



PHD231 INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEMS THINKING IN MARKETING

The course is supported by Nordic Academy of Management

PhD course (7.5 ects) at Stockholm School of Economics, spring 2022

Course director:

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Teachers:

Hans Kjellberg, Professor, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

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Systems thinking has a long history within the marketing discipline, although it represents a “road less travelled” compared to the mainstream marketing management school of thought. In recent years, an increased emphasis on the dynamic nature of the context within which firms and marketers work has generated a renewed interest in and perceived relevance of a systemic understanding of core marketing phenomena such as value cocreation, brands, markets. Systems thinking, arguably, also plays a key role in equipping marketing with the conceptual tools needed in the effort of tackling the wicked problems which societies across the globe are currently facing.

This course offers an overview of how ideas from general systems theory as well as more specific streams of systems literature have been used to reframe and enrich the understanding of marketing and its phenomena. In doing so, the course equips the students with a deep understanding of the similarities and differences between different streams of literature under the broad umbrella of “systems thinking,” such as chaos theory, complexity theory and system dynamics as well as thorough knowledge about the core systemic concepts such as interdependence, complex adaptive systems, emergence, and feedback loops, and their marketing implications.

After completing the course, the student is expected to:

- have a thorough understanding of how systems thinking to date has been used to inform marketing literature and the opportunities and challenges in such applications
- understand underlying assumptions, central concepts, and conceptual relations within systems thinking and be able to apply these in their own research

The course will run during the spring of 2022 and is given by Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden in collaboration with Hanken School of Economics, Finland. It includes a course introduction, 8 student-led literature seminars and the writing and presentation of a course essay. The course introduction and student-led seminars will be held virtually via Zoom. The final seminar in which the course essays are presented is planned to be a face-to-face event at the Stockholm School of Economics.

The course literature consists of 30 mandatory articles and book chapters (one article as a general background reading and 3-4 articles for each literature seminar). The reading list will be shared with the participants in late December. The course examination takes place via a course essay which is graded pass or fail.

Schedule

Course introduction: Wednesday, January 12, 2022: 10-12 (Zoom)

Seminar 1 The roots of systems thinking in marketing: Tuesday, January 25: 9-12 (Zoom)

Seminar 2 Markets as systems: Tuesday, February 8: 9-12 (Zoom)

Seminar 3 Socio-technical systems and marketing: Tuesday, February 22: 9-12 (Zoom)

Seminar 4 Chaos and marketing: Tuesday, March 8: 9-12 (Zoom)

Seminar 5 Complex adaptive systems and marketing: Tuesday, March 22: 9-12 (Zoom)

Seminar 6 System dynamics and marketing: Tuesday, April 5: 9-12 (Zoom)

Seminar 7 Emergence and marketing: Tuesday, April 26: 9-12 (Zoom)

Seminar 8 Wicked problems and marketing: Tuesday, May 10: 9-12 (Zoom)

Seminar 9 Course essay presentations: Tuesday and Wednesday, June 7-8: 9-16 (Stockholm School of Economics)

Application

To apply, send your application to Kaisa.Koskela.Huotari@hhs.se by December 5, 2021. The application should include a short description of your research and why the course is relevant to your studies (max 300 words). A maximum of 16 doctoral students will be accepted to take part in the course. If the number of applicants exceeds 16, doctoral students from NFF member institutions take priority (check whether your institution is a NFF member here: <https://nordicacademy.hi.is/members/>).



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