

MAR 3231 (Sections 6298 and 228E)
Introduction to Retail Systems and Management
Fall 2016

NOTE: Some dates/specific daily content may change, as not all speakers and tours are confirmed, but students will be given as much advance notice as possible.

Exams will definitely occur on dates listed.

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| Professor: Steven Kirn, Ph.D. Phone: 352-273-3277 Stuzin Hall 100 (Retail Center) steven.kirn@warrington.ufl.edu | Office hours: Monday afternoon after class Other times by appointment (easy – just contact me!) Course Website: http://lss.at.ufl.edu Course Location/Time: Section 6298: Heavener 250, Monday and Wednesday, Periods 3-4, 9:55 – 11:50 a.m. Section 228E: Heavener 240, Periods 7-8, 1:55 – 3:50 p.m. |
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Why should you study Retailing Management?

First, we all shop! This course will help you be a better, more informed customer. And since this class is mostly Marketing and Business majors– but I am delighted to have folks from other disciplines! I hope it will inform you about some of the applied aspects of your chosen career interest! **Second**, retailing directly or indirectly accounts for about 25% of all employment in the U.S., and consumer spending makes up 70% of the country’s GDP. No matter your career interests, an understanding of retailing informs your overall understanding of our economy. **Third**, we are entering an era of a true global marketplace and a revolution in how and where people acquire the goods and services they need. You will inevitably be a part of this transformation, and knowledge of the reach and impact of the retail industry will make you a more informed “player”.

Course Objective:

To take students on a fast – but detailed as possible – “tour” of the strategic and operational decisions involved in running a retail firm, the underlying business concepts and principles for making those decisions, and the variety of professional roles required for effective execution. While the course focuses on the retail industry, including both products and services, it is also useful for students who might work for companies that interface with retailers, such as manufacturers of consumer products, or for students with a general management or entrepreneurial interest. In one sense, this class uses retailing as a sustained “case study” in business strategy development and execution, with the retail industry as a framework.

Specific student learning outcomes are to develop an understanding of:

- the scope and contribution of retailers in the product value chain.
- consumer motivation, shopping behaviors, and decision processes for evaluating the retail offering and purchasing merchandise and services.
- definition of strategic objectives, competitor analysis, and competitive strategy
- how retailers differentiate their offering as an element in their corporate strategy
- the traditional bases for market segmentation and how that segmentation can inform retail strategy
- changes and trends in retailing, with specific focus on changing consumer groups/preferences, e-commerce, technology and globalization
- the role of organization design and human resource practices

- factors affecting strategic decisions involving investments in locations, supply chain and information systems, and customer retention programs.
- how retailers communicate with their customers.
- tactics (pricing, merchandise assortment, store management, visual merchandising, customer service) for extracting profit from a retail offering
- issues of corporate social responsibility

Required Course Material:

Michael Levy, Barton Weitz and Dhruv Grewal, *Retailing Management*, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, Ninth Edition, 2014 (referred to as “LWG” for short elsewhere in this document and on the course web site.) There will also be two copies of this book on reserve in Library West.

General Course Design

This course uses a variety of learning approaches, including lectures, case studies, readings, videos and other multi-media tools, group and individual projects and reports, guest speakers from the retail industry, and guided tours of a large retail distribution center and a major retail store. There is ample opportunity for in-class discussion, which is strongly encouraged.

Teams:

Students will work in teams of 5 or 6 students for two major assignments. If there are people you know in the class and/or can easily connect with, you can request assignment to the same team, but I may also have to “create” some teams. The teams will be responsible for two group projects, noted on pages 9 - 13 of this document. The Strategic Analysis project consists of a high-level analysis of the competitive strategy of a particular retailer, and contrasting that with two of its competitors. The Competitive Shopping Assignment requires field study and analysis of assortments and execution in a particular merchandise category, comparing and contrasting two stores. *Note: A “peer assessment” will be included in the grading of this assignment, as it is a hard reality that individual commitment and contributions vary on these teams, and I want to be sensitive to creating a total “team effort”. Each assignment is worth 75 points, but if team member feedback indicates lack of contribution/participation, I will deduct points from individual scores. So, work together to create a great project!*

Class Participation and Attendance:

You are encouraged to be an active part of the class discussion and dialogue. Such participation adds to the class learning, and helps assure that the class content is meaningful and relevant. Thus, regular class is expected, and required.

Ten points will be deducted for missing either the field trip to the store or distribution center and for missing each class with a guest speaker. Excused absences may include class conflicts, employer interviews (but please, don’t “push” this exception too far!), documented illness or true emergencies. Please: you need to notify me about any such conflict before the trip or guest speaker session, if at all possible. Other excused absences may be granted, in advance, but should be considered the exception, rather than the rule. **You are permitted up to three class absences without penalty**; 10 points will be deducted for each additional absence. Arriving to class late or leaving early may count as an absence.

Exams

All exams will be open notes, but not open book. The exams will be weighted about 50% multiple choice/quantitative items, 50% written answer format. The latter will be judged not only on accuracy, but particularly on the amount of thought and analysis you include. In other words, I want to hear *your* thoughts and ideas, not just read a litany of bullet points from class

presentations – especially since you will have access to your notes. Show me how you “get” the course concepts!

Grading:

Grades can be earned as follows (570 points maximum, from class activities as shown)

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Exams | 360 points (3 X 120 points each) |
| Strategic Analysis (Group) | 75 |
| Competitive Shopping (Group) | 75 |
| Individual Assignments | 60 (6 assignments @ 10 pts;) |
| TOTAL REGULAR POINTS | 570 |

| Grade | Points Needed (% of total) | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| A | 530 | 93% |
| A- | 513 | 90% |
| B+ | 502 | 88% |
| B | 484 | 85% |
| B- | 473 | 83% |
| C+ | 456 | 80% |
| C | 445 | 78% |
| C- | 427 | 75% |
| D+ | 416 | 73% |
| D | 399 | 70% |
| D- | 382 | 67% |
| E | <382 | |

Make-up Exams:

Make-up exams are only considered if there has been a valid and documented personal, family or medical emergency, or if we have made arrangements for this in advance to accommodate special circumstances.

Resource for your use – really helpful!

I strongly suggest that you make use of the following resource. It includes links to excellent research resources that I know you will find helpful in this and other classes, if you are not already aware of them:

<http://businesslibrary.uflib.ufl.edu/mar3231>

Online Learning Center

The McGraw-Hill Online learning Center (OLC) is at <http://mhhe.com/levy9e> It includes interactive spreadsheets, models, practice exam questions and other resources you may find helpful, for example, in your various individual and team assignments.

Cheating:

Cheating won't be tolerated. As a student at the University of Florida, you are responsible for pursuing knowledge with integrity, as described in the Student Honor Code. Update yourself on this policy at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#studentcode>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

I will be happy to work with you to assure any needed accommodation. Don't hesitate to ask! I will make this easy for anyone who requires special accommodations.

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to me (the Instructor) when requesting accommodation.

MAR 3231 – Fall 2016
Introduction to Retail Systems and Management
Class Schedule Summary (Sections 6298 and 228E)

(“LWG” = our text by Levy, Weitz and Grewal. Also, See “Assignments” for additional information about specific assignment details)

[NOTE: Schedule subject to revision, due to such events as guest speaker cancellations or date changes required for store visits, developments in the retail industry that are timely for consideration, etc. There is no way to eliminate these unexpected events, but I will give you as much advance notice as possible. Except in extraordinary circumstances, exams will be on the days shown.]

| DATE | TOPIC | READINGS | ASSIGNMENT | NOTES |
|------|---|-----------------|---|--|
| 8/22 | Introduction to Class | | Show up! | Please attend, as we will do an opening exercise and introductions |
| 8/24 | Introduction to the Retailing Industry – and “The End of Retailing” | Chapter 1 (LWG) | | Be sure to read “Career Opportunities”.pp 32-33 |
| 8/29 | Types of Retailers | Chapter 2 (LWG) | Listen to “Back Story” podcast segment: “The Wonderful Windows of Oz” (The program segments are listed separately if you scroll down. This one is about 10 minutes long.) | We’ll discuss the podcast in class. (No individual submission required. No points for this. C’mon – it’s interesting!) Here is the link: http://backstoryradio.org/shows/counter-culture/ Completed profile – with photo, if possible – due on Canvas learning platform. Important to help me get to know you! |
| 8/31 | Multichannel Retailing | Chapter 3 (LWG) | Case #3, page 553, “Blue Tomato” Focus on discussion items 2,3,4 | |
| 9/5 | Holiday | | | |
| 9/7 | No class today | | | Dr. Kirn in Santiago, Chile, for presentation and panel |

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|------|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 9/12 | Multichannel Retailing (cont.) | | | Team Member Assignment Requests Due See “Multichannel Retailing” in detailed schedule for assignment details – individual preparation required! |
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|------|--------------------------|-----------------|---|--|
| 9/14 | Customer Buying Behavior | Chapter 4 (LWG) | Each group assignment team should post on CANVAS the name of the retailer and its two competitors for which they plan to do the Strategic Analysis assignment, described in detail later in this document Depending on letter of the alphabet that starts your last name, follow assignment instructions. Each assignment group will discuss their experience. No advance “team” preparation required – just a general discussion of reactions | |
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|------|--|-----------------|---|---|
| 9/19 | Retail Market Strategy | Chapter 5 (LWG) | Case #1, p. 550, “Tractor Supply Company” | Focus on case discussion questions 2, 3 and 4 |
| 9/21 | Retail Strategy (cont.) and Financial Strategy | Chapter 6 (LWG) | | |

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|------|------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| 9/26 | Exam #1 | | Exam will cover Chapters 1 – 6, plus class material | Open notes but cannot bring textbook |
| 9/28 | Retail Locations | Chapter 7 (LWG) | Listen to “Back Story” podcast segments, “Mall About It” and “Boxed In”: http://backstoryradio.org/shows/counter-culture/ (Individual submission required.) | Strategic Analysis presentations, Groups 1-3 |

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|-------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 10/3 | Retail Site Location | Chapter 8 (LWG) | | Strategic Analysis presentations, Groups 4-6 |
| 10/5 | Human Resource Management ; Guest Speaker – Loss Prevention | Chapter 9 (LWG)) | | Guest speaker from Loss Prevention Resource Council: Read Hayes, Ph.D. |
| 10/10 | HR Management (conclusion) and IS/Supply chain | Chapter 10 (LWG) | Case #10, p. 564, “Walmart: Pioneer in Supply Chain Management” | Sears transformation: Role of HR For case, Focus on discussion question #1 |
| 10/12 | IS/Supp. Chain (cont.) | | | |

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|-------|---|------------------|----------------------|--|
| 10/17 | | | | Walmart DC Tour-Alachua. Carpool. Note Shoe rule! |
| 10/19 | Customer Relationship Management | Chapter 11 (LWG) | | Teams post the name of the company for the Competitive Shopping assignment. See detailed schedule for information. |
| 10/24 | Merchandise Assortments and Planning Systems | Chapter 12 (LWG) | | |
| 10/26 | Test #2 | Chapters 7-12 | | |
| 10/31 | Managing the Store | Chapter 16 (LWG) | | Note Change in Chapter Sequence! |
| 11/2 | Store Tour (TBD) | | | |
| 11/7 | Buying Merchandise, Vendor Relationships | Chapter 13 (LWG) | | Guest speaker? |
| 11/9 | Pricing | Chapter 14 (LWG) | Case #24, "JCPenney" | Focus on questions 3 & 5 |
| 11/14 | Retail Communication Mix | Chapter 15 (LWG) | | |
| 11/16 | Store Layout and Design, including design competition award winners | Chapter 17 (LWG) | | |
| 11/21 | Customer Service | Chapter 18 (LWG) | | |
| 11/28 | Team presentations | | | Competitive Shopping presentations: Teams 4 – 6 |
| 11/30 | Team presentations | | | Competitive Shopping presentations: Teams 1 – 3 |
| 12/5 | Class summary | | | |
| 12/7 | Exam #3 | Chapters 13 - 18 | | "Final" exam in cumulative exam approach on Chapters 13 – 18, plus in-class material. Also include items from total class. |

Assignments Schedule: Individual and Group

All assignments should be typed and turned in through the e-learning platform (Canvas).

Assignments submitted after 5:00 p.m. on the due date will be considered late and may receive a lower grade. Detailed descriptions/instructions follow the schedule below.

| Assignment | Type | Due Date | Points |
|--|------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Complete profile on Canvas e-learning platform | Individual | 8/31 | |
| Listen to “The Wonderful Windows of Oz” podcast (No written submission required – just enjoy!) | Individual | 8/29 | |
| Case #3, “Blue Tomato” | Individual | 8/31 | 10 |
| Submit team member requests | Team | 9/12 | |
| Multi-channel retailing assignment | Individual | 9/12 | 10 |
| Post on Canvas: Strategic Analysis choices | Team | 9/14 | |
| Case #1, “Tractor Supply Company” | Individual | 9/19 | 10 |
| First Exam | Individual | 9/26 | 120 |
| Listen to “Back Story” podcast segments: “Mall About It” and “Boxed In” (Individual submission required) | Individual | 9/28 | 10 |
| Strategy presentations Teams 1 - 3 | Team | 9/28 | 75 (for each team) |
| Strategy presentations Teams 4 - 6 | Team | 10/3 | 75 (for each team) |
| Case #10, “Walmart: Pioneer in Supply Chain Management” | Individual | 10/10 | 10 |
| Walmart DC tour | Class | 10/17 (tentative) | |
| Post team’s Competitive Shopping choices | Team | 10/19 | |
| Second Exam | Individual | 10/26 | 120 |
| Store Tour | Class | 11/4 (tentative) | |
| Case #24, “JCPenney” | Individual | 11/9 | 10 |
| Comparison Shopping Assignment Presentations, Teams 4 - 6 | Team | 11/28 | 75 |
| Comparison Shopping Assignment Presentations, Teams 1 – 3 | Team | 12/30 | 75 |
| Third Exam (Final) | Individual | 12/7 | 120 |

Team Assignments

Strategic Analysis Assignment (Due September 28 or October 3)

Prepare a strategic analysis of a retailer with respect to two of its direct competitors. The written report should be between 10 and 20 pages with exhibits. These assignments will be graded for organization, grammar and style as well as content. Points will be deducted if I can detect that different sections were written by different team members. (In other words, this should be completed as a “team” project, even though I know it is logical to divide the labor. It just should not look like a “cut and paste” – or a ransom note!) Include bibliography of articles and other sources such as 10K reports at www.sec.gov, article in magazines and newspapers found through the library database (this is a good time to access those resources in the link described earlier in the syllabus!), company web site for information used in making your report. If you cite articles, cite the magazine/journal, not the URL.

Each team should post on Canvas the name of the company for which they are planning to do the strategic analysis assignment (and the competitors). This is due by September 9.

To insure that you can get information about the retailer, the retailer you select should:

- Be a publicly held company so that you can access its financial statements and annual reports. Do not select a retailer that is part of a conglomerate. For example, since Banana Republic and Old Navy are owned by The Gap, you can only get financial information about The Gap and not the divisions it operates such as Banana Republic.
- Focus on one type of retailing. For example, Abercrombie & Fitch just operates one type of specialty stores and thus would be a good choice. However, Walmart operates discount stores, neighborhood groceries, warehouse club stores, supercenters, and other formats and thus would not be a good choice

Some examples of retailers that meet the first two criteria are: Whole Foods Market, Dress Barn, Burlington Coat Factory, Ross Stores, Ann Taylor, Cato, Finish Line, Foot Locker, Starbucks, Claire’s, CVS, Walgreens, Staples, Office Depot, American Eagle Outfitter, Pacific Sunwear, Tiffany, Zales, Autozone, Pep Boys, Hot Topic, Wet Seal, Best Buy, Dollar General, Michael’s, PetsMart, Dillards, Pier 1 Imports, Home Depot, Lowe’s, Bed Bath & Beyond, Mens’ Wearhouse, Kroger, Kohl’s, Safeway, JCPenney, Nordstrom, and Target.

Assume the role of an investment analyst and prepare an analysis of the retail company. Identify direct competitors and the retailer’s strategy-- the retailer’s target market and positioning, its retail mix (merchandise variety and assortment, pricing, locations, etc.), and its bases for developing a competitive advantage relative to its competitors. The “Pentagon and Triangle” model (developed by Tigert and Ring) we will explore in class can be a helpful organizing tool. Outline the retailer’s strengths and weaknesses, plus opportunities and threats. Include a financial analysis for the retailer comparing its present to past performance and to performance of competitors.

(5 points) Review the history of the retailer, identify its direct competitors. and describe its general strategy-- the retailer's target market and positioning, its retail mix (merchandise variety and assortment, pricing, locations, etc.).

(5) Outline the retailer's strengths (its basis for competitive advantage) and its weaknesses relative to competitors

(15) Include a financial analysis for the retailer comparing its present to its past financial performance and to financial performance of competitors. Evaluate the performance of the focal retailer compared to the listed competitors. Use its annual report, which you can get either in the "investor relations" area of its web site or from the Edgar files at www.sec.gov. or information from web sites like www.hoovers.com, The business library resource tool also provides excellent resources: <http://businesslibrary.uflib.ufl.edu/mar3231>

Determine the following productivity measures: ROA, asset turnover, gross and net profit margin percentage, overhead expenses (general and administrative expenses - as a percent of sales), inventory turnover, sales per square foot, sales per employee. Compare these measures describing this year's performance with preceding three years' measures for the company. See exhibits 6-13 and 6-14 in the text for examples.

(10) What are the threats and opportunities in the environment that may positively and negatively affect its performance?

(15) What are growth opportunities (same market-same format, new market-same format, same market-new format, and new market new format) for the firm?

(15) Assess its overall performance and position in the marketplace, and prospects for the future. Is it future promising or questionable? What does it need to do in the future to provide strong financial returns? Why?

(10) Presentation of the report – verbally and in writing.

Note the emphasis of the report is on your analysis, not just collecting the data. Tell me what it “means”.

Competitive Shopping Assignment (Target company selection due 10/19. Presentations on November 28 or 30, depending on your group.)

The objective of this assignment is to have you think about the different retail mixes companies offer and how they compare to their competitors. The focus here is on bricks and mortar stores – not their online offerings. Some *examples* of a merchandise category and two retailers that you might focus on are:

| Retailers | Merchandise Category |
|---------------------------------|---|
| HH Gregg, Walmart | Small/medium flat-screen TVs |
| TJ Maxx, Ross Dress For Less | Women’s dresses |
| GameStop, Best Buy | X box 360, PlayStation games or similar |
| JCPenney, Sears | Small kitchen appliances |
| Forever 21, H & M | Women’s tops |
| Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million | Cook books, travel guides |
| Petsmart, Petco | Dog treats, dog/cat food |
| Fresh Market, Trader Joe’s | Cheese, soup, pasta |
| Home Depot, Lowe’s | Lighting, appliances, paint, BBQ grills |

You need not limit yourself to these choices. Be creative! Use other retailers if you like. But it will generally be most interesting if you pick a category that both retailers actually compete in, but take different approaches.

When selecting a category and retailers, you need to consider:

- Pick a category that both retailers offer and that has a small enough number of SKUs in the category that you can count them, but large enough to provide variety.

Each team should post on Canvas the name of the retailers and the category that they are planning to use for the Comparison Shopping Assignment by October 19!

Pretend you are responsible for the merchandise category - its assortment, pricing, visual merchandising, customer service, and placement in the store. Describe and evaluate the merchandise category offering for the two **stores** (not the retailer’s website) – the breadth and depth of merchandise and prices. Then assess the more general characteristics of the retailer’s store – store location, customer service, store design, signage, visual merchandising, etc.

Some issues you should consider in the comparisons are:

Strategic Overview The strategy pursued by the two retailers –each retailer’s target market and general approach toward satisfying the needs of the target market.

General features of the Store -The general overview of retail mixes as reflected in the stores – store location, breadth and depth of merchandise, store design and visual merchandising, customer service, Some questions you might answer are:

Store Location Where is this retail store located? (CBD, Shopping Center, Specialty Center, MXD) Why do you think they chose this location? Is this a good site? Why or why not?

Pricing: What is this store's pricing policy? (Everyday Low Pricing, High/Low Pricing etc.) Were prices displayed prominently in the store?

Store Layout: Describe the store layout - e.g., overall feel of the store, promotions, signs, pleasing to shop at, etc... What type of design layout does this store use? (Grid, Racetrack, Free Form etc.) Is it effective for customer flow? What type of fixtures do they use? Is music constantly playing? What type? Notice the lighting. Does it do a good job in highlighting merchandise, structuring space, capturing a mood, and downplaying unwanted features? Evaluate the store's signage. Do they do an effective job in selling merchandise? Has the retailer used any theatrical effects to help sell merchandise? Does the store layout help draw people through the store? What method(s) has the retailer used for organizing merchandise? Is this the "best" way? Do they use scents/fragrances or other stimuli?

Customer Service: What type of services does this store offer? (Alterations, layaway, gift wrapping etc.) Talk to 3 customers - What is their perception of this store's customer service? How does this store handle customer complaints? Were you greeted when arriving at the store? How long did it take? Did it seem "genuine"? Were shopping baskets/carts available and/or offered? Were salespeople visible on the store floor? Did anyone ask if they could assist you in finding an item? When asking for assistance, did the salesperson take you to the item or point to the item? Were salespeople using product knowledge when speaking with their guests? Did employees appear friendly? Were they smiling?

Specific Merchandise Category - Compare the merchandise offering and pricing (format example is in Exhibit 2-2, page 33, of L&W). What brands do they carry? Do they offer private label brands? Compare the categories on breadth and depth of assortment by counting the SKUs of different types and prices by looking for the prices of similar items and compare the prices. Where is the category located in the store and how much space is devoted to the category? Were sale items/store circulars displayed and/or available? Comparing the pricing and price points for items in the category. How much space was allocated to the category? Evaluate the location of the category.

Recommendations -What suggestions would you make for improving the appeal of the merchandise category?

Presentation of written and oral report

Data Collection

To prepare this comparison you need to visit the stores (not the websites) and observe the retail mixes in the stores. Pretend you are a customer shopping for merchandise in the category to evaluate the customer service. In most stores, a group of people with notebook, clipboard and camera is very suspicious. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself to the associates and/or manager, especially to get permission to take pictures. Generally, once they know why you are there it poses no problem, especially in a university town, but respect their wishes. Finally, look thoroughly at the merchandise in the category to make a comparison as if you were a competitor see in what the store has to offer. (See "Specific Merchandise Category" above)

Report

Summarize the results of the comparison shopping exercise in a 10 to 20 page report plus exhibits. These assignments will be graded for organization, grammar and style as well as content. Points will be deducted if I can detect that different sections were written by different team members. **Dividing the labor is fine, but the report should have an “integrated” look and feel.**

Concentrate on the difference in the retailing of the merchandise category, illustrating how different strategies result in different retail mixes and providing a thoughtful, insightful discussion of how and why these differences arise. Focus on comparing the store’s offering, not the retailer’s offering from its internet site. You could also point out inconsistencies in the store’s strategy and implementation through its retail mix for the category. Use photos to illustrate key points, if they are permitted.

Individual Assignments

Here are some guidelines for preparing your individual assignments – worth 10 points each, for a total of 60 points on your grade. As mentioned elsewhere, I’m interested in **your** observations, analysis and application of textbook concepts. These don’t have to be long essays; often just one page will do, but past experience shows that most people sometimes use two. (Note: Some prior students used just one-quarter of one page. Good for me from a “time it takes to read them” standpoint, but typically inadequate to really address the topics!) In some cases, bullet points may be the best way to respond, and those are fine. Use your judgment. These need to be posted on the Canvas site by 5:00 p.m. on the due date, and preferably the evening before the due date, as I plan to have class discussions around what you wrote.

Cases (Cases are in the Levy, Weitz and Grewal text, starting on p. 549.)

The “question numbers” refer to the discussion questions at the end of each short case. As above, prepare a 1-2 page summary of your thoughts on the questions asked, and post on Canvas.

1. Case #3, p. 553, “Blue Tomato” (August 31)

Respond to questions #2, 3 and 4. You may find the Online Learning Center to be helpful.

2. Multi-Channel Retailing – Internet and Mobile Channels (September 12)

Read Chapter 3 (LWG)

Assignment: Students with last names as listed here prepare to answer the questions below. Each person will turn in through the Canvas e-learning platform a two page max, single spaced, bullet points of the key points addressing the questions shown. I’ll have the assigned students come to the front of the room, and lead us through the web sites, using the classroom A/V. No formal group preparation of a “presentation” is expected – just chime in! These will need to move along quickly, but try to give the rest of the class the “flavor” of what you observed.

Last name beginning with A thru F. Assume that you are going to buy a wedding engagement ring. Compare and contrast your shopping experience when you go to www.tiffany.com and www.bluenile.com. What are features of the sites do you like and

dislike, such as the “look and feel” of the site, navigation, special features you found useful or did not like, etc.? How easy was it to locate what you were looking for? What was the checkout like? Note any other aspects of the experience that caught your attention.

Last name beginning with G thru L Assume that you are getting married and planning your wedding. Go to www.theknot.com to plan your wedding. Describe your experience. What are features of the site do you like and dislike such as the “look and feel” of the site, navigation, special features you found useful or did not like, etc.? What are the specific services offered by the site that you would use?

Last name beginning with L thru S Assume you are interested in buying a cruiser-style bike for getting around campus or taking short rides for fun (not the long-distance kind). Go to www.amazon.com and www.jamisbikes.com and compare bike shopping on these two sites. What features on the sites did you find helpful? What features made shopping more difficult? Which bike would you buy? Why? From which site would you buy it? Why?

Last name beginning with T thru Z Assume you are interested in buying a vacuum cleaner and a pair of sunglasses. Go to these comparison shopping engines: www.shopping.com, and www.pricegrabber.com. What features on the sites did you find helpful? What features made shopping easy, or annoying/difficult? Did you find any really good deals?

3. Case #1, p 550, “Tractor Supply Company” (September 19)

Assignment: Submit using the Canvas elearning platform a 1 to 2 page attachment with a “bullet point” SWOT analysis (competitive strengths and weaknesses, plus opportunities and threats in the environment) for Tractor Supply. . Based on that analysis, how would you answer questions 2, 3 and 4?

4. Backstory segments “Mall About it” and Boxed In”. (September 28) Listen to the segments and share your reactions. Where do you like to shop? Why? How well is the retail market overall at providing you with the kinds of shopping experiences you prefer? What is missing? Here is the link to the audio. Scroll down to access the individual segments.
<http://backstoryradio.org/shows/counter-culture/>

5. Case #10, p. 564, “Walmart: Pioneer in supply chain management (October 10) Focus on question #1.

6. Case #24, p. 584, “Are customers addicted to sales at JCPenney?” (November 9)

Read: Chapter 14 (LWG)

Focus on questions 3-5