

University of Pennsylvania – The Wharton School

Special Topics: Retail Merchandising – MKTG 306 – 402, 806 - 402

Syllabus – Spring (Q4) 2021

Instructor: Bryan Eshelman

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Classroom: JMHH TBD, Monday 3-6

Office Hours: Mondays 12-3 by email appointment

Course description and objectives:

This course is to introduce and expose students to both the fundamentals and recent trends in the end-to-end retail merchandising process. The format of the class will be a combination of lecture, case discussion, and guest speaker presentations.

The objective is to familiarize students with both the theory and practice of planning, buying, designing, sourcing, displaying, and fulfilling merchandise to consumers. This knowledge will be fundamental to careers working for retailers themselves (e-commerce or omnichannel), but also in consulting to retailers, and in banking or investing in the retail sector.

Evaluation will be a combination of in-class participation, an individual assignment of a case analysis, a fundamental concepts test, and a group presentation.

Date	Topic	Assignment	Case
3/15	Overview of Merchandising & the Role of Experience	Case Group 1	Reinventing Best Buy
3/22	Financial Overview – Retail Math, Pricing, and Wall Street	Case Group 2 Team member list due	J.C. Penney's "Fair and Square" Pricing Strategy
3/29	Visual Merchandising – Online, Mobile, and Brick & Mortar	Case Group 3 Team topic selection due	Wipro Consumer Care: Merchandising for Success
4/5	Assortment Development & Optimization in the Digital World	Case Group 4	Predicting Consumer Tastes with Big Data at Gap
4/19	Product Design, Development, & Sourcing –	Case Group 5	What Business is Zara in?

	Speed & Fast Fashion AND Inventory Deployment – Stores, DC, Drop Ship		
4/26	Trends & Innovation – COVID-driven innovation	Take Home Test Due; Group Presentations	None

Reading materials:

Additional materials will include case studies, links to which will be available along with all in-class presentations via Canvas.

Grading – weighted as follows:

Class Participation	30%
Individual Assignment (Case Write-Up)	20%
Test (Take Home)	20%
Group/Team Project	30%

- Given the limited number of meeting sessions (six over the course of the quarter), attendance is mandatory at all sessions, including the first.
- Class participation includes attendance, preparation, and quality questions & discussion during class lecture, case discussion, and guest lecturer Q&A
- The individual assignment is a write-up of answers to three to five questions regarding one of the cases. All students in the class will be randomly assigned one of the six cases for this assignment. Grading will be based on a rubric published on Canvas prior to the start of class.
- The test is a multiple-choice review of the key fundamental concepts learned throughout the semester. The knowledge and facts required will all be in the lecture notes.
- The team assignment will provide an opportunity for students to research and present an emerging trend or innovation in retail, linking it to retail fundamentals learned throughout the course. Grading will be based on a rubric published on Canvas prior to the start of class.