



**Principles of Retailing
Marketing 225
Spring (Q3) 2021A**

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Office hours by appointment
Classroom: Virtual

Course Overview

The retailing industry is in the midst of a significant transformation which the pandemic has greatly accelerated. 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 Forever 21, JC Penney, American Apparel, Loehmann's, Stage Stores, Pier 1 Imports, Lord & Taylor, SteinMart and J.Crew. 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, Bed Bath & Beyond, The Gap, Macy's, Boll & Branch, Away and Stitch Fix.

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.

Course Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate in case and class discussion. 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 (20%)*** – 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-up (40%)*** – you will be required to provide a written case analysis as 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, website and store visits and competitor visits.
3. ***Final exam – case study (40%)*** -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(s)	Guests (TBD)	Assignment
1	1/26/21	Retail market, trends and challenges		Christa Hart, Senior MD, FTI Consulting	
2	2/2/21	Retail KPI's and performance evaluation	Amazon.com		
3	2/9/21	Retail strategy in a post-pandemic world	Walmart	Robin Lewis, CEO and Founder, The Robin Report	
4	2/16/21	Reinventing "big box" retailing	Macy's, Best Buy, Bed Bath & Beyond	Rafeh Masood, EVP, Chief Digital Officer, BB&B	Case assignment due
5	2/23/21	Reinventing "specialty" retailing	The Gap, Boll & Branch, Away	Mike Rempell, EVP and COO, AEO	
6	3/2/21	Technology innovation in retailing	Stitch Fix	Richard Kestenbaum, Partner, Triangle Capital	
7	3/9/21	New business models and where we go from here?		Karl Haller, Partner and Retail COE Leader, IBM	Final assignment due