

***Dissertation Seminar***  
**Marketing, Sustainability, Food and Fashion**

*Academic Year:* **2017/2018**

*Semester:* **1st**

*Instructor(s):* **Vera Herédia Colaço**

*Max. Number of Students:* **3**

*Seminar Description:*

*Conscious food and fashion* are trends of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The democratization of eco-ingredients from anti-oxidants to organic Cotton has never been more in demand today. While grocery stores have been mimicking the *Whole Foods* store chain by offering more fresh produce and organic goods in their assortments. Fast fashion brands, such as H&M are ethically sourcing some of their collections as a response to the increasing green consumerism trend that comes down from high-end designers such as Stella McCartney. On the consumers' side, these have become equally more exigent and impatient during their shopping decisions, who expect immediate gratification from goods that are delivered to stores within few weeks of having been conceptualized. Among some of the consequences of satisfying the increasing consumerism that has disrupted over the recent years are the more frequent and faster production cycles. But, what are the social and environmental consequences of frequent and fast production cycles? What are some of the other consequences of companies wanting to attain commercial success while keeping up with the speed of demand? What does food and fashion democratization mean for consumers?

For brands to be successful it is important for managers to understand what are the relevant marketing and sustainability-based strategies at their disposal to be effective in the marketplace. For instance, fashion brands such as Toms shoes and Stella McCartney have been addressing sustainability issues from the bottom line and building a credible reputation. Food brands such as, Whole Foods and Fairway have been advocating healthy living lifestyles through a complete offer of organic goods and exceptional service. Consumer behavior insights have never been as important since consumers are at the core of any commercial business and vote with their purchases, through comments they hear online and offline and through influencers – bloggers, social networks and peers.

This seminar is for students preparing their MSc dissertation and who want to address a relevant problem within the context of marketing but from the perspective of sustainability, food and/or fashion. From the marketing and branding of fashionable clothing to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and profitable retail food businesses, students will learn how some of the most creative yet profitable industries in the world are dealing with the prominent topic of the century – sustainability.



Students will be provided with a set of research methodologies and skills that will allow them to address research questions and write a research project that makes a scientific contribution to the field of marketing and consumer behavior.

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Seminar Content:

1. The seminar comprises a mix of compulsory group and individual sessions:
    - a. Instructor-led classes, where an overview of the concepts, data analysis methods and dissertation writing skills will be given;
    - b. Group discussions, where students will be reporting their choice of a chosen topic, progression in writing of the different chapters and getting feedback.
    - c. Individual advisory meetings, where students will be presenting a research proposal and subsequently report progression of the first and the final drafts of their dissertations and receiving comments/suggestions on their work from the advisor.
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Seminar Objectives:

1. To prepare students on how to write up a dissertation that addresses a particular problem and makes a scientific contribution to the field of marketing and sustainability.
  2. To make an introduction to the topic of marketing, sustainability and fashion that will allow them to pick a topic.
  3. To show students the importance of performing an initial literature review that will conduct them to write a research proposal that includes the state of the art and selected methodology - primary and secondary data.
  4. To train students on how to present their work to their peers and instructors and get relevant feedback from them.
  5. To prepare a final dissertation document that sufficiently takes into account instructors' guidelines and comments, and reflects hard work, intellectual progress and a valuable contribution to business practice.
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Topics' Examples:

1. Analyze and evaluate marketing and sustainability from a branding perspective.
2. Develop and formulate marketing strategies based upon analyses of consumer behavior and their profiles.
3. Analyze sustainable labels and consumption trends of fashion products.
4. Analyze the effects of conspicuous consumption and materialism on consumer decision-making.



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Bibliography / Recommended Textbook(s) / Additional Readings:

- Alba, J. W., & Williams, E. F. (2013). Pleasure principles: A review of research on hedonic consumption. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 23(1), 2-18.
- Lindstrom, M. (2008). *Buyology: Truth and Lies About What We Buy*. Broadway Books: New York.
- Luchs, M. G., & Kumar, M. (2015). "Yes, but this Other One Looks Better/Works Better': How do Consumers Respond to Trade-offs Between Sustainability and Other Valued Attributes?", *Journal of Business Ethics*. doi: 10.1007/s10551015-2695-0.
- Niinimäk, K. (2010). "Eco-clothing, Consumer Identity and Ideology", *Sustainable Development*. doi: 10.1002/sd.
- Solomon, M. R., & Rabolt, N.J. (2009). *Consumer behavior: in fashion*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Young, W., Hwang, K., McDonald, S., & Oats C. J. (2010). Sustainable Consumption: Green Consumer Behaviour when Purchasing Products. *Sustainable Development*, 18, 20931.

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Contact(s) and Office Hours:

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Office hours: TBD

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Schedule:

Sessions' duration:  
4 sessions: 90 mins  
4 sessions: 120 mins

Attendance policy: students are required to participate in all scheduled sessions.

SESSION #1 (13<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 3-4:30 PM, room # TBD)

- Topics discussion
- References list
- Importance of a good research proposal.
- Guidelines on how to develop a literature review
- Introduction to ASSIGNMENT 1-Research proposal and questions (delivery date: 17<sup>th</sup> September, by e- mail)



SESSION #2 (20<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 3-4:30 PM, room # TBD) o  
Research proposal feedback

- Topics and research questions' discussion
- Introduction to ASSIGNMENT 2: Literature Review first draft (delivery date: 6<sup>th</sup> October by e-mail).

SESSION #3 (11<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 3-4:30 PM, room # TBD)

- Research proposal conclusion
- Literature review feedback
- Introduction to ASSIGNMENT 3: Second draft of literature review (delivery date: 20<sup>th</sup> October, by e-mail)

SESSION #4 (25<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 3-4:30 PM, room # TBD)

- Final feedback on Literature Review. Suggestions for improvement of Hypothesis and conceptual framework development
- Introduction to ASSIGNMENT 4: Methodology development (delivery date: 6<sup>th</sup> November, by e-mail)

SESSION #5 (7<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 3-5:00 PM, room # TBD)

- Methodology development discussion
- Suggestion for improvement given by instructor
- Introduction to ASSIGNMENT 5: Methodology improvement (delivery date: 17<sup>th</sup> November, by e-mail)

SESSION #6 (22<sup>nd</sup> November, 3:00 – 5:00 PM, room # TBD) – individual sessions.

- Methodology final analysis and development.
- Data collection and data analysis guidelines.
- Introduction to ASSIGNMENT 6: Data Collection and data analysis

SESSION #7 (29<sup>th</sup> November, 3-5:00 PM, room # TBD) - individual sessions. First Draft Data Analysis evaluation and results' feedback

- Introduction to ASSIGNMENT 7: Results' improvement and conclusions development (delivery date: 6<sup>th</sup> December, by e-mail)

SESSION #8 (13<sup>th</sup> December, 3-5:00 PM, room # TBD) - individual sessions Conclusion chapter evaluation and overall final thesis comments

Introduction to ASSIGNMENT 8: Inclusion of final comments and thesis preparation for submission.

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Deadlines:

The full list of dates and deadlines can be consulted [here](#).