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## Geography 3751 – Retail Location

Section: 2015 SDE – Spring Term (May 4 – June 15)

### Course Syllabus

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**Instructor:** Dr. Brian Lorch  
Professor Emeritus  
Department of Geography  
Lakehead University

**Contact Info:** [bjlorch@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:bjlorch@lakeheadu.ca)

**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 (1) academic background (program of study, (2) number of full-course equivalent credits completed by Dec 31, 2014) and (3) 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 and for writing term tests and the final exam.

Please note that access to the course's D2L site is only available to students who are officially registered in the course.

The course's D2L site will be activated no later than one week prior to the official start date of the course.

**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;
- hone and practice your 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. Each involves a variety of activities ranging from viewing lectures in the form of PowerPoint slide shows to reviewing assigned readings, exploring websites and completing small practical workshops and formal assignment.

### Lectures

The majority of the course material is covered through a series of 31 lecture slide shows. An audio track has been added to the shows. Hence, watching them will be somewhat like sitting in a regular class but without the instantaneous professor-student interaction.

The running time of the slide shows ranges from 15-30 minutes.

### Workshops

As this course has a strong practical component, a series of short workshop exercises have been designed to provide hands-on experience with various techniques of retail location analysis.

No grade is assigned to the workshops and hence, no submissions of completed work will be necessary. Questions about concepts and techniques covered by the workshops will be incorporated into 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.

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.

### Assigned Readings / Course Text

1. ***Location, Location, Location*** by Ken Jones and Jim Simmons.

Selected chapter excerpts are available for downloading from the course website. 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.

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.

2. Course Text: ***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.

3. A very limited number of academic articles from professional journals will be given as assigned reading. All may be downloaded free of charge from the LU Library's collection of e-journals.

Listings of required readings for each module are incorporated into overview documents that summarize the tasks that you will need to complete. Again, you may access these documents from the course website once you have registered for the course.

### **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, I would call my submission Lorch\_Assign1. Thank you in advance for remembering to do this.

#### **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.

### **Policy on 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**

Dates for the two term tests will be:

- Tuesday, May 19
- Wednesday, June 3

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 from any location, the only requirement being that there is reliable internet access. As there will be no proctors present, the test are effectively open book. You may surround yourself with any study materials you think will be useful with the exception, of course, of a human assistant. See the last section of this document for important information about academic conduct (or misconduct as the case may be).

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.

Additional logistical details about the term tests will be distributed at one week prior to test dates. Note that the tests will be accessible throughout most of the day and evening of the dates shown.

### **Final Exam**

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

The final exam will have a quiz portion and an essay portion. The quiz portion will follow the same format as the term tests. Again, it will not be cumulative in that it will only cover material from where Test 2 cut off and the last one-third of the course began. For the essay portion, you will be asked to craft one essay-style answer from a selection of two or three questions. These questions will be designed such that essays may draw upon almost any part of the course for their content.

Further details about final exam logistics will be sent out during the final week of classes (Week 12 of the term).

## 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 construction of equations to do simple arithmetic calculations and the fill down feature that will repeat those calculations over a range of cells.

I have run into many students who have Excel on their computers but have never used it. If that describes you, I hope you will use this course as an opportunity to learn something about the program. To assist that learning, I have prepared self-guided tutorials for the 2003, 2007 and 2013 versions of Excel. These may be accessed from the course website once you have officially registered.

### **Time Zones**

All references to test times and due dates in this course will be based on the Eastern Time Zone.

If you happen to live several zones away from Eastern Time, please be in touch and I will see what I can do to accommodate your situation.

### **Time Commitment and Scheduling of Work**

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

All of the course module material is already posted on the course D2L site. A suggested schedule for completing the various modules will be made available on the course website.

### **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**

Keeping the content of the lectures for an online course completely up-to-date is almost an impossible task for a subject where change is a regular occurrence. For that reason, 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.

### **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 (3 @ 11.67%)	35%
Final Exam - comprehensive portion	15%

### **Academic Conduct**

The term tests and exams in this course will be written online. You will be allowed to write at any location that has internet access. As such, there will be no formal invigilation of any term tests or the final exam.

It is both expected and required that tests be completed independently. Communication concerning the content of this quiz and/or answers to particular questions on the quiz with any person, either during the taking of tests or the exam or following completion of tests or the exam is prohibited. Students found in violation of this requirement will be subject to disciplinary action as specified in the **Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures**. Thank you, in advance, for your efforts to uphold standards of academic integrity at Lakehead University.