University of Pennsylvania – The Wharton School

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

Syllabus - Spring 2020

Instructor: Bryan Eshelman   email: (Class) bryan.eshelman@alumni.upenn.edu
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Classroom: JMHH 340, 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
3/16	Overview of Merchandising and the Role of Experience	Case Group 1	Reinventing Best Buy
3/23	Product Design, Development, & Sourcing – Speed & Fast Fashion	Case Group 2 Team member list due	What Business is Zara in?
3/30	Financial Overview – Retail Math, Pricing, and Wall Street	Case Group 3 Team topic selection due	J.C. Penney's "Fair and Square" Pricing Strategy
4/6	Visual Merchandising – Online, Mobile, and Brick & Mortar	Case Group 4	Wipro Consumer Care: Merchandising for Success

4/13	Assortment Development & Optimization in the Digital World	Case Group 5	Predicting Consumer Tastes with Big Data at Gap
4/20	Inventory Deployment – Stores, DC, Drop Ship	Test	None
4/27	Trends & Innovation – Rental & Resale	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   20%
Group/Team Project   30%

- Given the limited number of meeting sessions (seven 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 five cases for this assignment. Grading will be based on a rubric published on Canvas prior to the start of class.
- The test is a closed book, 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.