

Doctoral Course on Service and Relationship Management (course code 62339) 2026-2027 Hanken, Department of Marketing

Course aim and content

Students gain an understanding of service management, relationship-oriented marketing management, and the research implications of these in both consumer and industrial markets. The course covers key concepts and models related to service management and service logic, customer relationships, business-to-business relationships, and research methods for studying services and relationships. Emphasis is placed on familiarizing students with research publications and articles addressing service and relationship management from diverse perspectives, as well as analyzing and discussing their evolution and underlying assumptions. Students read, analyze, and discuss publications that have had—or are considered to have had—a significant impact, while developing skills in critically engaging with academic research. These competencies strengthen students' research capabilities and support the design and writing of a doctoral thesis. Methodological issues are also addressed, as they are closely linked to the students' doctoral work. Overall, the course provides a strong foundation for formulating research problems and advancing doctoral students' own research.

An additional important aim of the course is to bring together doctoral students working on service- and relationship-related topics, providing opportunities for networking and scholarly exchange.

Learning outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to

- analyse and synthesise core literature/concepts in service and relationship management research
- discuss and critically evaluate academic work
- apply service and relationship management research to your own research and doctoral thesis

Scope and language

ECTS: 8. The course language is English.

In-class time and venue

Online pre-meetings and course preparations start in November 2026. The course includes 32 hours of obligatory class (seminar) time, divided into **four consecutive full-day class meetings, Tuesday to Friday, March 9-12, 2027**, from 8/9 am-4/5 pm, at Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki, auditorium XX, Hanken main building.

Our marketing faculty, plus potentially international guest professors, are course instructors e.g.

Larissa Becker Braz. Assistant Professor of Marketing (tenure-track), Hanken.

Robert Ciuchita. Associate Professor of Marketing (tenure-track), Hanken.

Johanna Gummerus. Professor of Marketing, Hanken.

Kristina Heinonen. Professor of Service and Relationship Marketing, Hanken.

Maria Holmlund. Professor of Marketing, Hanken, corresponding instructor and course responsible, maria.holmlund-rytkonen@hanken.fi, +358 40 3521 396

Mekhail Mustak. Associate Professor of Marketing (tenure-track), Hanken.

Kaj Storbacka. Professor, Hanken.

Indicative topics

- Topical service research topics
- Qualitative methods

- Customer relationships
- B2B service and relationships
- Beyond dyads
- Digital service marketing
- Customer experience management
- Publishing in scientific journals

Examination

Evaluation is based on continual assessment, a written term paper, and a learning diary.

- 1) Presence and informed participation in all four days of class meetings are compulsory. **20%**
- 2) Key learning analysis. Individual written analyses of the material. **20%**
- 3) Term paper, including presentation and discussion of the papers in class. **50%**
- 4) Learning diary. **10%**

Signing up for the course

The course is compulsory for all doctoral students admitted to Hanken's doctoral program in marketing in Helsinki after 2024 and recommended to students of Supply Chain Management and Social Responsibility, and Management and Organisation. The course cannot be taken by those who have passed Relationship Management (code 62339). Doctoral students from other universities in Finland and abroad are warmly welcome. Please see below for instructions on how to submit an electronic application.

Doctoral students from other universities wishing to participate are encouraged to send an email before Friday, October 16, to maria.holmlund-rytkonen@hanken.fi, including:

- contact information (name, university, address, e-mail),
- information on the current phase of the studies (incl. number of earned study credits)
- a short summary of the PhD research
- need and motive for taking part in the course
- preparedness to take part in all four in-class days

Notification of acceptance: before Thursday, Oct 22

Hanken students: please sign up for the course in SISU as soon as possible

For more information regarding the course content, contact Maria Holmlund. Priority when assessing applications will be given to the relevance of the course to the doctoral thesis.

Welcome to the 12th bi-annual Service and Relationship Management course!

Maria Holmlund

Course responsible and instructor. Professor of Marketing and Head of Department.

Hanken School of Economics. Department of Marketing. CERS-Centre for Relationship Marketing and Service Management. PO BOX 479, FIN-00101 HELSINKI, Finland. Visiting address Arkadiankatu 22, Helsinki. Tel. +358-(0)9-431 33 396, gsm +358-(0)40-3521 396
E-mail maria.holmlund-rytkonen@hanken.fi