
Geography 3751 – Retail Location

Section: 2014 WDE - Winter Term

Course Outline

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Office hours: Telephone or Skype conferences available by appointment.
Please use email to request an appointment.

Pre-requisite Geography 1120

NOTE: This course is open to any student who has completed at least two years of university-level study.

Students without the prerequisite or third year standing may be admitted to the course with permission of the instructor. Inquiries regarding admission may be made by e-mail stating academic background (program of study, number of full-course equivalent credits completed) and reason for wanting to enroll.

Delivery This is a web-based course using Lakehead University's Desire 2 Learn system (D2L). Access to the internet (preferably high speed) is required for downloading course materials.

Please note that access to the course's D2L site is only available to students who are officially registered in the course. The course D2L site will be activated no later than Friday, January 3.

Background I'm not trying to scare you away but to be fair to those with an extreme phobia of numbers, be warned that portions of course lectures, workshops and assignments have a significant quantitative bent. You certainly don't need calculus to get by - just a basic level of comfort with simple arithmetic skills and working with numbers is all that is needed. 😊

Objectives

By completing this course, it is hoped that you will:

- gain an appreciation of how spatial economic theory can be used to interpret retail landscapes;
- become familiar with and competent in the use of common tools employed by location analysts to evaluate market areas and retail sites;
- develop an awareness of data sources useful to the retail analyst, especially those provided by Statistics Canada and Canada Post
- have opportunity to hone and practice written communication skills.

Course Content Overview

This course offers a geographical perspective on the retail sector of the economy. Two interrelated aspects of this sector are of particular interest to geographers: the structure and spatial distribution of shopping opportunities and the way in which consumers spatially interact with shopping opportunities available to them. Academically, interest is also focused on how the supply of and demand for shopping facilities has changed over time. Pragmatically, retail geographers are interested in modeling shopping behaviour in order to select optimal locations for new facilities as well as to provide input to local governments on policy regarding the expansion / location of retail facilities. This course provides an overview of both the academic and the pragmatic work of retail geographers. Topics to be addressed are:

- The urban settlement system as system of retail markets
- Components of an intra-urban retail landscape: the downtown, ribbons and planned shopping centres
- Evolution of a hierarchy of planned shopping centres
- The rise of new forms of retailing - mega malls, outlet centres, warehouse, membership clubs, discounters, big box category killers, power centres, etc. and how traditional shopping places are adapting to new competition
- Interaction of consumers and shopping environments (the internal geography of malls and how it influences consumer behaviour)
- Spatial monopoly and market penetration approaches to defining trade areas
- Forecasting the impact of new retail development on existing retail areas
- Choosing the right site for a retail store
- Geo-demographic approaches to targeting consumers
- The role of municipal planning in shaping retail development

What work is involved?

Based on feedback from students, it would be fair to say that the perceived workload in this course ranges from average to above average when compared to other courses they have taken.

Successful completion of this course requires commitment and dedication on your part to keep up with the work.

The course is divided into eight thematic modules. For each module, an overview document is provided that outlines what work must be completed. Module activities include a variety of activities ranging from viewing PowerPoint slide shows and/or video clips, reviewing assigned readings, exploring websites and completing small practical workshops and formal assignment. These Module Overview documents are available for downloading from the Content page of the course D2L site.

For your convenience, I have provided a document that lists important dates (e.g., due dates for assignments, test dates) as well as a suggested schedule for beginning each of the course modules. You can find this document in the "General Information" section of the Content page of the course's D2L website.

Lectures

In an effort to make this course as much as possible like one delivered on-campus, the main mode of delivering material will be through PowerPoint slideshows complete with an audio soundtrack. The lectures are formatted as MPEG-4 files which are accessible to both PC and MAC users. You may download the files from D2L and watch them at a time convenient to you.

A variety of programs can be used to view these slide shows (e.g., RealPlayer, Windows Media Player, Quick Time). However, a "must have" feature is the ability to pause, rewind and even skip ahead. Based on past experience, both RealPlayer and Windows Media Player have this capability. If you are not able to set up viewing of the files with a pause / rewind feature, please contact the Continuing Education office for assistance. One word of caution. If you try to view the shows in full screen mode, you may experience a noticeable deterioration in the sharpness of the image.

The running time of the slide shows ranges from 15-30 minutes. This is much shorter than the average lecture period but remember, no time is allocated to stop and address questions that would likely be raised in a live lecture format.

The slideshows are also made available to you as PDF files. This gives you the option of printing off the slides in advance of viewing any one of lectures so that you can make notes while watching. Most of the shows make extensive use of photographs to demonstrate points and so, you may find that taking notes is necessary and may save you time later in that you will not need to go back and watch the lecture a second time to hear what was said about a particular photo or graph.

Assigned Readings / Course Text

You will not be asked to do an excessive amount of reading for this course. A general resource that is made available to you is a collection of chapters from ***Location, Location, Location*** by Ken Jones and Jim Simmons. This publication originally appeared in book form but it went out of print over ten years ago. Since then, the authors bought back the rights to the book from the publisher and, along with Shizue Kamikihara, revised some of the chapters. They have graciously given permission for an electronic version of the book to be used in the course at no charge to you. Given the size of the book, it has been broken up into several PDF formatted files that are available for download from the course's D2L site. Look for the heading "Readings" on the Course Content page.

Additional readings will be drawn from on-line journals that you will be able to access (again for free) from the LU Library website. Where applicable, a list of readings will be provided with each thematic module.

The one resource you will need to purchase is the book ***Why We Buy*** by Paco Underhill. You will need this book to complete Assignment #3. Copies of the book have been ordered through the LU Bookstore. Copies can also be purchased through online booksellers such as Amazon at very attractive prices. Make sure you purchase the edition with the red shopping bag on the cover.

Workshops

At various points, I will provide a small workshop exercise for you to complete. The workshops are designed to give some hands on experience with various techniques and concepts in the analysis of retail location decisions and consumer spatial behaviour. In some cases the workshops allow you to practice a technique before applying it in a course assignment. No marks are given for completing workshops and so, any work they ask you to do does not have to be submitted. However, you can expect to see questions about them on term tests.

Assignments

There will be three assignments to complete during the course. The assignments serve several purposes. They will introduce you to various data sources available to retail analysts, provide hands on experience working with techniques introduced in the lecture slideshows and afford you an opportunity to collect and analyze your own data and craft it into a written report.

All of the assignments have been posted on the course D2L site and you are welcome to take an advance look. Assignment 1 is something you should get started on right away as its due date comes up quickly in the schedule.

Assignment 3 is something you should also have a look at now. It involves analyzing the internal geography of a retail store using concepts introduced in the book *Why We Buy*. I would highly recommend that you read the book through once ASAP. While the assignment is not due until near the end of the course, it is something you can start to work on (or at least think about) quite early as it is not dependent on any particular course module.

When grading assignments, marks will be awarded according to the accuracy shown in executing techniques, the quality of the interpretation given to the results, and in the case of Assignments 3, the quality of the presentation including clarity of writing.

Hyperlinks

In several modules and workshops, I've include hyperlinks to websites. I make an effort to keep these up-to-date but I can't guarantee that by the time you come to click on one of them, the site it is linked to will still be at that address. If you run into a situation where a hyperlink does not work, please send me an email to let me know and I will try to remedy the situation as fast as I can.

Submitting Assignments

By Email

If possible, I would prefer assignments to be submitted as an attachment to an email. As you might imagine, it can be quite confusing when 30 or more students submit the first assignment with the same filename -- Assignment 1.docx.

You can save me a lot of time by following this convention: begin the names of any attachments with your surname. For example, call the file Lorch_Assign1. Thank you in advance for remembering to do this.

I am running the 2007 version of Office on my computer so please insure that any attachments are compatible with that version of Word or Excel.

By Surface Mail

If it is not possible for you to submit assignments by email, you may send them by surface mail. Please make sure you keep a copy for yourself before putting the original in the mail. To expedite delivery, consider using Priority Post.

Assignments can be sent to the following address:

51 Leander Crescent., Winnipeg, MB R3Y 1W5

If you decide to send something by surface mail, please also send an email at the same time to let me know it is coming that way. Otherwise, I'm likely to start sending you emails inquiring why your assignment did not arrive in my inbox on time.

Late Submissions

Due dates are given for each assignment. To be fair to those who submit on time, deductions will be made for late submissions. My standard policy is to deduct 5 percentages points for each working day beyond the stated deadline. The weekend will count as one working day. Exceptions will be made for medical and compassionate reasons. Please keep me informed if you are so affected.

Term Tests

There will be two online term tests given during the course. Please see the course schedule and calendar for exact dates. The tests will be comprised of multiple choice and short answer questions based on material covered in the lecture slide shows, assigned readings and workshop exercises.

Test 2 will not be cumulative. In other words, it will not repeat material you studied for Test 1.

All testing in this course will be done online using the quiz function of D2L. You are free to write them from any location, the only requirement being that there is reliable internet access. As there will be no proctors present, the tests are effectively open book. You may surround yourself with any study materials you think will be useful.

To compensate for this advantage, the time allowed for completion of the tests is shorter than what would be the case if you were writing in a supervised exam room. This means that you have to be well prepared. If you spend too much time consulting notes, you will not finish the test before the time limit expires.

While everyone must write the tests on the appointed dates, there is some flexibility as to what time of the day you can begin the test. For example, a time window will be created allowing you to begin anytime between say 9:00 AM and 11:00 PM. Once you begin a test, the clock starts ticking on the time allotted for completing the test.

Final Exam

There will be a final exam in the course that will be written online. date and time TBA. Once the Registrar's office creates the exam schedule, I will post an item in the News section of the course D2L site.

A portion of the final exam will be similar in format to the term tests and cover material from Test 2 to the end of the course (quiz portion). The remainder of the exam will draw upon the entire course (comprehensive portion).

The time window for the final exam will be considerably tighter than what was the case for the two term tests in order to have all students write at approximately the same time.

Further details about final exam logistics will be sent out towards the midway point of the course.

Other Things You Should Know

Using Microsoft Excel

The first two assignments in the course involve repetitive calculations. They can be done manually using a calculator but a far more efficient way is to use a spreadsheet program such as Excel. In particular, spreadsheet skills that will come in handy are the fill down feature and the construction of equations to do simple arithmetic calculations.

I have run into many students who have Excel on their computers but have never used it. If that describes you, I hope you use this course as an opportunity to learn something about the program. To assist that learning, I have prepared a self-guided tutorial. You can find it in the "Other Resources" section of the Content page on D2L. Office 2003 and 2007 versions of the tutorial are provided. If you are running the 2010 version and need help let me know. My better half has that version on her computer and I can try to help answer questions that might arise.

Time Zones

All times referred to throughout the course will be Eastern Time Zone. With respect to deadlines, if an assignment is due in my inbox by just before midnight, that means midnight in the Eastern Time Zone.

Time windows for tests will also be referenced to the Eastern Time Zone as that is where the server running the course is housed (i.e., Thunder Bay). If you will be taking this course from a place several time zones away from the Eastern zone, please let me know and I will see what adjustments can be made to accommodate you.

Time Commitment

There will be no mandatory live chat rooms or conference calls that would require you to be present at a specific time.

With a few exceptions, all of the course module material is already posted on the course D2L site. A suggested schedule for completing the various modules is available in the Course Information section of the Content page. You are free to work ahead if you like.

Local Knowledge

In case you were not aware, my title of Professor Emeritus means that I am officially retired from my full time position at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay campus. I've lived in Winnipeg since 2001 and actually commuted to Thunder Bay for eight years prior to leaving LU. Much of the research I carried out in my last ten years at LU was focused on the Winnipeg retail system and so you will see a considerable amount of that work has found its way into this course. Thunder Bay examples are used as well. Unfortunately, for those of you based at LU's Orillia campus, my knowledge of the retail environment in that particular part of Ontario is quite limited.

If you are not familiar with Winnipeg or Thunder Bay for that matter, do not fear. The most important thing to take from case examples is the concepts that they illustrate. Thus, I would encourage you to be constantly thinking about your own local context and how the material you are studying can be applied there.

My Facebook Page

I run a Facebook page to which I post items I come across (mostly newspaper stories) about events in the world of retailing. The page is called - wait for it - Dr. L's Retail Geography Page. Feel free to search it out and "Like" it.

Contacting the Instructor

As mentioned, I am located in Winnipeg and hence, e-mail will be the primary means by which we will communicate.

Your best bet is to send email to my regular LU email address (again, see the top of this document). I am usually able to respond to emails within a few hours of receiving them. If you have not got a response more than day after sending a message, try sending it again. Your message may have got lost in cyberspace.

You may also send email through the D2L system but I tend to look at that less frequently and hence a reply may be later in coming.

Daytime, evening or weekend telephone meetings will be possible by setting up an appointment time via e-mail. I will make the calls from Winnipeg to Thunder Bay or wherever you might be located. Hence, there will be no long distance costs to you.

I am also on Skype. My username is bjlorch. I am willing to set up appointments to take calls on Skype if you would prefer to communicate that way.

Allocation of Marks

Last but not least, here are the weightings that will be attached to the various gradable components of the course:

Assignment 1	15%
Assignment 2	15%
Assignment 3	20%
Tests 1 & 2 and Final exam quiz portion (equal weights)	35%
Final Exam - comprehensive portion	15%