

Business 189

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Instructional term: Aug. 23 – Dec. 11, 2017

Office: BT655; office hrs T/Th 11:00-12:00 & by appointment

Fall 2017, Section 07

T/Ths 12-1:15 p.m.

Boccardo Business Ctr 326

COURSE OVERVIEW

Strategy is winning at competitive corporate problem-solving, or out-thinking and out-doing rivals competing in the same business lines. Arguably, there's no "best" way of doing this, especially in a global era, like today, when national environments, industries, business practices, firm goals and means are ever-changing. But, by employing logic and analysis, best or at least better solutions to competitive business problems may be found, advancing performance and profitability at the lowest possible costs.

Management's jobs are identifying and isolating problems, planning and executing strategies, upgrading them, and developing alternative courses of action. As students of business, planning on being managers, your jobs are the same. In doing so, the following factors are considered:

1. External conditions including the competitive, social, economic, technological, political and natural environments. In other words, what's going on outside firms.
2. Organizational or "internal" resources, structures and processes. What's going on inside firms, considering their resources, capabilities and competencies.
3. The values, aspirations and histories of key actors in firms as well as firm values and precedents embedded in organizational history, systems and culture.

The course is taught through lectures, class discussions, case studies, team and take-home exercises. My job is to impart the complexities and uncertainties of strategy; your job is to understand the choices available to firms and to analyze and evaluate the choices they've made.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the concept of strategy: what it is and how it is used in managing and driving business success.
2. Recognize the differences and interrelationships among different types of strategy, such as corporate, business, and functional strategies.
3. Understand the organizational environment, how that environment may be analyzed, how it shapes strategy, how it influences organizational success.

4. Learn to appraise organizational structures and systems and how they relate to strategy.
5. Analyze how corporate leadership, control systems and culture influence strategy.
6. Develop the ability to present strategic information and concepts effectively.
7. Analyze the impact of corporate social responsibility in firms and assess business strategies in relation to social, economic, environmental and technical conditions.

COURSE MATERIALS

- Charles W. L. Hill, Gareth R. Jones and Melissa Schilling, *Strategic Management: Theory*, Cengage Learning, 12th edition, 2015, 2017.
- Additional readings as indicated by the instructor

Recommended supplemental business publications with a strategic orientation:

- Financial Times (<http://news.ft.com/home/us/>)
- Wall Street Journal (www.wsj.com)
- The Economist (www.economist.com)

COURSE FORMAT, ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Course format

This course employs a collaborative, seminar format to elicit knowledge and collectively make sense of it.

This requires commitments on the parts of students and me. The instructor...

- Guides subject review to facilitate subject matter comprehension.
- Prepares lectures, organize classes, grades exams and papers, and is available to answer questions and provide guidance.
- Structures projects to foster understanding from multiple sources and perspectives.

Students are expected to...

- Adhere to class schedules and requirements.
- Complete readings before class and assignments on time and according to direction.
- Contribute actively to class discussion, being polite to instructor and fellow students.
- Engage with the subject matter: think about the concepts, imagining how they apply in current and future professional roles.

Class Attendance & Participation

Class attendance is assumed because “face-to-face” participation is essential to learning within the seminar format. Participation is rewarded by giving all-or-nothing extra credit (see “grading” below) for perfect attendance and at least some engagement.

The seminar format requires students to commit themselves fully to the learning process by taking an active role in group discussions and projects, dedicating time to completing readings and preparing assignments. Participation has qualitative and quantitative components based on comparative analysis of data and artful organization and presentation of findings.

Finally, students are expected to exhibit respect for their peers by supporting them in attaining individual and team learning objectives. Individual and team performances are weighed more or less the same, so it's **just as important to push hard for high levels of team performance as it is to set high standards for individual performance.**

Case Analyses

Hill, Jones and Schilling's *Strategic Management: Theory* does not contain full business cases, but offers brief “mini-case” summaries instead. Prepare these for in-class discussion. Cases exemplify elements of strategic analysis and offer opportunities to think creatively.

Grades are based on critical thinking skills in selecting information, analyzing data, advancing arguments, and supporting positions in class discussions and submitted work. Note that all Internet-based information is not equal, some of it should be used cautiously, and most of it backed up with reliable, vetted sources.

How you say something is often just as important as what you say: arguments are only as powerful as they are well organized and argued.

Industry Analysis and Business Plans

An industry analysis and company analysis are due at the end of the semester. Students assess the trends, issues, competitors, and key dynamics of an industry and prepare company analyses for firms competing in the same strategic group. Reports are based on comparative analysis: why firms and strategic groups excel. **Don't tell me - show me - why firms win by analyzing the bases of their success.** This semester, the auto industry and GM, Honda and Tesla are chosen as the industry and firms for analysis.

Plagiarism

At all times during this course, students are to be cognizant of – and in compliance with – the university’s plagiarism policy:

Whenever you quote from, make reference to, or use ideas attributable to others in your writing, you must identify these sources in citations or bibliography, or both. If you do not, you have committed plagiarism. “Plagiarism may take the form of repeating another’s sentences as your own, adopting a particular apt phrase as your own, paraphrasing someone else’s argument as though it were your own.” (*Modern Language Association Handbook*, New York: MLA, 1977, p.4.) Sanctions for plagiarism range from reprimands to failing grades and expulsion.

Disability

If you are a student with a disability or a disabling condition, or if you think you may have a disability, please contact me and we will discuss your needs for this course.

Grading

Grading is intended to provide both student and instructor with information about understanding, class contribution, and progress towards meeting the course’s objectives; specifically,

- Use of strategy concepts from text and the class
- Clear organization and communication of ideas; quality of assignments and mid-terms
- Contributions to class discussion; complete/on-time class attendance
- Commitment to learning individually and as a team member

Assignments and grading:	
Class participation	5 pts
Midterms (3)	45%
Industry analysis (PowerPoint & report)	25%
Company analysis (PowerPoint & report)	25%
Total	100%

CLASS TOPICS, OBJECTIVES & AREAS OF FOCUS

Session #1: Aug. 24

Session Topics:

- Sort out registration and any other course related issues
- Review course objectives, deliverables, assignments and grading
- Team formation: strategies for forming teams; self-introductions
- Preliminary thoughts on strategy, strategy stack & general principles

Session #2: Aug. 29

Session Topics:

- Chapter 1, plus Analyzing a Case Study, pp. C-2 to C-14
- Read: Chapt. 1, Strategic Leadership, 1-42; C-2 to C-14
- Continue with team formation: the sooner, the better

Session #3: Aug. 31

Session Topic

- Chapter 2 External Analysis, 43-79.
- Collaborative selection of company report subject, agreement on team and individual roles
(team name, members, email addresses & subject turned in at end of class)

Session #4: Sept. 5

Session Topic: Chapter 3, Internal Analysis, 80-115.

- Teams formed, companies chosen; all assignments, reports and evaluations understood.

Session #5: Sept. 7

Session Topics: Continuation of Chapt. 3, 80-115; Chapter 4, Functional Level Strategies

Session #6: Sept. 12

Session Topic: Continuation of Chapter 4, 116-152.

Session #7: Sept. 14

Review Chapters 1-4 in preparation for First In-Class Midterm

Session #8: Sept. 19

First In-Class Midterm on functional-level strategies applied to GM, Honda & Tesla

Session #9: Sept. 21

Session Topic: Chapter 5 on business-level strategies, 153-177

Session #10: Sept. 26

Session Topic: Continuation of Chapter 5, 153-177.

Session #11: Sept. 28

Session Topic: Chapter 6, 178-209, on business-level strategies

Session #12: Sept. 30

Continuation of Chapter 6, 178-209; advance to Chpt. 7 if time allows

Session #13: Oct. 3

Session Topic: Read, discuss & finish Chapter 7

Session #14: Oct. 5

Session Topic: Strategy in the Global Environment, Chapter 8

Session #15: Oct. 10

Review of Business Level Strategies, Chapters 5-8.

Session #16: Oct. 12:

Second In-Class Midterm on Business Level Strategies, Honda & Tesla

Session #17: Oct. 17

Session topic: Corporate Level Strategy: Horizontal Integration, Vertical Integration,
& Strategic Outsourcing; Read: Chapter 9: 286-317.

Session #18: Oct. 19

Session topic: Corporate-level Strategy: Related and Unrelated Diversification

Read: Chapter 10, 318-358.

Session #19: Oct. 24

Session topics: Corporate Governance, Social Responsibility & Behaving Responsibly

Session #20: Oct. 26

Review of Corporate-level Strategies

Session #21: Oct. 31

Third in-class midterm on corporate level strategies and GM, Honda & Tesla

Session #22: Nov. 2

A-Team 15 min. meetings on Industry Reports & PowerPoint Presentations, applying all industry-level models with comparative analysis and team-specific insights with respect to industry trends.

Session #23: Nov. 7

B-Team 15 minute meetings on Industry Reports and PowerPoint Presentations, applying all industry-level models with comparative analysis and team-specific insights with respect to industry trends.

Session #24: Nov. 9

B-Team 15 minute meetings on Company Reports and PowerPoint Presentations, applying all firm-level models covered during semester with added analysis and strategic recommendations.

Session #25: Nov. 14

A-Team 15 minute meetings on Company Reports and PowerPoint Presentations, applying all firm-level models covered during semester with added analysis and strategic recommendations.

Session #26: Nov. 16: Last chance for meetings on Industry/Company presentations; 10-15 min. options.

THANKSGIVING VACATION, NOV. 22-24, NO CLASS THIS WEEK.

INDUSTRY & COMPANY POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS: 15 minutes, concise, insightful
PowerPoint analyses with PowerPoint slides; separate written reports turned in after presentations.

PowerPoints are peer evaluated for quality of analysis, content, presentation and insight/creativity.

Session #27: Nov. 28 Industry Report presentations, Group A Teams

Analysis of industry structure and strategic groups with projections/analyses as to which firms are best positioned to take advantage of industry trends.

Session #28: Nov. 30 Industry Report presentations, Group B Teams

Analysis of industry structure and strategic groups with projections/analyses as to which firms are best positioned to take advantage of industry trends.

Session #29: Dec. 5 Company Report presentations, Group B Teams

Strategic recommendations for Honda/Tesla, supported by analyses, evaluations and projections.

Session #30: Dec. 7 Company Report presentations, Group A Teams

Strategic recommendations for Honda/Tesla, supported by analyses, evaluations and projections.

Final exam: full and final PowerPoint presentations and Industry/Company Reports on GM, Honda & Tesla due on day and at time of final exam.