

23E57000 Fashion Marketing

Guidelines for course deliverables and assignments

1. HARVARD CASES (45p)

Case studies give you a practical arena or context to apply what you have learned into a real-life situation. We will follow the Harvard Business School case study method, which is described as follows:

[The] case method is a profound educational innovation that presents the greatest challenges confronting leading companies, nonprofits, and government organizations—complete with the constraints and incomplete information found in real business issues—and places the student in the role of the decision maker. There are no simple solutions; yet through the dynamic process of exchanging perspectives, countering and defending points, and building on each other's ideas, students become adept at analyzing issues, exercising judgment, and making difficult decisions—the hallmarks of skillful leadership. [...]

In class—under the questioning and guidance of the professor—students probe underlying issues, compare different alternatives, and finally, suggest courses of action in light of the organization's objectives. As you watch a case study unfold in class, you'll see students doing 85 percent of the talking, as the professor steers the conversation by making occasional observations and asking questions

Preparation is key for a good study experience. For you to get the most out of the case session, you need to read through and reflect on the case material. It is highly encouraged to share ideas and reflections with your group-mates before class. Within the classroom, you will be given an opportunity to argue your position and get feedback on your thinking by listening to other participants' ideas. To repeat: preparation is key for a good case experience, as the instructor's job is to merely facilitate the discussion.

Harvard cases are written in a very specific way. While a lot of information is given, it is incomplete by design, and the participant is expected to fill the gaps. So rather than thinking of “what is the right answer?” (in real life, there rarely is one), you should assume the mindset of “what is a good argument or plan of action based on these given facts?” In most case discussions, multiple plans of action will emerge, and participants will be quite split at the end as to which plan is the best. The key learning point is to develop your own analytical tools to look at similar situations in your own daily business.

We will cover each case for 90 minutes of class time, depending on how much class discussion it is able to stimulate. You are expected to submit a written report of the case study. In class, you will be discussing the case bit by bit, with the goal of ultimately forming some sort of consensus opinion on what the case was about and what potential courses of action might work best. The instructor will also participate in the case unpacking in a facilitating role.

The course contains three Harvard cases, 15p each (written case analysis 10p and class discussion 5p). The written part is done in groups (2-3 students), but in class you are graded individually. The written case analysis will be submitted via MyCourses prior to the session in which it is meant to be discussed and unpacked. Given that each case will be discussed right after it has been returned, there will absolutely be no late returns!

Detailed evaluation rubric for cases will be available in MyCourses. Below you will find a description of each case study and its questions. After that, you will find detailed instructions for how to prepare the case.

1.1. Preparing a Case Analysis

There are four distinct steps for reading through and analyzing a case.

1. **Thoroughly read through the case.** Be sure to take notes, highlight relevant facts (especially numbers) and try and identify what you think are the key problems. Highly encouraged to share ideas and viewpoints with other students!
2. **Focus your analysis.** There are usually two to five key problems. What are they? How do they relate to each other? Why do these problems exist? What is their impact? Who is responsible for them and/or has the ability to solve them?
3. **Identify possible solutions.** There is never only one potential solution to a Harvard case, you need to identify multiple potential avenues! Link back to course topics, ideas, and discussions. Do outside research. Also: don't be afraid to refer to your own experiences.
4. **Find and argue for what you think is the best solution.** Review the tradeoffs between solutions (pros and cons). Consider the feasibility of different solutions. Make your pick.
5. **Remember, all the relevant information is provided in the case!** There is no need to refer to class articles, though you may do so if you wish.

1.2. Writing the Case Analysis

Once you have agreed on what you are going to argue, it is time to write it all up into a report. The report should be a uniform narrative—it is not recommended to write the case in “case question – case answer” manner! Subheadings may prove helpful but are not absolutely necessary. However, good writing is; be clear, consistent, and show care for concepts and grammar. From a structural standpoint, the report should include the following:

1. **An introductory section or paragraph (5%).** Here you identify the key problems of the study, a brief statement relating to your solution, and a few sentences relating to your analysis. The introduction is an overview of the entire report.
2. **Background section (30%).** Set the scene for the reader. Inform them about the relevant background information, facts, and the most important issues. Here your goal is to convince the reader that you have understood the problems of the study and have done enough research (using the data provided in the case).
3. **Outline the alternatives (30%).** What possible courses of action are there? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Do they exclude one-another and why? Explain why you favor one (or more!) alternative over the others. Why are some possibly lucrative solutions not feasible? What data supports each course of action? What are the constraints and possible caveats for each possible solution?
4. **Give your proposed solution (30%).** Make your choice and outline your plan of action in a sufficiently detailed manner. Continue elaborating why this course of action was chosen and support your choice with evidence. Link back to class concepts and ideas to support your argument the best you can and draw from outside evidence or personal experience to bolster your argument.
5. **Conclusion and recommendations (5%).** Brief summary of what you have proposed. Here you can also “hedge your bets” and explain what kind of changes or investments need to be made to

make sure your solution is viable. Outline future courses of action and key responsibilities. Close the report.

6. It is emphasized that a good case answer does not answer each question separately, but rather presents a unified, essay-like argument. Overall, we encourage you to not waste space by using too many subheadings. Offer your recommendation in concise form. Good writing is a must.
7. **Important!** Be sure to identify all the authors of the case report for example in the header or footer of the document! Use 1.5 line spacing, 12-point Times New Roman, and 1” margins. The length of the report must not exceed 5 pages!

1.3. Preparing for Class Discussion

It is encouraged to bring a printout of your case solution into class, possibly with highlighted items that you can discuss in class. Be ready to discuss and defend your viewpoints of the case. The class discussion is about active participation and engagement.

1.4. How and where to find the cases?

The links for purchasing and downloading the Harvard cases are found on MyCourses.

Important! All participating students must purchase and download their own version of the case files! There will be no sharing of downloaded files. Harvard monitors the download numbers and compare them to what the professors reports as the class size being. If there is a discrepancy between the class size and the number of downloads, the educator handling the course can be banned from Harvard’s system. Given how much I rely on Harvard materials, I do not want to risk this. Harvard also sends a list of all the students who downloaded the files. **If your name is not on this list, your case will not be graded.**

1.5. Cases, Case Questions, and Deadlines

Case 1: ZARA

Deadline for turning in the written report: **January 20th at 13:00.**

General tips for preparing case:

1. *Background section:* Focus on why Zara had been so slow to “go digital” and provide an overview of its digital omnichannel solution.
1. *Alternatives and Proposed Solution:* The main foci are outline in the “Way forward” section of the case. Discuss the pros, cons, risks, and opportunities relevant to the different options. Discuss in particular Inditex’s options for its different brands.

Case 2: Longchamp

Deadline for turning in the written report: **February 1st at 13:00.**

General tips for preparing case:

2. *Background section:* Focus on why has Le Pliage been so successful and for so long. Also: what is the role of the Longchamp brand in its success?
3. *Alternatives and Proposed Solution:* What should Longchamp do to manage Lepliage? What are the pros, cons, risks, and opportunities with the proposed changes outlined in the case? Focus here especially on issues of product portfolio, distribution strategy, and their synergies.

Case 3: Predicting Customer Tastes with Big Data at Gap

Deadline for turning in the written report: **February 15th at 13:00.**

General tips for preparing case:

1. *Background section:* Explain Gap's struggles in 2017 and the context that led to the firing of all the creative directors and going for a more data-driven approach.
2. *Alternatives:* Focus your analysis on how the alternatives reflect on all three of Gap Inc.'s primary brands: Old Navy, Gap, and Banana Republic. Reflect on the pros, cons, risks, and opportunities relating to brand positioning, retail experience, supply chain management, product offerings, and potential partnerships with new channel partners.
3. *Proposed solution:* In your proposed solution, try to also reflect for which purposes is big data/predictive analytics more or less useful in marketing of fashion and where more traditional intuitive and artistic approaches might be more suitable. How could the Product 3.0 program be overall improved?

2. INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT (40 p)

Choose a fashion brand and write **an academic essay that analytically explores the marketing strategy of fashion brand of your choice in the light of topics we have covered in the course** (lectures and readings). Important: Tie your evaluation also to **current retail and market trends** that you believe have the biggest influence on the fashion company of your choice, explain how and why. For example, what are some of the things its competitors are doing? What has the company announced or is expected to do?

Note: The essay needs to reflect your learnings, and show you are able to critically apply the class concepts in practice. You must apply the theories and relevant course literature to structure your analysis and exploration. It is expected that you refer to class concepts across all lectures, though with some brands you may emphasize and focus more on certain concepts than others. Use academic references and enrich and justify your analysis with visual material (if many, put them in the appendix).

Instructions

- To be completed **individually**.
- Maximum length of **4500 words** (+ possible appendix); Times New Roman 12pt, 1,5 spaced.
- The submission deadline for the final assignment is **28.2 by midnight**.

- Please, submit the final assignment through MyCourses in pdf-format.
- Evaluation: max score of the individual essay is 40 points, which represents 40% of the final grade.
- You may use whatever citation style you like (APA, Harvard etc.), so long as you do so consistently throughout the essay.

Evaluation

Total score of individual assignment: 40p

Breakdown:

Fashion brand analysis 20p

(e.g. business model, branding, marketing comms, retail..)

Retail & market trends exploration 10p

Conclusions and academic coherence, structure of the essay, usage of relevant academic references 10 p

(Detailed evaluation rubric will be available in MyCourses)

3. CLASS ACTIVITY (15 points)

Active participation throughout the course will bring you activity points. These deliverables may bring you activity points, but they are not compulsory.

The maximum of activity points is 15p. Sources of points:

1. Active participation during the lectures: 10 points (NOTE: Harvard case lectures graded separately!)
2. Read the assigned papers, provide questions and comments through Perusall: 10 points
3. However, the overall maximum grade remains 15 points!

Instructions for Perusall:

- a) Create an account on Perusall.com
- b) Join the course by inserting the course code: **WEIJO-GHPCY**
- c) Complete the assignments before each class (check the deadlines!)

Your Perusall score depends on:

- Contributing thoughtful questions and comments to the class discussion, spread throughout the entire reading ([see some examples](#))
- Starting the reading early
- Breaking the reading into chunks (instead of trying to do it all at once)
- Reading all the way to the end of the assigned reading
- Posing thoughtful questions and comments that elicit responses from classmates
- Answering questions from others
- Upvoting thoughtful questions and helpful answers