

MGT 490 | Careers in Product Management | Davis Full-Time | 1-unit

Fall 2024, Version 8/11/2024

Class meets: 11/14, 11/21 ... 12/05

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Marc Lowe, BS, MBA

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650.521.1005 (voice and text)

Office Hours by Appt. I am typically available for online appts after 7pm on weekday evenings and in-person before and after class meetings. Email me at mdlowe@ucdavis.edu to schedule appointments.

Every regular class session – in-person – **meets THURSDAY from 2:10pm until 5pm.**

Gallagher Hall, GH 2102 | **11/14, 1/21 ... 12/5**

All class meetings will be held in-person, however a ZOOM meeting room has been set up if necessary for guest speakers or unanticipated remote sessions. The course ZOOM link is:

<https://ucdavis.zoom.us/j/92758475891?pwd=UUg2o0FyFz40OORkwLXwHG7nuUJjZy.1>

Course Web Page: MGT490 on CANVAS - <https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/918309>

Course Prerequisites: None

Course Mailing List: mgt490pmc-f24@ucdavis.edu

Technology Requirements: Laptop PC for class work and access to canvas

Accommodations: Students may discuss accommodations with the instructor for physical, medical, or learning disabilities, religious beliefs, observations, and practices, or conflicts because of athletic competition, or school or career interviews.

COURSE SYNOPSIS

This course is designed to provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the product manager and related roles such as brand manager and product marketing manager in both non-technology and technology firms.

The goals of this course are to help entering MBA determine whether product management (PM), brand management (BM), and product marketing management (PMM) are roles they wish to pursue, and to prepare them for the rigorous path to PM/BM/PMM internships and career positions during their MBA studies.

The product (or related) manager is accountable for the ultimate success of a product line whether in consumer products, financial services, healthcare, information technology, biotech, services, B2B, B2C, or online businesses. Product management careers are often steppingstones to broader general management assignments.

Product managers develop products that meet the needs of their targeted customers and work across functional areas to achieve product line and corporate goals. These activities include industry and competitive analysis, marketing research, customer needs assessments, product definition and planning, product life cycle management, and the development or coordination of pricing, positioning, promotional, product, and channel strategies

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS

- 1) 11 Revealing Product Manager Interview Questions at <https://www.productplan.com/learn/product-manager-interview-questions/>
- 2) The Product School: The Ultimate list of PM interview questions at <https://productschool.com/blog/interview-tips/the-ultimate-list-product-manager-interview-questions>
- 3) **MGT 490 Course Packet:** A course packet containing cases and readings is available through Harvard Press.
 - a. Building UBER: The Human Challenge of Product Management (IN-1603- PDF-ENG)
- 4) How the Software Industry Redefines Product Management (H00UVA-PDF-ENG) FREE thru GSM Library <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=118647401&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

MGT 490 CLASS SCHEDULE

Lowe, Fall 2024

Ssn	Date	Topics	Reading	Assignment
1	THURS 11/14	Course Introduction What is Product Management?? Product Sense & Class Exercise	11 Revealing Product Manager Interview Questions ProductSchool.com Ultimate List of PM Interview Questions	READ prior to first day of class. Available at link in Required Reading above
2	THURS 12/21	PM Roles and Responsibilities PM/BM/PMM Job Description Form interest groups	Building UBER: The Human Challenge of Product Management (IN-1603)	PM/BM/PMM Job Description Assignment Review prior to class.
3	THURS 12/05	Prod Mgmt Job Search Strategies Organizational Considerations Final Assignment Course-wrap up	How the SW Industry Redefines Product Management	FINAL EXAM: The First Round Interview
	SUNDAY 11/12 @ 1159PM	NO FINAL EXAM SCHEDULED OUTSIDE OF THE THREE REGULAR CLASS MEETINGS.		'Day in the Life' Team Paper OR Personal Reflections Individual Paper

***DISCLAIMER: Syllabus/schedule are subject to change**

CAREER INTEREST TEAMS

Students will be form teams based on their career and industry interests. These teams will be formed on the first day of class and serve as the primary unit for collaboration and group projects. In addition, these teams can be a student's peer support group over as students proceed through their job search journeys during their MBA studies.

COURSE GRADING

There are 100 total points possible for the quarter. Grades will be assigned based on the following point totals:

A	950 and higher	B	834 to 866
A-	900 to 949	B-	800 to 833
B+	866 to 899	C+	<799

The final course grade will be based on a combination of individual and team assignments.

Graded Assignments	Points	Comments
Individual Class Participation	300	Attendance & instructor evaluation of in-class and overall course participation – based on QUALITY of engagement & deliverables
Job Description Assignment	200	2-3 page typed or 2-4 min video analysis of at least five PM/BM or PMM JDs of your choice
FINAL EXAM: The 1 st Round interview	200	Peer evaluations of your ability to answer 1 st round PM interview questions
'Day in the Life' Final Paper (TEAM) OR Personal Reflections Paper (IND)	300 275	5-7 page typed or 3-6 min video summarizing your conclusions
Total Possible Score	1000	

INDIVIDUAL CLASS PARTICIPATION

Attendance for the full class period is expected. Contact instructor if you cannot attend a course session, require video recording of class, will be late or miss assignment deadlines.

Full class participation and preparation. Students should be prepared to discuss assigned readings in class on the date due. Class participation will be evaluated based on the **QUALITY** and frequency of your questions and comments in class. You should be prepared to be called on to comment or offer your opinion at any time in class.

INDIVIDUAL GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

INDIVIDUAL submissions will be made to the CANVAS ASSIGNMENTS drop box. Assignments may be submitted as written or video submission. If submitted in written form, page format will be double-spaced, 10-point font, one-inch margins. Coversheet and table of contents are NOT included in the final page count. If you have received Generative AI (Chat GPT, Bard, etc.) in preparing your written submission, you must disclose this on your submission.

If you are making a video submission, you may upload a video link or complete files to Canvas. Videos should be submitted using cross-compatible, video file formats, preferably .mov or .mp4. Videos may be casual, but concise and structured. Think of a conversation with a hiring manager vs. ramblings with a pal.

All individual submissions whether written or video will be graded based on original content, personal insights, thoughtfulness, and authenticity.

JOB Description Assignment

Each student will submit a 2–3-page paper summarizing their findings or upload a 2-4 min video and share their findings in class discussion.

To become familiar with the job functions of and skills required for PM, BM, or PMM roles in various industries, each student will source and analyze **at least FIVE current job descriptions** (JDs) for positions currently advertised online. You may choose whatever PM-related role you are interested in, within any company or in any industry. The objective of the assignment is for you to determine how the JDs differ by title, company, and industry, and to begin to assess your interest and potential fit for PM-related careers.

PM Career Personal Reflections Assignment or ‘Day in the Life’ Team Paper described below (your choice)

- 3–5-page paper summarizing their findings or upload a 3-6 min.
- The PM Career Reflections assignment summarizes your personal learnings and path forward.
- Has the course helped you determine whether product management and related careers are a fit for you? If so, why? Are there particular job titles, companies, industries you are interested in? Do you believe you are qualified now? Based on what you’ve learned in the course, where do you need to grow and how? What’s your plan?
- Or perhaps, you’re still on the fence about PM careers are for you. Why aren’t you convinced one way or the other? What are the aspects of product careers that leave you uncertain? What aspects keep you somewhat interested? Have you assessed your qualifications and where you will need to build skills to be a strong candidate by graduation? What’s your plan?
- Finally, if you are now sure you would rather do anything BUT a career in PM, cover the factors that have helped you make your decision, both in terms of job content and personal fit. The purpose of the class is for you to discover your interest and suitability for product-related careers, YOUR answer is the right answer.

FINAL EXAMINATION: The 1st Round Interview

There will be an in-class final exam on the last day of class. The exam is a first-round product management mock interview. Questions will be drawn at random from the [Product School: Ultimate List of Product Manager Interview Questions](#). Any questions specifically relevant to the product management aspects of the job are fair game and may be asked.

You will have two weeks to prepare for your interview. You may prepare individually or in self-formed groups. You can use any online resources, discussions with current PMs, etc. You will be evaluated by your peers in 3–5-person interview panels. Only 30% of the candidates will be invited to the 2nd round, so this is a competition. Others will be “saved” for future job matches or “deleted” from the candidate pool entirely. Each member of your interview panel will answer 3-5 questions and then rate the answers of the other members on the panel. Total scores will be calculated and converted to your final exam grade.

TEAM GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE MADE TO THE CANVAS ASSIGNMENT DROP BOX BY THE DUE DATE.

“Day in the Life” Team Paper – optional final assignment alternative to the Personal Reflections paper

- 5-7-pages to summarize your “Day in the Life” findings using your product management interviews to highlight concepts covered in the course and compare the PM role in companies and industries of your team’s choosing.
- Each team is responsible for completing at least **THREE** ‘day in the life of a product manager’ interviews for companies, industries, and titles of their choosing. The objective of the assignment is to illustrate PM responsibilities, tasks, and challenges as discussed in class, and to exercise the networking skills necessary to succeed in your job search.

NOTICE OF ACADEMIC CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Academic Conduct exists to support high standards of behavior and to ensure fair evaluation of student learning. Students who violate the Code of Academic Conduct are subject to disciplinary sanctions that include censure, probation, deferred separation, suspension, or dismissal from the University of California. Unless specifically authorized by the instructor in writing, misconduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Academic misconduct on exams or other coursework
- Plagiarism
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Misuse of an instructor’s course materials or the materials of others
- Lying or fraud
- Intimidation or disruption
- Misuse of University properties or resources

See <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/cac.pdf>

It is expected that all class members will treat each other with respect and dignity. It is unacceptable to insult, harass, or demean any member of the class. Professional business behavior should be modeled in the classroom, including use of appropriate language, jokes, or stories.

In general, students should adhere to the UC Davis Principles of Community, copied below.

The University of California, Davis, is first and foremost an institution of learning and teaching, committed to serving the needs of society. Our campus community reflects and is a part of a society circumstances. The successful conduct of the university's affairs requires that every member of the university community acknowledge and practice the following basic principles:

- We affirm the inherent dignity in all of us, and we strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by respect for each other.

- We acknowledge that our society carries within it historical and deep-rooted misunderstandings and biases, and therefore we will endeavor to foster mutual understanding among the many parts of our whole.
- We affirm the right to freedom of expression within our community and affirm our commitment to the highest standards of civility and decency towards all. We recognize the right of every individual to think and speak as dictated by personal belief, to express any idea, and to disagree with or counter another's point of view, limited only by university regulations governing time, place and manner. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity and respect.
- We confront and reject all manifestations of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, status within or outside the university, or any of the other differences among people which have been excuses for misunderstanding, dissension or hatred. We recognize and cherish the richness contributed to our lives by our diversity. We take pride in our various achievements, and we celebrate our differences.
- We recognize that each of us has an obligation to the community of which we have chosen to be a part. We will strive to build a true community of spirit and purpose based on mutual respect and caring.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students' and instructor's rights to academic freedom (e.g., respect the rights of others to express their points of view)
- Students' and instructor's adherence to campus principles of community (e.g., civility in personal interactions)
- Course materials are copyright protected and should be treated as such.