

DBUS 2050 - Introduction to E-Commerce

Fall 2026

Class Meetings: Mon/Wed 9.35a-10:55am BLB 255

Introduction to E-Commerce is an introductory course in retail ecommerce for students who have not had a previous course in retail or merchandising. The course has several objectives, in addition to the obvious one of introducing the basic terms and concepts of ecommerce. The course will include significant team/collaboration activity.

The course will include instructor lectures written and shared online, class discussions, case analyses, videos, and exercises. You can best broaden your knowledge by actively participating with questions, ideas, interpretations, and comments.

You can expect many assignments and class exercises in this course. During this course, you will work collaboratively and work on case studies and projects.

You will also do a Website evaluation and SWOT analysis and a point of view for a national and global ecommerce operations and strategy.

COURSE DESCRIPTION (3 credit hours)

Survey of electronic merchandising and its application to global consumer products and services for business-to-business and business-to-consumer markets. Introduction to digital merchandising theory, terminology, international resources, industry participants, and career opportunities. Emphasis is placed on emerging technologies including artificial intelligence (AI), mobile commerce, and social platforms that are shaping the future of digital retail. Students will explore how AI impacts customer experience, personalization, logistics, advertising, and competitive strategy in e-commerce.

COURSE OBJECTIVES /LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **Understand the global digital retailing environment**, including its phases of development and the technological and societal forces that drive innovation.
 - **Evaluate the role of artificial intelligence (AI)** in digital retail—from personalized marketing to dynamic pricing and AI-enhanced supply chains.
 - **Compare and contrast national and international ecommerce business models**, including AI-driven strategies such as recommendation engines and predictive analytics.
 - **Analyze agile, digitally connected consumer behavior** and how AI contributes to improved targeting, engagement, and personalized customer experiences.
 - **Use key industry terminology**, including AI-related terms (e.g., machine learning, automation, recommendation systems), to communicate insights about ecommerce.
 - **Critically evaluate ecommerce websites and mobile platforms**, especially features enabled by AI (e.g., smart search, automated product curation, chatbots).
 - **Assess current trends and disruptions in digital retail**, with a focus on emerging technologies such as the metaverse, blockchain, and generative AI.
 - **Explore career opportunities in digital retail**, including emerging roles in ecommerce strategy, AI integration, and digital analytics.
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INSTRUCTOR: Ms. Malini Ratnam
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Please use your Eagle Mail account when contacting me, preferably - I will check the Canvas message system occasionally. When sending an email, please use the subject line: DBUS 2050 Student – Fall 2026 to identify yourself and the course number.

CANVAS: Students must know their EUID and password to access the course on Canvas. Do not try to manage the course through smartphone.

OFFICE
HOURS: Mon/Wed: 11-12pm or by appointment
Please email to let me know you are coming.
Unanticipated events can occur.

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INSTRUCTOR COMMITMENT AND EXPECTATIONS

My classroom is a place where every voice matters, and where we grow through mutual respect, curiosity, and collaboration.

Your success matters to me – both in this course and beyond. You can count on me to:

- Respond to your emails promptly
- Create engaging class discussions
- Provide clear guidance for all assignments
- Be available when you need support

To make the most of our time together, I encourage you to:

- Come prepared and ready to learn
- Share your unique perspectives in discussions
- Tackle challenges with curiosity and persistence
- Engage actively with your peers and the material

I'm looking forward to all we'll accomplish together this semester!

ENROLLMENT REMINDER:

It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. Please check your online schedule daily through the 12th class day to make sure you have not been dropped for non-payment. Students unknowingly have been dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, etc. **Students cannot be reinstated for any reason after the 12th class day regardless of the situation.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

ATTENDANCE:

The way to be successful in this class is to show up for every class meeting on time, be present, prepared and engaged. Attendance is taken every class period either via a roll sheet or record of the in-class quiz. If you forget to sign on **iclicker**, you will have to take the absence.

- a. For your attendance to count you are required to be in class by 9:35 am. It is a mid sized class and you being on time will be appreciated, however if you are late, please follow this protocol.
- b. If you are later than 9:40am, when you get to class, please sit at the back of the class.
- c. If you will be later than 9:45 am, understand that you will automatically be marked tardy. Three tardies equals one unexcused absence.
- d. **If you have an excused absence, please present the relevant documents to me on the day you resume class. If you do not provide the documentation on time as requested, your absence will automatically become an “undocumented absence”.**
- e. **IMPORTANT:** If you need accommodation, you will need to contact DOS within three days of resuming class. This is critical as without this I will not be able to help (and I DO want to help you 🙏)
- f. Documented emergencies, deaths, and illness are considered excused absences. Going on vacation, doctor’s appointment, car trouble in the morning, parking issues, are not considered to be excused absence.
- g. I reserve the right to excuse a student from class on an individual basis with appropriate documentation and advance notification.
- h. **If you have more than 5 absences which are undocumented it may lower the grade by one letter.** You are responsible for attending each class meeting and securing your own notes from another student in the class.

How to be Successful in this Course

I want you to be successful, not only in this course, but also in your future career. All of the material and assignments have been designed so that you are prepared for real life! To be successful in this course and your future career, consider a few suggestions:

1. Plan. You now have the syllabus for the course that includes all of the important dates. Keep track of the dates and plan your schedule around your work load.
2. Prepare. Be ready when you to come to class – read the chapters, articles assigned and, review or print out the slides (if that is your practice), the day before class so that you are not rushed coming to class. Preparing while the semester is going along will make it easier around quiz time.
3. Ask questions. The only bad question is the one that you did not ask (and then missed on an exam or case).
5. Be professional. Think of your instructors in any courses as managers whom you want to impress – be professional with them and they will return the favor. Also, keep up your end of the workload in your groups.
6. View this class within the right context. As in your career, don't look for shortcuts – failing to learn course material will hurt you when you are looking for a job. Start planning for your success now by treating this course as you would a job.

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES:

- All assignments will be submitted online via Canvas. **Assignments due online will not be accepted via email.**
- Students should always take the time to ensure that their assignment uploaded correctly. If you are having trouble uploading your assignment, you must contact CLEAR using the information provided above.
- Each student is responsible for ensuring that **1) their file uploaded correctly, 2) their file is compatible with the system, and 3) their file is within file size restrictions.**
- Assignment due dates are available on the course calendar. **Late assignments are downgraded by 10% for each day that it is late. After two calendar days (48 hours) assignments are no longer accepted for credit.** There are no exceptions, including assignments that did not upload correctly to Canvas, as it is ultimately the student's responsibility to make sure submissions were successful. Students are encouraged to view their assignment after submission to confirm successful submission.
- Any team assignment requires that only one student in the team upload the assignment to Canvas.
- Students have one week from the date assignment grades are released to follow-up on grades. After one week, assignment grades stand, and appeals will not be considered.
- Grading rubrics - your best path to a great grade! Continually refer to it and 'pretend' you are the grader of your own assignment, using it before you turn in your work.
- **All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, one inch margin on all sides, and 12-point font.**
- Please use APA for all assignments unless otherwise stated. Quotes should be paraphrased in your words, not directly copied from the reference. You cannot quote the content of an entire paragraph from the same article, no matter how good it is.

Sources should be authoritative industry or scholarly. Wikipedia is not an acceptable source. A good resource to review APA standards is owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

- If you are planning to drop the class due to any reason, please send your team a specific email and copy me.
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MAKEUP EXAMS:

- Makeup exams will only be given if a student contacts the instructor via email *prior to the exam time*. Students are required to provide sufficient paperwork (e.g., hospital admittance papers, funeral program, court appearance) to the instructor.
- All makeup exams are given on an assigned date during pre-finals week. Students can only take one makeup exam. Makeup exams are for students who missed an exam, not to improve an exam grade.
- A missed exam without an excused absence will result in a “0” for that exam.

FISHBOWL FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS:

Participation is a requirement for this course, and the Fishbowl Discussions platform will be used for online discussion about class topics. Fishbowl Questions is an online community where you can be fearlessly curious and ask open-ended questions to build on top of what we are covering in class and relate topics to real-world applications.

GROUP PROJECT GUIDELINES:

Please follow these general guidelines for all the assignments:

1. Team projects or Individual Projects. There will be both, in this course.
2. Each team will have 3-4 members. If you have concerns/complaints with your teammates, please follow this protocol:
 - a. Send me an email listing the concerns. Email needs to be sent only through Canvas.
 - b. Set up a meeting with me, all team members need to be present – This is non-negotiable and can happen during office hours or through Zoom.
 - c. **Point penalties:**
 - First complaint – Warning to the student.
 - Second complaint – 5% deduction from the current assignment.
 - Three complaints or more – 15% deduction from the assignment.

d. Team evaluations: **IF** your team **works well together**, there is **no need to submit a peer evaluation**. However, if team member(s) did not participate as needed, you can submit peer evaluation. Peer evaluation needs to be received on the date when it is due. A percentage of the point will be deducted from the overall grade of the assignment. For example, if a student received 70% in the peer evaluation, then they would receive 70% of the grade for the assignment.

GRADE DETERMINATION:

Assignment Details

1. AI Tools Sandbox + Reflection

Due: Week 5 – Individual – 75 points

Students explore an ecommerce-relevant AI tool (e.g., ChatGPT, Midjourney, Perplexity) and share their insights through a **3–5 min video reflection** and visual demo.

Deliverables:

- What the tool does
 - How it applies to ecommerce (CX, logistics, personalization)
 - One ethical concern
 - Two AI-related terms used and explained
 - Screenshots or demo included
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2. Global Brand Spotlight Case Study

Due: Week 8 –Pair – 100 points

Students choose a non-U.S. ecommerce brand and compare it with a U.S. counterpart using **slides or a 5–7 min video presentation**.

Focus:

- Ecommerce model
 - Localization strategies
 - Regional consumer behavior
 - SWOT + brand comparison
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3. Digital Dilemma Debate or Reflection

Due: Week 13 – Individual or Group – 75 points

Students respond to an ecommerce ethics scenario (e.g., AI bias, privacy, automation) with a **recorded stance video (3–5 min)** or live participation in a Zoom fishbowl debate.

Expectations:

- Clear stance
- Use of course terms and examples

- Critical thinking
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4. Website Evaluation & SWOT Analysis (Final Group Project)

Due: Week 15–16 – Group – 200 points

Teams analyze a real brand’s website/mobile experience, evaluate AI-enhanced features, and conduct a strategic SWOT.

Deliverables:

- 8–10 slides
 - Live presentation (9–10 min)
 - SWOT analysis slide
 - Strategic recommendation (opportunity + threat response)
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5. Tech Radar: Ecommerce Edition

Due: Week 4 – Individual or Pair – 75 points

Students select an **emerging ecommerce tech** (AR/VR, AI, blockchain, etc.) and explain its use and risks via **slides + 2–3 min voiceover or video**.

Components:

- Tech overview
 - Brand example
 - Ethical concern
 - “Hot or Hype” radar graphic (optional)
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6. Career Reflection + Future Resume

Due: Week 14 – Individual – 75 points

Students explore a future ecommerce career, reflect on fit, and submit a **creative 2028 resume + short video or audio reflection**.

Focus:

- Digital career path
 - Your future strengths
 - Resume design & goals alignment
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7. Weekly Fishbowl Discussions

Due: Weekly – Individual – 100 points total (10 × 10 pts)

Weekly Canvas discussions using real-world examples and course terms. Students

post and reply, with options for video submissions and occasional live sessions.

8. Midterm Exam

Due: Week 7 – 100 points

Conceptual exam covering digital retailing foundations, ecommerce models, basic AI applications, and terminology. Mix multiple choice, scenario questions, and applied analysis.

9. Final Exam

Due: Finals Week – 100 points

Conceptual exam emphasizing AI strategy, ethics, global ecommerce, customer experience, and website evaluation frameworks.

Total Course Points: 800 (including scaffolded group project)

1. AI Tools Sandbox + Reflection	50
2. Global Brand Spotlight Case Study	50
3. Digital Dilemma Debate or Reflection	50
4. Tech Radar: Ecommerce Edition	50
5. Career Reflection + Future Resume	50
6. Website Evaluation Group Project (Scaffolded)	200
a. Site Audit Worksheet	(30)
b. AI Feature Analysis Slide	(30)
c. SWOT Draft + Feedback	(40)
d. Final Group Presentation	(100)
7. Weekly Fishbowl Discussions (10 × 10 pts)	100
8. Midterm Exam	100
9. Final Exam	100
Total	800

Course Grades¹

Letter Grades	Percentages
A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69%
F	59% and below

¹ All extra credit points are added to the final total points earned and are used in calculating your final grade.

SMHM AI Policy:

1. Submitting assignments that use Generative AI without proper citation or indication of its use is plagiarism. It is a substitute for your own creative thought and effort. Your brain continues to develop and make connections throughout your life; train your brain, not AI.
2. Instructors will monitor AI use and will check student work for ethical use according to their policies.
3. Every instructor has consequences stated for plagiarism in their policies. A range of disciplinary actions may result from any finding of academic dishonesty (for example, admonition, class failure, expulsion) depending upon the severity of the misconduct. Plagiarism will be reported to the UNT Academic Integrity Officer.
4. Policies may differ between instructors and courses. Read the syllabus and course policies, especially for the consequences.
 1. a. If you are allowed by your instructor to use any Generative AI in a course, you must disclose and cite its use by including citations in APA style.
 2. b. If your instructor allows Generative AI use, carefully check all output for errors — hallucinations, factual inaccuracies, oversimplified results, and bias from training sources.

My Philosophy of AI in Education

AI is a core part of the digital business world. In this course, I encourage you to **experiment with and explore AI tools** as part of your learning journey.

Using AI to brainstorm, create mockups, analyze data, or enhance presentations is not just allowed — it's part of the future of digital retail.

However, with that power comes responsibility. You are expected to use AI in a way that supports **your own thinking, creativity, and integrity**. AI should enhance your work, not replace your learning process. Most importantly, I expect you to be **transparent** and **ethical** in how you use it.

Guidelines for Ethical AI Use

You are encouraged to use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, Gemini, Midjourney) to support your work as long as you follow these expectations:

- AI is a collaborator, not a replacement. Use AI to explore ideas, practice concepts, and refine your work — but your final submission should be your own synthesis and voice.
- Be transparent. Any assignment that uses AI should include a brief “AI Use Disclosure” (see below).
- Use critical thinking. Don’t accept AI-generated content at face value. Always verify facts, challenge assumptions, and consider credibility.
- Do not use AI to plagiarize or bypass learning. Submitting AI-generated work as your own without modification or disclosure is considered academic misconduct.

AI Use Disclosure

For any assignment in which you use an AI tool, please include a brief statement titled “**AI Credits**” at the end (or in an intro slide/video note) explaining:

- Which tool(s) you used (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, Gemini)
- What you used it for (e.g., idea generation, visual design, proofreading, data analysis)
- How you modified or built upon the AI’s contribution

Example:

AI Credits: I used ChatGPT to brainstorm headline ideas for my presentation and Midjourney to generate a concept image. I revised the AI content significantly and made all final design and wording decisions myself.

How AI Use May Be Reviewed

To support learning and uphold integrity, I may:

- Request more information on how you used AI in your process
- Use detection tools (e.g., Turnitin, AI probability scanners) as prompts for deeper conversations, not punishments
- Provide feedback on how you can use AI tools more critically or ethically in future work.

Data Privacy

Students must not submit any personally identifying information to any AI system.

DBUS 2050: Introduction to Digital Retailing

Fall 2026 Tentative Course Schedule*

*This course schedule is subject to change when the instructor determines it necessary for the benefit of the course. Other assignments may be added as deemed necessary to meet the course objectives.

Week	Date	Topic / Activity	Activity/Assignment
1	Aug 17	Welcome, Syllabus Overview, Assignments, Tools & AI Policy	
	Aug 19	Intro to E-Commerce + “Digital Habit Mapping” Icebreaker	
2	Aug 24	History of E-Commerce + Internet Milestones Timeline	
	Aug 26	The Internet: Technology & Background	
3	Aug 31	Ecommerce Business Models Overview + Matching Models Activity	Tech Radar Assignment Introduced
	Sep 2	Mobile Web & Platform Design In-Class Analysis	
4	Sep 7	NO CLASS – Labor Day (University Closed)	
	Sep 9	Emerging Technologies: AI, Blockchain, AR/VR AI Use Cases & Global Brand Case Study Introduced	
5	Sep 14	UX/UI	Tech Radar assignment Due
	Sep 16	Digital Advertising Concepts	AI Tools Sandbox Assignment Introduced
6	Sep 21	Assignment - SMHM Career Expo: Sep 22 (Tue), 10am–1pm, Union 314	Global Brand Spotlight Assigned
	Sep 23	Social, Mobile, Local Advertising	
7	Sep 28	Loyalty/CRM	
	Sep 30	Ecommerce Payments & Subscription Models	
8	Oct 5	Exam Review: Group Project in Class	
	Oct 7	Midterm Exam	
9	Oct 12	Mobile Commerce Trends & UX Examples	AI Feature Slide Assigned
	Oct 14	Guest Speaker	

10	Oct 19 Oct 21	Ethics Primer: Privacy, Bias, and Responsible AI Guest Speaker	Digital Dilemma Assignment Introduced
11	Oct 26 Oct 28	Policy & Security Issues in ecommerce International Ecommerce & Localization	
12	Nov 2 Nov 4	Ecom Fulfillment Guest Speaker: Careers in Digital	SWOT Draft Assigned
13	Nov 9 Nov 11	Resume/LinkedIn Labs – Future Roles in Ecommerce Web Analytics	SWOT Draft Due Digital Dilemma Assignment Due: Career Reflection Assigned
14	Nov 16 Nov 18	Guest Speaker AI Lab Part 2 Social Dilemma – Video and Discussion Career Reflection + Future Resume Due	Career Reflection + Future Resume Due
15	Nov 23 Nov 25	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break (Nov 23–29) NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break	Final Group Project Due → Nov 30
16	Nov 30 Dec 2 Dec 7	Group Project Presentations – SWOT & Website Evaluation Begin Final Group Project Due Group Project Presentations – Final Day (Last Regular Class) Final Exam - 8-10am	

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