New Empirical Research on Advertising: Syllabus and Reading List

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This workshop will discuss new empirical research on advertising. There is probably more new work on this topic than any other in the quantitative marketing literature.

The reading list below identifies subtopics and papers. For each paper, one participant will lead with a formal 10-minute discussion. The discussion should identify the paper’s intended contribution, assess whether the paper makes that intended contribution, identify strong and weak points of the paper, and present a few questions, opinions or comments about specific points within the paper. 20-30 minutes of informal group discussion will follow each formal discussion.

There will be no free riding in discussions. All participants—enrolled students, auditing students, auditing faculty and me—are required to read all papers prior to any class session they attend. It will be obvious during informal discussion if you did not read. If you do not finish reading prior to class, I expect you to skip the discussion in order to read the paper. Unprepared discussants impose negative externalities on others.

All participants will be required to prepare at least one formal discussion. The number of formal discussions per person will depend on the number of participants and is currently expected not to exceed 2 papers per average participant.

Please email me to introduce yourself (a CV would be appreciated). For every class session that you expect to attend, please identify one paper for which you would be willing to prepare a formal discussion.

Enrolled students will be expected to submit one or two final papers. You can choose what to write about. Possible topics: review and synthesize the recent empirical literature on advertising; review a subtopic within the advertising literature that is not covered in the list of sessions below; describe, in detail, an idea or design for new research related to advertising. Final papers should be 1,000-4,000 words and are due by February 1.

The following reading list provides a solid foundation to survey and understand the new empirical literature on advertising, but you should be aware that this list is incomplete. Many authors cited here have additional uncited papers, and there is a great deal of older literature.

Session 1: Advertising Effects


Session 2: Estimation of Advertising Effects


Session 3: Spillovers


Session 4: Attribution of Advertising Effects


Session 5: Advertising Content

Session 6: Consumer Demand for Advertisements
*We will reserve time for papers that were not fully covered in earlier sessions.*