

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
The Bryan School of Business and Economics
Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies**

¹RCS 460/560: Advanced Retail Buying and Merchandising (3 Credits, Online Course)

Fall 2023

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Jin Su

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Virtual office hours: Monday & Wednesday: 12:00 – 1:00pm (see Canvas)
Or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Charlotte Mills (comaurno@uncg.edu)
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PREREQUISITES

For undergraduates: Grade of C (2.0) or better in RCS 361
For graduates: Instructor's approval

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Advancing the strategies of inventory acquisition and control. Application of retail math to excel spreadsheets in planning the assortment plan, six-month merchandise plan, and model stock plans.

In this course, we will focus on those elements that contribute to the firm's decisions about the merchandise it buys and sells, and the performance of the merchandise. We will investigate and discuss the role and responsibilities of apparel/textile product merchandisers in retail operations in addition to fundamentals of merchandise mathematics and application of computer technology.

RECOMMENDED TEXT

Tepper, B. K., & Greene, M. (2020). *Mathematics for Retail Buying* (9th ed.). New York: Fairchild Books.

¹ Please note: This is an online course. It is important that you check the course website regularly for any new course information. You are responsible for any information posted on Canvas.

Additional teaching materials (readings, lecture notes, etc.) will be made available through Canvas.

The book(s) of previous retail math class would be helpful as a reference.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, both *undergraduate and graduate students* should be able to:

- Apply basic principles of merchandising theory to manage and control inventory in an apparel and textiles context.
- Calculate figures employed within the retail environment for profit maximization.
- Predict future sales figures for apparel and textiles merchandise by examining current trends and previous sales figures.
- Develop and analyze a simulated retail merchandising plan for an apparel and textiles company.
- Utilize computer software to obtain key information and prepare useful reports concerning inventory management.

At the end of this course, *graduate students* should be able to:

- Evaluate and critique an apparel and textiles company's merchandising strategy.
- Prepare and present a revised retail merchandising plan for an apparel and textiles company.

TEACHING METHODS AND ASSIGNMENTS FOR ACHIEVING LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course will be a combination of online lectures, homework assignments involving problem-solving and the use of computer software, and a financial assignment involving critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and computer software skills.

Online lectures will be used to introduce key concepts and to provide information from the outside readings. Homework assignments and the financial assignment will be used to master analysis skills and to gain experience using the computer software.

Graduate students enrolled in the course will also be expected to complete one additional assignment, which is a written analysis and revision of an apparel and textiles company's merchandising strategy.

TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

There would be some coverage of technological advances and global perspectives relating to retail buying and merchandising in the course.

E-MAIL POLICY

Your UNCG email is the only email address that the professor will use to contact you for the course. It is expected that all communications are prepared and presented professionally. To communicate professionally and respectfully with the professors, your email should include:

- Email subject including RCS 460 or RCS 560
- A greeting
- Clearly written paragraph(s) indicating the question or concern you have
- End the message politely
- Be sure to include your name at the end

If you have any questions or concerns about this course, please feel free to contact me via email (j_su@uncg.edu). I will try my best to reply as quickly as possible, but please allow 24 hours for response to your email Monday-Friday, and additional time on the weekends. If you would like to meet with me via Zoom — even besides my office hours — email me so that we could schedule our virtual meeting.

EVALUATIONS AND GRADING

All students will be graded on 1) the midterm and final examinations; 2) completion and submission of the homework assignments; and 3) completion and submission of the financial assignment. More specific evaluative criteria for each element will be posted on Canvas.

Your grade will be determined entirely by your performance on the exams, assignments, and course projects, etc. Therefore, we cannot adjust grades due to factors outside of the course (e.g., GPA trouble, work conflicts, personal problems, etc.). Please feel free to come and speak with the professor about your performance in the course at any time during the semester. However, do not tell the professor that you need a certain grade or ask for extra assignments for the purpose of raising a grade. We have to treat everyone fairly.

For **undergraduate students**, grades are based on the following point system (please refer to the tables below):

Grading Systems	Points
Final Exams	120
Six Assignments: Retail Buying and Mathematics	280
Cotton Denim Assignment	50
POPBL Project: Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Cotton Denim (Part-1, Part-2, Part-3, and Part 4)	250
Total	700

For **undergraduate students**, your course Grade (%) = Total points you have earned / 825
The letter grade breakdown for **undergraduate students** is shown below:

A = 100 – 93%	B+ = 89 – 87%	C+ = 79 – 77%	D+ = 69 – 67%	F = Below 60%
A- = 92 – 90%	B = 86 – 83%	C = 76 – 73%	D = 66 – 63%	

	B- = 82 – 80%	C- = 72 – 70%	D- = 62 – 60%	
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For **graduate students**, grades are based on the following point system (please refer to the tables below):

Grading Systems	Points
TWO Exams	120
Six Assignments: Retail Buying and Mathematics	280
Cotton Denim Assignment	50
POPBL Project: Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Cotton Denim (Part-1, Part-2, Part-3, and Part-4)	250
Graduate Student Assignment	50
Total	750

For **graduate students**, your course Grade (%) = Total points you have earned / 825

The letter grade breakdown for **graduate students** is shown below:

A = 100 – 93%	B+ = 89 – 87%	C+ = 79 – 77%	F = Below 70%
A- = 92 – 90%	B = 86 – 83%	C = 76 – 70%	
	B- = 82 – 80%		

▪ **Final Examination**

The final exam questions will be based upon class lectures, the text, class discussion, assignments, and other materials covered in class. The exam will consist of multiple choice and essay questions, as well as problem-solving questions. The final exam will be completed online during the final examination week.

▪ **Retail Buying and Mathematics Assignments**

There will be several assignments to complete during the semester. Assignments include, but are not limited to, problem-solving activities and written responses to questions. EXCEL software will be used for completing retail mathematics assignment. These assignments will be completed as you work through the corresponding learning modules online. They will be due at the time that you complete the learning module by the due date listed on the syllabus. They will focus on the key concepts introduced in each learning module.

▪ **Cotton Denim Assignment**

This assignment is developed to advance students' knowledge about cotton sustainability and circularity. The assignment provides background knowledge that will help students work on the POPBL project.

▪ **POPBL Project: Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Cotton Denim**

Using *problem-oriented and project-based learning* (POPBL) approach, this project is developed to help students understand the benefits, costs, and feasibility of cotton denim circularity strategies. The project consists of four parts.

Part 1: Student teams will research sustainable denim companies/brands.

Part 2: Based on the research report completed in Part 1, students will develop a retail business plan for a sustainable denim brand of their choice.

Part 3: Students will create a six-month merchandising plan for the upcoming season for the sustainable denim brand. They will determine initial allocation quantities to order for the store location through analysis of simulated historical data.

Part 4. Student teams will present the entire project at the end of the semester. A panel of judges will select the winning project using a developed rubric.

Midterm Grading Policy

In keeping with UNCG policy, I will post a midterm grade for you in UNCGenie by the end of the sixth week of the term. That grade will not appear on your transcript or in your GPA calculations. Instead, it is intended to help you and your academic advisor understand how you are doing in the course up to that point. If you review your midterm grade and find it to be lower than you hoped, I encourage you to talk to me so we can make a plan together for your success.

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS

▪ **Late assignments WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!**

The only exception to this rule is if you have documentation for medical or family emergencies and other crises (i.e., doctor's note).

- **Written Assignments (WORD document):** All documents must satisfy the requirements as follows:
 - typed,
 - double-spaced,
 - 10-12 font,
 - 1-inch margins on all sides,
 - title of assignment centered on first page,
 - use of header containing student name at left side and due date on right side,
 - use of appropriate page number,
 - appropriate citation for all references and quotations (APA style in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th or 7th edition),
 - accurate spelling and grammar.

Citation Guides: APA Style on the webpage of UNCG Libraries (University Libraries—Research Guides—Citation Guides—APA Style):

<http://uncg.libguides.com/citation/apa>

The Writing Center at UNCG provides some information about APA Style:
<https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/writing-assistance/grammar-and-usage/>

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to complete all modules in a timely fashion. Attendance in the modules will be recorded via completion and submission of the homework assignments which are embedded in the modules.

Incomplete (for entire course)

Grades of incomplete will only be given to those students who have participated fully in the majority of the class and are under extenuating circumstances of which the instructor must be notified and provided adequate documentation of the excuse. An option to receive an incomplete will be at the discretion of the instructor. In addition, the reason for the incomplete must be verified and there must be a written agreement with the student that specifies the work to be performed and an according timetable for completion must be submitted.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students will be expected to do his/her own original work for exams and assignments. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the UNCG policy on issues such as cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification and facilitation of dishonest conduct. Procedures and penalties related to these and other violations of the Academic Honor Policy are found in the undergraduate bulletin as well as via the following web site: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/>. Any violation of the Honor Policy may result in failure of the assignment and subsequently the entire course. Therefore, **DO NOT JEOPARDIZE YOUR ACADEMIC FUTURE** by participating in, or facilitating, any act of academic dishonesty.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. If you feel you will encounter any barriers to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS). The OARS staff can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can learn more about OARS by visiting their website at <https://ods.uncg.edu/> or by calling 336-334-544 or visiting them in Suite 215, EUC.

RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS STATEMENT

The statement below is from the UNCG 2021-2022 University Catalog:

(<https://catalog.uncg.edu/academic-regulations-policies/university-policies/>)

The university allows for a limited number of excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by the faith of the student.

Students must notify instructors of absences in advance of the date of the religious observance. Instructors have the authority to specify, via written notice to students, the amount of lead time required and may require that the nature of the religious observance be specified and the student's participation be confirmed in writing by an official of the religious organization.

When appropriate notice is provided by a student, the student must be granted at least two excused absences per academic year under this policy and must be allowed to make up or waive work and tests missed due to these particular absences. With regard to any test or other assignment that a student would miss due to notice of a required religious observance, faculty members may require the student to complete the test or assignment in advance of the originally scheduled date of the test or assignment. Beyond the minimum terms and limits of this policy, instructors maintain authority to establish and enforce the attendance policy for the courses they are teaching.

The requirement for students to make such requests for excused absences applies only to days when the university is holding class.

CARS DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON STUDENT CONDUCT AND COMPLAINT BEHAVIOR

The Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies (CARS) expects that all students enrolled in the CARS major will behave professionally and in a manner that reflects positively on the department, the school, and the university. This expectation applies to conduct within CARS courses, when working at internship sites, and attending events where students are acting as representatives of the CARS program.

Complaints pertaining to a specific course must first be brought up with the instructor. Per the UNCG University Catalog, if a student wishes to appeal an assigned grade, the student should first discuss the concerns with the instructor. If desired, the student may further appeal to the department head, the dean of the school or college, and the provost, in that order. See the University Catalog for further details on Grade Appeals.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from

alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu

RCS 460/560: Advanced Retail Buying and Merchandising (3 Credits, Online Course)
Course Topics and Tentative Course Schedule for Fall 2023

Please note:

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- You are responsible for any information posted on Canvas.

Week	Date	Topics and Assignments	Activities
1	Aug. 15-18	Course Syllabus Unit-1 Today's Buying Environment Unit-2 The Buying Function in Retailing Unit-3 Buying for Different Types of Stores	
2	Aug. 21-25	Unit-4 Obtaining Assistance for Making Buying Decision Unit-5 Understanding Your Customers Unit-6 Understanding Product trends: What Customers Buy	Assignment# 1 Due (Sunday Aug 27 before midnight)
3	Aug.28 – Sept. 1	Unit-7 Selecting Vendors and building Partnerships Unit-8 Making Market Visits and Negotiating with Vendors Unit-9 Locating Sources in Foreign Markets Unit-10 Making the Purchase Unit-11 Pricing the Merchandise	
4	Sept. 4-8	Unit-12 Profit & Loss Statements	Assignment# 2 Due (Sunday Sept 10 before midnight)
5	Sept. 11-15	Unit-12 Profit & Loss Statements (Cont.)	Assignment# 3 Due (Sunday Sept 17 before midnight)
6	Sept. 18-22	Unit-13 Markup and Inventory Control Parts 1-2 Markup and Inventory Control Part 3	Assignment # 4 Due (Sunday Sept 24 before midnight)
7	Sept. 25-29	Unit-14 The Six-Month Merchandise Plan Parts 1-2	Assignment # 5 Part I Due (Sunday Oct 1 before midnight)

8	Oct. 2-6	Unit-14 (Cont.) The Six-Month Merchandise Plan Part 3 The Six-Month Merchandise Plan Open-to-Buy	Assignment # 5 Part II and Part III Due (Sunday Oct 8 before midnight)
9	Oct. 9-13	Unit-15 Preparing Buying Plans Developing Assortment Plans POPBL Project: Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Denim (Part-1)	Assignment # 6 Due (Sunday Oct 15 before midnight)
10	Oct. 16-20	Unit 16 Cotton Denim Assignment	Cotton Denim Assignment Due (Sunday Oct 22 before midnight)
11	Oct. 23-27	POPBL Project – Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Denim (Part-1)	Project (Part-1) Due (Sunday Oct 29 before midnight)
12	Oct. 30 -- Nov. 3	Project – Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Denim (Part-2)	
13	Nov. 6-10	Project – Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Denim (Part-2) Cont.	Project (Part-2) Due (Sunday Nov 12 before midnight)
14	Nov. 13-17	Project – Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Denim (Part-3)	
15	Nov. 20-21 Nov. 22-24	Project – Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Denim (Part-3) Cont. Graduate Student Assignment Class Excused - Thanksgiving Break	Project (Part-3) Due (Tuesday Nov 21 before midnight)
16	Nov. 27-29 Nov.30	Project – Buying and Merchandising Sustainable Denim (Part-4) Project Presentations Reading Day	Project (Part-4) PPT Due (Monday Nov 27 before midnight)
17	Dec. 1-5	Final Exam for Undergraduate Students Final Exam for Graduate Students Graduate Student Assignment Due (Tuesday, Dec 5 before midnight)	

The schedule and procedures in this course, as outlined in this syllabus, are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances and/or as deemed appropriate by the professor.