
DRAFT SYLLABUS – To be finalized in early August

**Omni-Channel Retailing
MRKTB8645
Fall 2020 – A Term, Thursdays 5:40 – 8:55 p.m.
Professor Manini Madia, Adjunct Associate Professor of Retail**

Course Objective

The objective of this course is to provide a holistic view of retail, merchandising, and store management in order to prepare undergraduate students for roles in merchandising buying/planning, retail consulting, and the retail vertical of private equity firms and investment banks. In this course students will learn how the merchandising process works, the role of the merchant, retail metrics, test-and-learn in store, and how to use retail data and trend spotting to predict future sales and trends.

About the Instructor

Manini Bhakta Madia is a subject matter expert in retail and consumer/shopper behavior. She leads new product innovation for Combe Inc., a personal products company. Manini has over twenty years of experience working with retail, CPG, and technology clients to generate new customers and drive loyalty within existing ones. Manini worked at MasterCard Advisors, where she commercialized data products to help retailers and financial institutions to use big data to engage their customers. Manini spent several years leading brand marketing for L'Oréal, Estee Lauder, and Kraft, successfully driving global product innovation that resulted in market share growth.

In addition to her brand management experience, Manini spent several years in strategy and retail consulting, at PwC and Kantar Retail. She helped clients with strategic and general management challenges, in the CPG and retail verticals. She advised clients on retail and merchandising strategies, leveraging analyses of point-of-sale, panel, and loyalty card data.

Manini received a B.S. in psychology and economics from Northwestern University, and an M.B.A. in marketing from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Class Participation and Attendance

In order to create a successful learning environment in this classroom, each student is expected to come to class prepared, having read assigned reading and completed assignments prior to class. This is a case-based course that leverages significant classroom discussion.

Participation is essential. Classroom participation will be evaluated on quality of comments, insights, and questions. Questions on the reading assignments will be posted on Classes prior to each lecture.

Attendance at all classes is expected. **Absences will impact the final grade.** Absences due to illness or emergency must be communicated to the professor. Your final class participation grade will be provided to you via Classes at the end of the semester (graded out of 20 points).

Note-taking on paper, and not on a laptop is highly encouraged. Laptops can be distracting during class. Please seriously consider this suggestion.

Honor Code

Students must adhere to the honor code. All students are obligated to report to the instructor any suspected violations of the code.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a qualified disability and will require academic accommodation during this course, provide me with a letter verifying your registration and outlining the accommodations needed. Please do this prior to the first class.

Course Grading and Assignments

Class participation	20%
Written assignments (2)	40%
Final group presentations	40%

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. A grade of 0 will be assigned to any late submissions.

Written Assignment #1: Due prior to Session 3. Analyze and compare two retailers' ability to engage their shopper across the omni-channel, using concepts learned in class and in course readings. The retailers you select can be either bricks & mortar retailers, or e-commerce. No more than two double-spaced pages in 12 pt. Arial font and 1" margins all around. Points will be deducted for submissions that exceed the length requirement. Grading is based on how well your ideas are expressed, and how deeply your observations and analyses are supported by course concepts. Graded out of 20 points.

Written Assignment #2: Due prior to Session 4. Answer a set of questions (TBD) on case (TBD).

1. Question 1 TBD
2. Question 2 TBD
3. Question 3 TBD
4. Question 4 TBD

No more than three double-spaced pages in 12 pt. Arial font with 1" margins all around. Points will be deducted for submissions that exceed the length requirement. Grading is based on how clearly your responses are articulated, and the analysis used to support your responses. Graded out of 20 points.

Final Group Presentations:

The final deliverable for the course will be the opportunity to develop an omni-channel strategy for a retailer or brand via a final group project. Project teams will be assigned by the professor, at the second meeting of the course. Each project team will have a maximum of 20 minutes to present, followed by 3 minutes of Q&A from the class and instructor. Each member of the team will receive the same grade. Grading is based on the following (graded out of 40 points):

- **Omni-Channel Strategy:** quality, analysis, and creativity of the strategic plan/recommendations for the brand, and analysis/application of retail principles (25 points)
- **Team Presentation:** team performance and *participation of each member* in the presentation, as well as quality of responses during Q&A (10 points)

- **Slides:** quality of presentation slides and clear expression of merchandising plan (5 points)

Course Materials

The course will cover both classical and latest thinking and texts on retail trends, merchandising mechanics, and store management. The course will also feature accomplished guest speakers with industry expertise.

Course reading materials follow below:

- TBD and will be finalized by 8/1

Session 1: The Customer Journey through Omni-Channel Retail

This module covers the fundamentals of the customer journey and how products get into the hands of customers. You will learn a variety of frameworks for understanding and analyzing the customer's journey, and how to observe and identify pain points and friction in the process.

Your groups for the final presentation will be assigned on this date.

Reading: TBD

Video to view prior to class: Dan Ariely's TED Talk - *Are we in control of our own decisions?*

Session 2: Omni-Channel Retailing Best and Worst Practices

You will learn a variety of frameworks for omni-channel retailing. We will discuss several real-world examples of companies and their omni-channel practices. We will utilize the frameworks to define best and worst practices, and how to optimize the customer experience in the shopping process.

Reading: TBD

Guest Speaker: TBD

Session 3: The Role of Big Data in Omni-Channel Retailing

We will learn how the best companies use customer and shopping behavior to drive trial, loyalty, and cross-purchase behaviors, ultimately driving higher lifetime value of the customer. We will explore the role of AI, machine learning, and voice as well.

Reading: TBD

Guest Speaker: TBD

Written Assignment #1: Due prior to session 3

Session 4: Evaluating the Performance of Omni-Channel Retailers

We will understand the financial components of the best in class omni-channel retailer, and how to analyze companies based on key metrics. We will touch on returns, and best practices to manage this important facet of the balance sheet. In the final sessions of the course, we will apply the studied frameworks to analyze the omni-channel practices of brands and retailers.

Reading: TBD

Guest Speaker: TBD

Written Assignment #2: Due prior to Session 4

Session 5: Omni-Channel Strategy and Investment

Conventional wisdom suggests that retailers should invest in bolstering the omnichannel experience they offer consumers on the basis that more channels will result in increased sales. But retailers can either invest in an omnichannel strategy and technology because it seems like the right thing to do, or invest based on data that details the value to be gained from key customer segments. We will learn how omni buying differs from brick/mortar buying, and will explore more deeply how digital merchandising impacts sales and profit margin. We will study a framework for assessing the dollar value of the omnichannel vs. single channel shopper.

Guest Speaker: TBD

Reading: TBD

Session 6: Final Presentations

Slides due to professor prior to class.