th | Team Trends Presentations WorkSession: Brand Assets Mapping Exercise | *During class*, present and discuss Brand Assets exercises.  
**Brand Assets Mapping Exercise DUE via OAKS by 4pm EST** |
| 6  | Feb. 12th  | Team Trends Presentations Building a Strong Brand: Start with your customer | Read: Keller, SBM Chapter 3, pgs. 106-128 and pgs. 134.137; Chapter 10, pgs. 326-338  
*During class*, discuss parameters of second exercise, Target Audience Personas. |
| 7  | Feb. 19th  | Team Trends Presentations Strategic Brand Management Brand Equity and Core Concepts of Positioning | Read: Keller, SBM Chapter 1, pgs. 58-64 (History of Branding) and Chapter 2, pgs. 67-79 and Chapter 4, pg. 168  
**Mini-Case: Rebranding DUE via OAKS by 4pm EST** |
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Feb. 26th</td>
<td>Team Trends Presentations</td>
<td>During class, discuss parameters of third exercise, Positioning/Competitive Assessment.</td>
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<td>WorkSession: Target Personas Exercise</td>
<td>Target Personas Exercise DUE via OAKS by 4pm EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 5th</td>
<td>Teams Trends Presentations</td>
<td>Watch: Simon Sinek video</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Getting to Brand Essence</td>
<td>Read: Stengel, GROW _ selection from Ignition blog</td>
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<td>Keller, SBM, Chapter 8, pg. 293-299</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 12th</td>
<td>Team Trends Presentations</td>
<td>During class, discuss parameters of fourth, and final exercise, Brand Essence.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>WorkSession: Positioning/Competitive Assessment Exercise</td>
<td>Positioning/Competitive Assessment Exercise DUE via OAKS by 4pm EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>March 19th</td>
<td>NO CLASS: Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>March 26th</td>
<td>Brand Archetypes</td>
<td>Read: Keller, SBM Chapter 9, pgs. 346-351</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Cultural Context and Engagement</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>April 2nd</td>
<td>WorkSession: Brand Essence Exercise</td>
<td>Brand Essence Exercise DUE via OAKS by 4pm EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>April 9th</td>
<td>Branded House vs. House of Brands</td>
<td>Read: Kappferer, Chapter 13</td>
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<td>Brand Valuation</td>
<td>Keller, SBM Chapter 2, pgs. 98-100 (Marketing Advantages); Chapter 9, pgs. 353-358 (BrandAsset Valuator); and Chapter 10, pgs. 375-376 (The Prophet Brand Valuation Methodology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>April 16th</td>
<td>Managing Brand Equity in a transparent world</td>
<td>Complete Online Course Evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>April 23rd</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up</td>
<td>Final Paper: Convince Me, DUE via Oaks by 4pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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APPENDIX

Supplemental Texts/Reference Resources:

Depending on your career interests and goals there are a few rather definitive texts dedicated to the discipline of branding. Since during the course of this semester, we will be reading selected chapters and sections from several of these books, it is NOT mandatory that you purchase any of them. They are listed here only for your reference.

- Two cornerstone textbooks often featured in college and MBA level coursework are Keller’s *Strategic Brand Management 4th Edition* and Kapferer’s *The New Strategic Brand Management*.

- Although first published about 20 years ago, many in the industry also continue to refer to Aaker’s seminal work in *Managing Brand Equity, Building Strong Brands and Brand Leadership*.

- While there are a plethora of books written on the topic, one that will also be referenced in this course is Stengel’s *GROW: How Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World’s Greatest Companies*. 
A sample of questions we will address over the course of the four exercises.

**BRAND ASSETS**
- What are the brand’s core equities? What assets are most closely associated with the brand, e.g. logo, tagline or advertising, website, community involvement, employee empowerment.
- What is the brand best known for? Stand for?
- How would its best customers describe the brand?
- Does the brand stand out or hold some kind of unique position within the marketplace? Among its core competitors?

**TARGET PERSONA(S)**
- Who is the ideal prospect for this brand? And Why?
- Describe them, including purchase or usage behavior; demographics; psychographics.
- What do they care about?
- How do they react to your category? What do they want/need/expect from the category?
- Are they all the same, or are there sub-groups or segments? If so, how (and why) are they sub-segmented?

**COMPETITIVE POSITIONING**
- How would you define the category or industry in which this brand competes?
- Would the consumer define it the same way?
- What business are they ‘really’ in?
- Is the category/industry healthy? Growing? Stagnant? Why? Is the challenge to gain share or create new users?
- What position does this brand hold in the category? Consider everything from share of the category to challenger vs. leader status.
- Who are the key competitors? And are they in the same category? Describe their distinct brand attributes or positions.
- Are there any broad-based or even generational trends that are influencing this consumer, market, product or brand? Think mood of the country; health and wellness trends; shifts in lifestyle preferences (e.g. tiny house phenomena); fashion trends – trends that might have an impact on your brand’s ability to reach its goals.

**BRAND ESSENCE**
- How would you describe the essence of the brand based on tagline, messaging, other activities, sales channel, etc.?
- ‘Why’ does this brand act as it does? Produce the products or services it brings to the market? Deliver customer service? Communicate to or engage with its customers?