



**Principles of Retailing
Marketing 725
Spring (Q3) 2019A**

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Course Overview

The retailing industry is in the midst of a significant transformation. Forces of change are disrupting the positioning of major retailers across the marketplace. Demographic, economic, competitive and technological developments are changing how consumers shop, where they shop and forcing brick and mortar retailers to rethink their value propositions and business models in order to survive. These macro trends have resulted in traffic and conversion challenges for many retailers.

The landscape is littered with the names of many prominent retail companies that have been forced out of business or have been forced to merge with others to succeed, including RadioShack, American Apparel, Loehmann's, Border's, Circuit City, Mervyns, Sharper Image, Linens n Things and Brookstone. Many others will follow. This course will arm students with an understanding of the tools and approaches for evaluating, formulating and implementing successful business strategies for retailers. Specifically it will:

- provide a framework to use in analyzing retailers' customer and competitive positioning;
- allow students to understand how different retail formats compete for share of wallet and why certain retail concepts perform better than others across different retail segments;
- provide a basic understanding of retail operations and why it is so difficult to implement a winning retail strategy; and
- provide insights into the ways in which Wall Street looks at retailers and how they value different companies.

This course is especially useful for students who are considering a career in retailing, for those students who will be going into the financial sector and be involved with investments in retail companies, and for students who are considering a career in management consulting with a focus on the retailing industry.

Course Materials

Classes will be highly interactive, using several case studies including HBS cases on Walmart, Amazon, Macy's, Uniqlo, Best Buy and Casper.com.

Outside guest speakers will join the class throughout the semester to supplement the course material so students learn how to apply the basic analytical tools that will be introduced throughout the course. Guest speakers will be announced at the beginning of the semester.

There is no textbook required for this class, however for those of you with a deep interest in retailing I would suggest The New Science of Retailing by Marshall Fisher and Ananth Raman, Harvard Business Press. In addition, I would highly recommend that those students who have little or no background in retailing consider obtaining a copy of Retailing Management by Michael Levy, Barton Weitz, 10th edition, Irwin- McGraw Hill. This text is definitely optional and, as it is quite expensive, I have a couple of copies that I can lend out to those who wish to evaluate it before buying. It is a solid primer in basic retailing principles.

Course Attendance Policy

Students must attend the first day of class in order to add the course once the semester has begun.

Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate in case and class discussion. Absences and late arrival to class will lower class attendance and participation grades. Written assignments are to be individually completed and must be submitted by the date & time they are due, generally one hour prior to class noted on syllabus. No submissions will be accepted after class begins.

Grading

1. ***Class participation (15%)*** – participation in each class will be evaluated in terms of level of involvement in class discussion, evidence of understanding and insight conveyed and value of your contribution to each session.
2. ***Case write-ups (50%)*** – you will be required to analyze **two out of the three** case assignments noted on the syllabus. The questions, which will be provided one week prior to the due date, will require combining information drawn from the case, public sources, store visits and competitor visits.
3. ***Final exam – case study (35%)*** -all students will be required to submit a written response to the final case questions before the start of the final class. These questions will be provided during the next to last class.

| Class | Date | Topic | Case | Guest | Assignment Due |
|--------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | 1/23/19 | Retail market, trends and challenges | | | |
| 2 | 1/30/19 | Retail KPI's and performance evaluation | Wal-Mart | Bryan Gildenberg Chief Knowledge Officer, Kantar Retail | |
| 3 | 2/6/19 | Elements of retail strategy | Amazon.com | Diane Ellis Former CEO Chico's and The Limited: currently Director, Stage Stores | Walmart vs. Amazon case due |
| 4 | 2/13/19 | Alignment of strategy with execution | Macy's | Justin MacFarlane, Chief Strategy, Analytics, and Innovation Officer, Macy's | Macy's case due |
| 5 | 2/20/19 | Merchandising strategy, Omnichannel and Customer Experience – Making it all work | Uniqlo | | Uniqlo case due |
| 6 | 2/27/19 | Technology innovation in retailing | | Karl Haller Global Leader, Retail COE, IBM | |
| 7 | 3/13/19 | Retail innovation – new business models and where we go from here? | Casper.com | Deb Weinswig CEO & Founder, Coresight Research and Robin Lewis, CEO, The Robin Report | Final exam due - Best Buy case |