UAB
Universitat Autònoma
de Barcelona

StudyAbroad UAB

E-COMMERCE AND ONLINE BUSINESSES

Course contact hours: 45
Number of sessions: 30
Recommended credits: 6 ECTS – 3 US credits
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Office hours: By appointment

1. OBJECTIVES

The increasing development of information and communication technologies (ICT) has significantly affected both firms and markets. Such technologies are currently changing the world in a more permanent and far-reaching way than any other technology in the history of mankind. The Internet, the Web and the mobile platform are revolutionizing the way people, businesses and governments transact. A new economy, where knowledge is the most important strategic resource, is forcing firms to review their traditional routines and take advantage of the tools able to create new value.

Since its beginnings in the mid 1990's e-commerce has experienced rapid growth and underwent several major transformations. The current global pandemic situation pushed even more consumers and businesses online at unprecedent levels. By May of 2020, ecommerce transactions reached $82.5 billion — a 77% increase from 2019 (Forbes, 2020). It would have taken four to six years to reach that number looking at traditional year-over-year increases. Given such explosion of e-commerce there is no better time than right now to study and understand the fundamental principles of e-commerce.

E-Commerce and Online Businesses takes a managerial and technology agnostic approach on e-commerce and provides you with an overview of the fundamental concepts of online business models and strategies, online consumer behaviour, digital marketing, designing, and developing a web presence, gaining customers online. In addition, some of the major social issues associated with e-commerce such as online security and ethical business behaviour online, will be also explored.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

    A. Student learning outcomes:
    Upon completion of the course you will be able to:
1. Explain the concept of e-commerce and its (r)evolution.
2. Identify and understand current Internet business models and strategies.
3. Identify issues of concern in the design and development of an online presence.
4. Develop solutions for web presence creation and optimization.
5. Understand the importance of Customer and User Experience in the design, development, and success of an online business.
6. Understand current marketing tools to promote business online and develop customer relationships.
7. Identify, evaluate and discuss ethical aspects of e-commerce.

8. Be aware of online security issues and the technologies available to ensure secure transactions and protect company and customers from major online security treats.
9. Discuss major ethical and legal issues surrounding e-commerce.
10. Implement, in simulation or authentically, an e-commerce presence.

B. College learning outcomes:
This course is designed to help you enhance your skills in the following areas:

1	Team work	6	Web assets design and prototyping
2	Active and continous learning	7	Content design and copywriting
3	Creative thinking and ideation	8	Computer/Internet literacy and technology use
4	Critical thinking and analysis	9	Internet research and information resources
5	Global concerns and ethics/values	10	Oral communication

3. ASSESSMENT MEASURES
College and student learning outcomes will be assessed through a variety of activities that emphasize critical thinking including the following:

A. Assignments and Case problems:
You will develop/further enhance your skills in critical thinking, information resources, global concerns and ethics/values as you learn to analyze ecommerce web presences and business models. In addition you will be introduced to using Web based informationresources in a professional manner. These activities will assess all the above learning outcomes.

B. Individual Research and Presentations:
You will develop skills in oral communications, creative and critical thinking and information resources as you will conduct research and present your findings regarding 1) current e-commerce news review and, 2) one e-commerce enabling platform review.

C. Final Team Project:
You will be required to partner up with other students in class to complete a final project. The aim of the project is to experience the dynamics of researching an planning the creation and implementation of a web presence for an e-commerce business idea. The project will assess all of the learning outcomes checked above.

4. TEACHING METHODOLOGY
Learning in this class is thought to be active, explorative and collaborative. Classes will be conducted in seminar format promoting student participation. The methods of instruction include class discussions, individual and team projects, demonstrations and student hands-on activities.

5. GRADING CRITERIA

	Weight (%)	Deadline/Comments
News review (individual)	10	The assigned presentation dates for each student will be available after the first week of class.
Platform review (individual)	10	
Case studies and assignments (individual and group)	30	The case studies and other assignments will be posted on Canvas and the deadlines will be notified to you in advance in class and via email notifications.
Web presence project and presentation (group)	30	This project is ongoing and you will be required to work on project related task each week. The final presentations of your work will take place during the last week of class.
Participation	20	See below

Class Participation (20%)
Learning in this class is thought to be continous, interactive and collaborative. There is no final; your grade will depend exclusively on how much you work in class and on the quality of your assignments and presentations. You are expected to attend class and actively participate into class discussions. Following Study Abroad UAB's general guidelines regarding attendance policy, no more than 1 day of unexcused absences is allowed. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 0.5 point drop in your final numerical grade. **Participation to class accounts for 2 points of your final numerical grade however, attendance alone will make your earn 20% of these points (80% is for active participation and class involvement).**

6. INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS AND GROUP PROJECT

A. CURRENT E-COMMERCE NEWS REVIEW

For this assignment you are expected to find, read, review and present one piece of ecommerce (or related) news. Topics may include (although not limited to):
- New moves of existing online companies (pure online as well as bricks and clicks; any business that also conducts transactions online)
- New companies, new products and new services offered online
- New e-commerce industries
- New websites/apps
- Technologies affecting e-commerce
- Legal issues regarding e-commerce, the Web and the Internet
- Social and ethical aspects of e-commerce

You can use any (legitimate) source for your news. If you are new in the field, I suggest the following sources:

- Forrester Research: blog.forrester.com
- Tech Chrunch
- Venturebeat
- The next web
- Internetretailer.com
- Practical e-commerce
- Ecommerce fuel
- E-commerce times
- Ecommerce news

You are encouraged to **supplement the news with any additional information you may find elsewhere**. For example you can further research the topic to find out more about it and include that information in your presentation. Make sure you include all sources in the last slide of your presentation.

The presentation should take about 10 minutes, leaving 5 minutes will be dedicated to questions and discussion. It is the responsibility of the presenters to encourage at least 2 questions or comments from the class (this accounts for 30% of the grade for this assignment).

The presenters are expected to demonstrate good organizational and verbal communication skills, using appropriate audio and visual aids and technology.

You should upload your presentation on Canvas at the specified date. Improper file format and late submissions will be penalized 1 point of your total numerical grade for this assignment.

B. E-COMMERCE PLATFORM REVIEW

The objective of this individual assignment is to become familiar with current platforms that enable e-commerce (e.g. BigCommerce, Shopify, Magento, etc.). By exploring major e-commerce platforms and presenting your finding to the class you will learn how these platforms work and how they help businesses of all sizes to create e-commerce websites, manage store operations and supply chains and establish customer relations. You should prepare a presentation covering the following:

- Data about the platform: when was it created? Who created it? Short background story. How popular is it? Number customers? What is the revenue model?
- How does it work? What functionalities does it offer? (you can use snapshots for this part, you can also use videos). Explore the platform and present your own experience with it.
- Customer opinions and comments (both positive and negative).
- Brief discussion on competitors (Who are the competitors? Are they targeting the same market segments? Are they doing a better or worse job? Which of these apps do you think will succeed on the long term?)

The presentation should take about 10-15 minutes, leaving time for 5 minutes of questions and discussion. It is the responsibility of the presenters to encourage at least 2 questions or comments from the audience. (this accounts for 30% of the grade for this assignment).

The presenters are expected to demonstrate good organizational and verbal communication skills, using appropriate audio and visual aids and technology.

You should upload your presentation on Canvas at the specified date. Improper file format and late submissions will be penalized 1 point of your total numerical grade for this assignment.

C. WEB PRESENCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Web Presence Development project (WPD) is a group project that aims to provide students with the opportunity of practising the managerial aspects of establishing and maintaining an (e-commerce) online presence. To this end, students will work in groups of 3 members to create a plan and strategy for the establishment and promotion of an online business. The project is ongoing and it is divided in the steps indicated below (you can see a graphical outline of the project on the next page).

1) **Think:** research, plan and strategize. This step is concerned with generating the online business idea and all the planning and research needed previous to the online presence creation (such as, establishing a general mission, market research, customer analysis and market segmentation, industry and competitor analysis, strategy formulation, etc.)
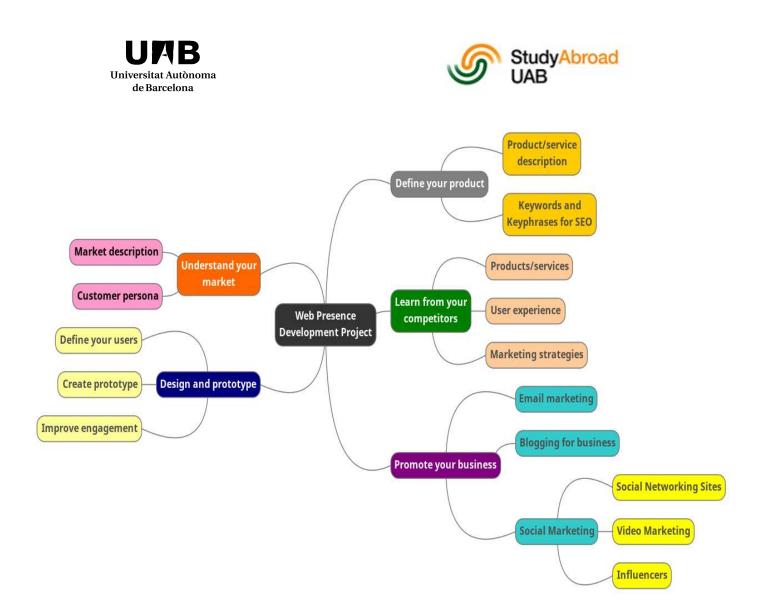
2) **Create**: build web assets. This step involves a hands on experience of web presence creation. Students will use the justinmind prototyper tool to develop a website and/or mobile app for their business idea. This step is designed to introduce students to UX design concepts and principles as well as issues related to online consumer psychology.

3) **Engage**: build relationships and drive trafic. This step involves activities such as designing specific online marketing tactics (including email, affiliate, video and social media marketing), media planning and search engine optimization. During this step students will create a marketing and promotion plan for their online business idea.

4) **Optimise**: continuous improvement. This step is focused on delivering lessons about web presence enhancement, through analytics, data mining, conversion optimization, etc.

The result of this project will be a plan/report for the proposed online presence and a prototype of the website or mobile application as well as sample content for the marketing strategy. Project presentations and written reports should be uploaded on Canvas at the assigned date. Late submissions or improper file format will be penalized 1 point of your numerical grade for the project.

Web Presence Development Project Outline

7. WHAT ARE THE COURSE POLICIES?
- The readings form the core of our class discussions and activities, so please come prepared. I expect each of you to participate.
- Attendance is required each session to make sure you achieve a satisfactory grade. Sign in at the beginning of the class. If you come in late, make sure to sign in after class – you don't want to be market absent by mistake.
- If you arrive late, once a presentation has started please wait outside and enter the class after it has finished.
- Late assignments and/or improper formating will receive 90% of the alloted points.
- When you are scheduled to present, make sure you arrive at least 10 minutes before the class begins so you have time to open your presentation and test it on the classroom computer.
- Avoid texting or using your phone in class. For emergencies, please take your phone outside.
- I am a big fan of respect – and will do my best ot show it to you. Respect builds a safe learning community, even if we disagree.

8. COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE*

Course week	Month	Monday		Wednesday	
		Day	Topic	Day	Topic
1	January	25	Course overview. What is E-commerce?	27	Intro to E-commerce History, evolution, technology and trends
2	February	1	Strategy issues. The Business Model.	3	Types of online business models. Business model reviews in different E-commerce areas.
3		8	Types of online business models. Business model reviews in different E-commerce areas.	10	Types of online business models. Business model reviews in different E-commerce areas.
4		15	The Web Presence. **Web Presence Project kickoff.**	17	The Web Presence. Planning and development approaches. Platforms and enablers.
5		22	The Web Presence. The user experience and online consumer psychology.	24	The Web Presence. The user experience and online consumer psychology.
6	March	1	The Web Presence. UX design and prototyping.	3	The Web Presence. Building engagement into design
7		8	Digital marketing. Consumers online. Internet marketing technologies.	10	Content marketing
8		15	SEO and search marketing	17	Email marketing
9		22	Marketing on social	24	Marketing on social
		29	**Easter Break - No Class**	31	**Easter Break - No Class**
10	April	5	Affiliate marketing	7	Online advertising
11		12	Online security and payment systems	14	Ethical and legal issues in e-commerce
12		19	**Final presentations**		

*Subject to change. Possible changes will be notified in advance.

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Class material such as power point presentations, additional readings, articles and case studies will be provided to you via Canvas

Laudon, K.C., Traver, C.G. (2019) *E-Commerce 2019. Business, Technology, Society*. 15th Edition (Global Edition). Pearson.

Eyal, N. (2014) *Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products*. Portfolio/Penguin.

Krug, S. (2014) *Don't Make Me Think Revisited. A Common Sense Approach to Web and Mobile Usability*

Berger, J. (2013) *Contagious: Why Things Catch On.* Simon & Schuster Paperbacks

Nahai, N (2013) *Webs of Influence: The Psychology of Online Influence.* FT Press.

Shelton, T. (2013) *Business Models for the Social Mobile Cloud: Transform your Business using Social Media, Mobile Internet and Cloud Computing*, Wiley.

Case Studies

Iskra, E.; A. Taleb (2020) *Facebook: A business model under attack*. McEwan University. School of Business. Product# 9B20M106

Nadayama, N; Lindblom, A. (2020) *Rakuten: To Stay or Not to Stay in the UK?* Ivey Publishing Services, Product# 9B20M022

Laudon, K; Guercio Traver, C. (2019) *Ace&Tate: Disrupting the European Eyewear Industry*; in Laudon and Guercio Traver, E-Commerce 2019. Business. Technology. Society, Global Edition, pg. 323 – 325

Neufeld, D.; Jiwani, F.; Hardy, S.; Tong, P. (2016) *WestJet: A New Social Media Strategy*. Ivey Publishing Services, Product# 9B16E019

Garg, P.; Aggarwal, R.K., Garg, V. (2016) *Snap Deal: A Nightmare or a Benefit in Reverse Logistics?* Ivey Publishing Services, Product# 9B16E039