

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR LEE Geunhee

A Closer Look at Seminar Classes:
An in-depth conversation with Professor LEE



We Q Team members have observed that after the shift from in-person to online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been very difficult for 2nd-year and 3rd-year students who are planning to take seminars to choose their seminar professor and for professors to connect with their students. This project focuses on both the seminar professor and student point of view to relay the elements and dynamics of seminars. Our interview articles on seminars introduce two professors at APU (one APS professor and one APM professor) and their seminars, alongside a spotlight on one of their seminar students. Through the student point-of-view focus, we hope that in addition to conveying successful seminar methods to other APU professors that they can incorporate into their own seminars, we can have them discover successful teaching methods through the student perspective as well.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Please introduce your name and country.
I am Professor LEE Geunhee, pronounced "ii kuni." I tell my students that I am from a great country called South Korea. ("ii kuni" means "good country" in Japanese.)

2. What are your hobbies?
I like reading books, watching movies, and collecting collectibles such as toys.

3. What research themes does your seminar cover?
My seminar class focuses on a modern-day approach to consumer behavior which combines its traditional concepts with the following two concepts:

(1) Co-creation: how consumers share their ideas with good/service providers to help them create more value for customers and their organizations.

(2) Viral marketing: consumers develop opinions that they share through reviews online after consumption of some good or service, involving interaction with other consumers online and helping the service-providing company to improve its customer experience

4. How long have you been teaching your seminar?
I have been teaching at APU for ten years and I have been conducting research seminar classes for nine and a half years.

II. How students enter the seminar and the benefits they receive

1. What are some common misconceptions about seminars?
I think that students come under the general impression that seminar classes are only for those who are interested in writing a research thesis. However, in my seminar, I focus on the concepts of co-creation and viral marketing and utilize my industrial network to come up with organization-related projects. For example, I am currently in a partnership with Sanwa Shurui, the alcoholic beverage manufacturer, and the projects we carry out in my seminar are focused on developing marketing solutions for them. Therefore, taking a seminar is a great way to experience focused content and practical learning, rather than merely a path to writing a thesis. I understand that other professors who teach seminar classes implement a similar approach to teaching and developing class content as they would in their other classes.

2. What is the one thing students should prepare for their interview with a seminar professor?
I recommend that prospective seminar students consult with my current seminar students who can better explain how they view the seminar, how they manage the workload, and their personal experience



A company visit group photo of Professor LEE's students featuring some of the staff.

I also hold in high regard students that reach out to me for one-on-one consultation sessions before applying and highlight the past industrial output of our seminar such as the projects we have worked on with Sanwa Shurui. Since there is a two-way communication process, the student should also explain why they are interested in my seminar and be able to demonstrate knowledge about its activities. Such actions will set them apart from other potential students.

3. What is the difference between a third- and fourth-year seminar? At the end of each year, what do you expect the student to have accomplished?
Third- and fourth-year students work separately. When teaching third-year students, I focus on the basics of viral marketing and co-creation by having collaborations with outside companies. Fourth-year students, then, mainly spend their



Seminar session including guests from one of the companies the students work alongside.

time writing a quality research article.

Fourth-year seminar students also receive the privilege of participating in the selection process of new third-year seminar students by joining the interview panel. Based on the interviewees' responses, they observe and recommend students that can merge into the team chemistry. As the success of our seminar projects depends on teamwork, placing those directly involved in teamwork at the center of the recruitment process helps reduce potential team conflicts.

4. In one-word answers, what are the three benefits of taking a seminar?

1. Expertise – Students can gain field expertise in specific topics related to marketing and consumer behavior through my seminar.
2. Network – Over the years I have created a database of previous seminar students that details the companies they work for, their specific field of work, and their contact details. This database helps my current students to connect with their seniors and receive advice on resume creation, industry-related interview etiquette, job hunting, and before and during the job search process.
3. Father (Mentorship) – In some ways, I perform a father-like role to both domestic and international students who are living away from home as I provide them with mentorship, emotional support, and academic and career advice.

III. Seminar Content

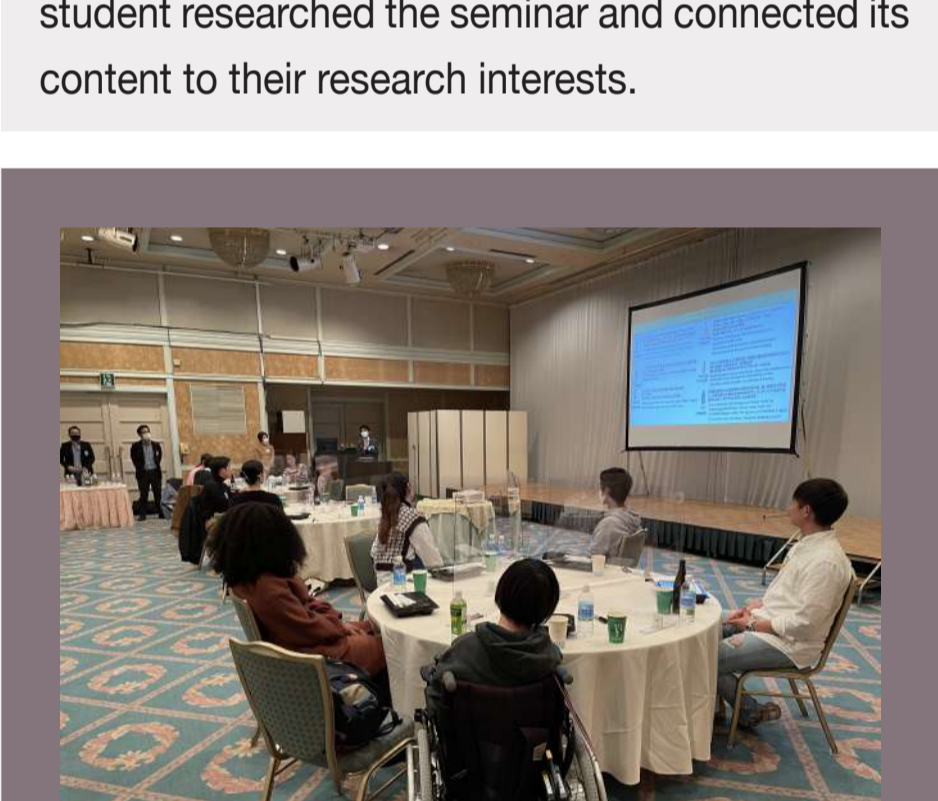
1. How is the seminar workload?
The workload is quite demanding and the style of my class is also unique. My students work on various marketing projects and give "progress reports." For example, this semester our focus is on viral marketing, and the current project is titled "increased awareness of APU using YouTube."

The challenge of this project and other past projects is that I will not provide any additional information or data to help the students complete it. My role is limited to developing the project theme, grading the rubric, and providing feedback. Students must challenge themselves to apply their knowledge of marketing. Weekly class presentations are followed by interactive feedback sessions where I ask questions based on the presentation and then provide recommendations. I also encourage peer-to-peer feedback during these sessions. This approach molds the desire to think critically and individually for situations they will be confronted with when they start working.

2. What has been one of the most impressive research topics from your seminar students?
One of the most impressive outcomes was a solution to: Find a problem that we have at APU and solve it using the power of viral marketing. Ten years ago, the bus waiting system at APU was unclear and the boarding process was chaotic during busy hours. This issue occurred across multiple bus stops in Beppu city. Images of students pushing, and shoving gave locals a bad impression of APU. My seminar students were interested in solving these bus queuing issues

which drew interest from the survey they distributed, and as a solution, they installed red and yellow tape to guide the queue at the waiting areas. Over two months and using video recordings, the students observed changes in the queuing and boarding patterns. The results of their findings were shared in a short movie via Facebook to teach APU students the importance of orderly queuing. This topic was impressive as it led to the official development of bus waiting areas and queuing lines, demonstrating the power of viral marketing.

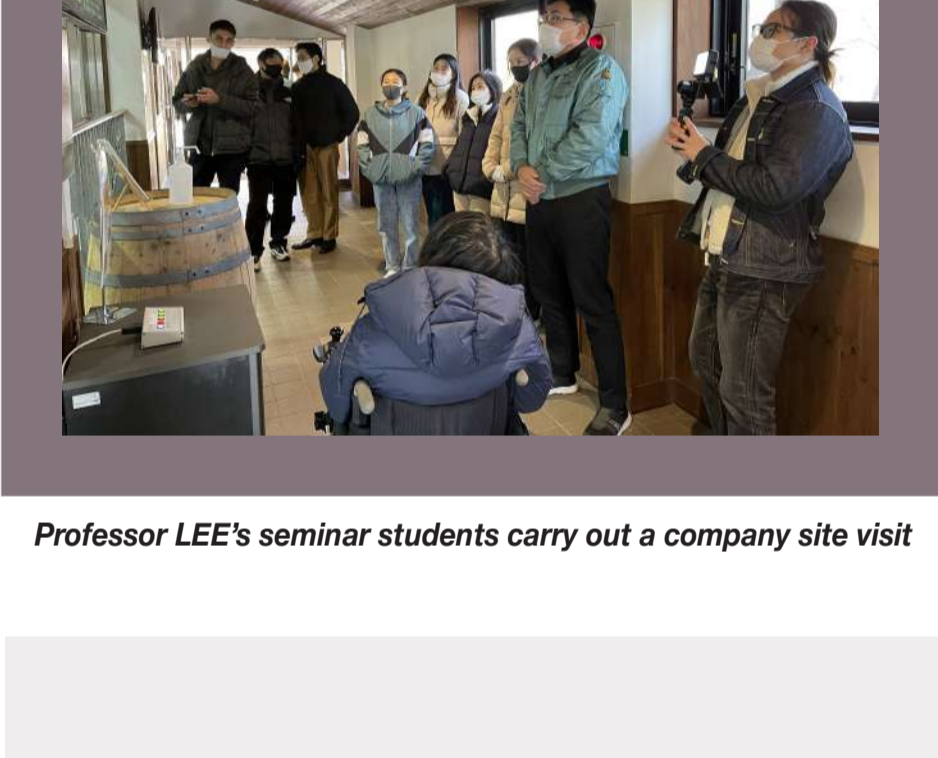
3. What is the prerequisite knowledge to attend your seminar?
Students that join my seminar class do not need to have any prerequisite knowledge. All new concepts will be taught during the course. However, I seek students that are motivated to learn, improve themselves, and interact with others. One way a student can demonstrate this motivation is by showing a clear understanding of what our seminar focuses on during the interview stage. This gives me the impression that the student researched the seminar and connected its content to their research interests.



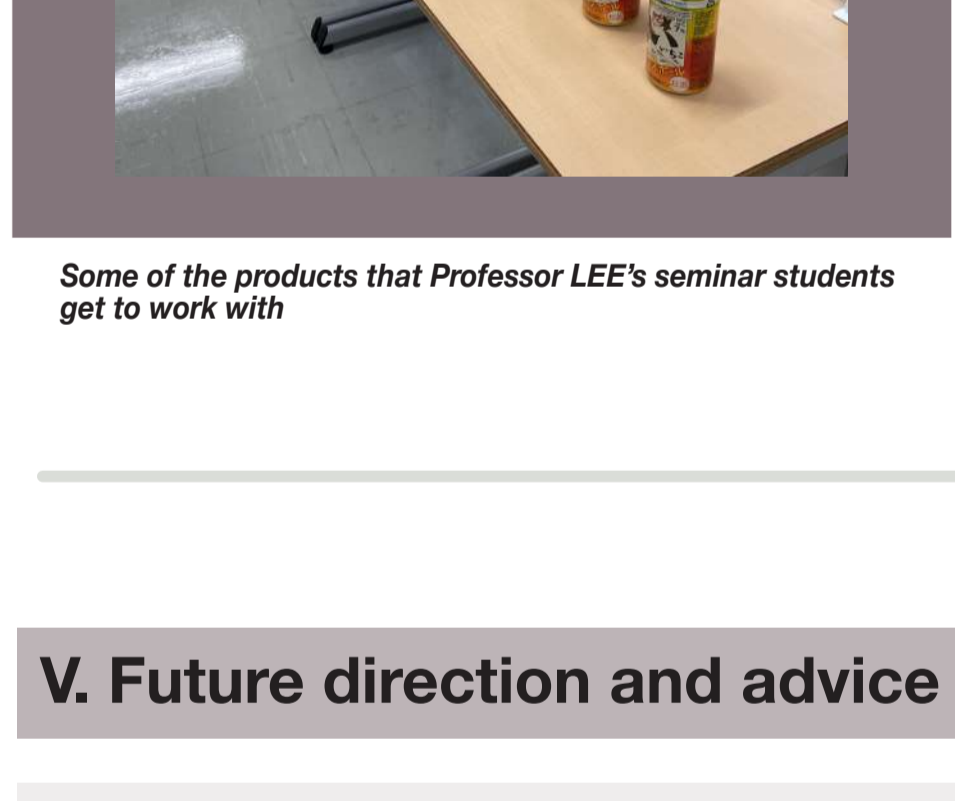
Professor LEE's seminar students follow a corporate presentation

IV. Teaching methods

1. Is your seminar conducted in the in-person, online, or hybrid format? Why is it conducted this way?
My seminar is currently being conducted in the hybrid format in case there are some students who are unable to join the class in person due to many reasons including the COVID-19 pandemic. However, almost everyone joins the class in person, because they understand the joy of direct communication. While I appreciate the safety and convenience that comes with online learning, I still prefer in-person teaching as I can get to know my students better through the extensive conversations that we can hold outside of class. I can also bond with my students, observe, and assemble into the team chemistry of my seminar class better in person.



Professor LEE's seminar students carry out a company site visit



Some of the products that Professor LEE's seminar students get to work with

2. How do you help students to decide on a research topic?
To help students match my output expectations, I hold "progress check" consultations with them once every two weeks. During these sessions, I request that my students provide me with updates on their research and I provide them with feedback.

3. How do you design the seminar curriculum?
I studied for my master's degree at a Japanese university with a seminar system, so I use both my independent knowledge and expertise plus the observations I made during my master's seminar days to develop my seminar curriculum.

V. Future direction and advice

1. What specific topics do you intend to investigate more in your future research?
Currently, I am interested in researching how companies can effectively use social media networks to market their products and services. I discovered that most companies these days are practicing social media marketing but not all of them have been effective. I want to investigate why a company's social media marketing is effective or not and provide practical implications. Similarly, I hope to see my seminar students observe current social marketing trends and deploy their knowledge of viral marketing, co-creation, and consumer behavior to close the gaps and problems that companies currently face.

2. Do you require students to write a thesis if they join your seminar class?
Authoring a research paper or thesis is not a requirement for my seminar students. Upon completing the seminar, I hope that my students have developed new knowledge and expertise that they can share with other students and apply to their own future careers.

VI. Conclusion

What is your advice for students who intend to take your seminar class in the future?
I encourage all students to join my seminar if they want to develop expert knowledge in viral marketing and co-creation, concepts which are both applicable at the corporate level and in building a digital brand. If students are interested in learning about content creation on YouTube, Facebook, and other social media platforms, my seminar will be useful. Our projects with Sanwa Shurui involve a back-and-forth process in which students pitch marketing ideas and then receive feedback to tailor these solutions to meet the company's needs. This kind of interaction helps students put the viral marketing and co-creation concepts they learned into practice by responding to industrial needs. Moreover, joining my seminar is an opportunity to receive academic mentorship and build a network of friends, both current and former APU students, that can provide help throughout life at APU and during the transition into the global job market.



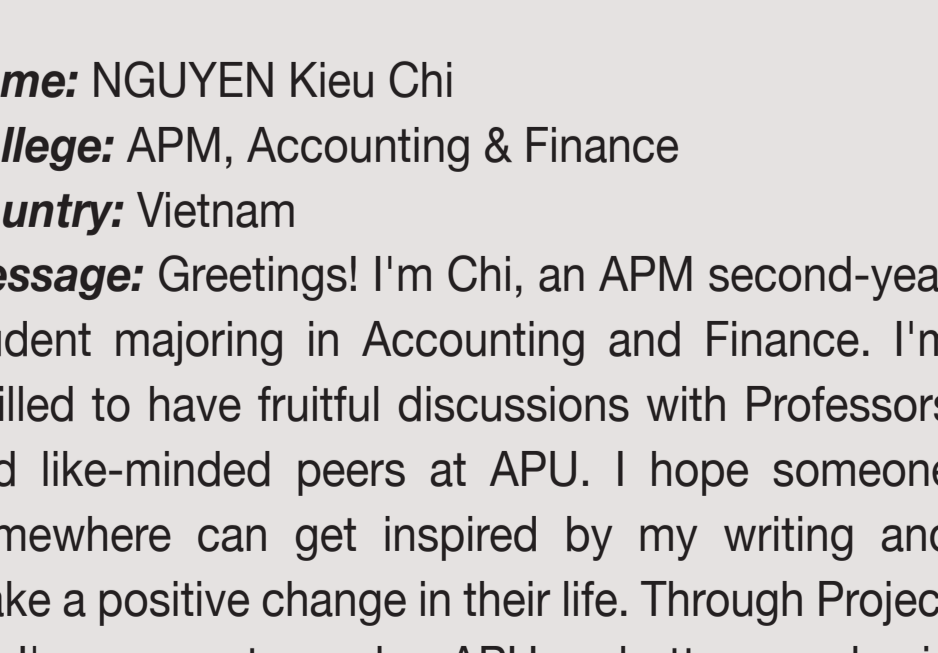
A group photo of Professor LEE's seminar students

AUTHOR'S IMPRESSION

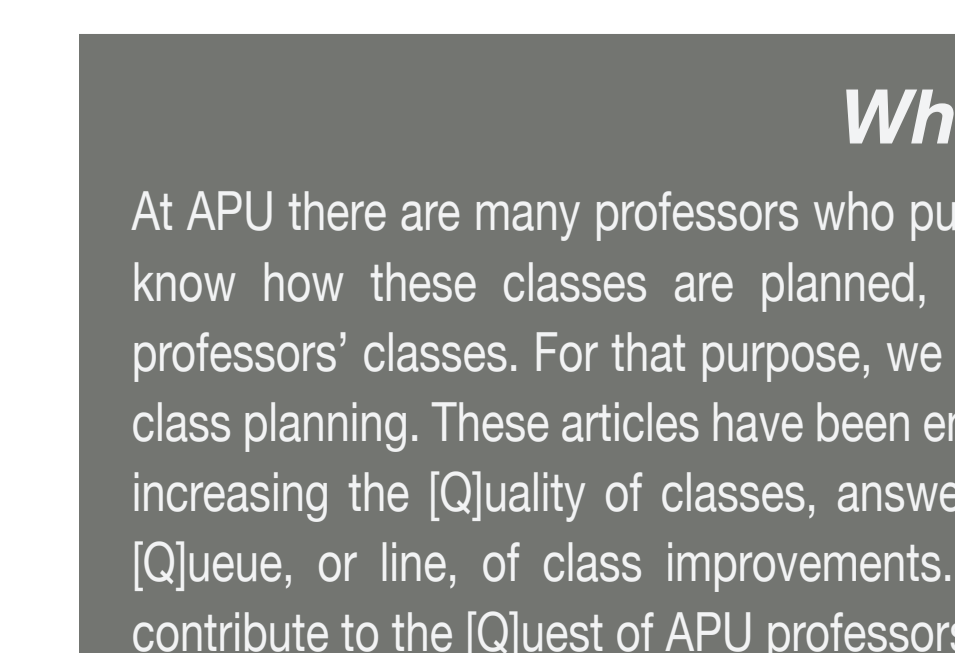
Professor LEE Geunhee takes a solutions-based approach to his seminar. This approach is demonstrated right from his first seminar project of helping APU develop a bus queuing system utilizing viral marketing and co-creation techniques. I also observed that Professor LEE Geunhee utilizes his industrial network to help develop seminar projects to seek answers to industrial problems. His projects involving viral marketing and co-creation to address brand-related problems that the Sanwa Shurui company faces are challenging but offer students a unique opportunity to apply the skills they gained in the seminar and related classes. I believe that students who join Professor Lee's seminar will ultimately develop in-depth skills to use viral marketing and co-creation as tools to solve individual and corporate marketing problems in a new and transformative way.

INTERVIEWER and AUTHOR

Name: MUROMBA Pascal Simbarashe
College: APAM (International Management)
Country: Zimbabwe
Message: I love reading books. Two of my favorite books are Educated by Tara Westover and The End of History and the Last Man by Francis Fukuyama. Politics and sustainability are some of my favorite topics. I am currently learning martial arts and I find it very interesting.



INTERVIEWER



Name: NGUYEN Kieu Chi
College: APAM, Accounting & Finance
Country: Vietnam
Message: Greetings! I'm Chi, an APM second-year student majoring in Accounting and Finance. I'm thrilled to have fruitful discussions with Professors and like-minded peers at APU. I hope someone somewhere can get inspired by my writing and make a positive change in their life. Through Project Q, I'm eager to make APU a better academic environment where students are free to express themselves and reach their full potential.

What is [Q]?
At APU there are many professors who put together wonderful classes, and if we could get to know how these classes are planned, it would contribute to the improvement of other professors' classes. For that purpose, we have begun doing interviews in order to learn about class planning. These articles have been entitled [Q], comprising a variety of meanings such as: increasing the [Q]uality of classes, answering [Q]uestions to increase quality, and forming a [Q]ueue, or line, of class improvements. We would be very happy if these articles could contribute to the [Q]uest of APU professors' class quality improvement.