

Seattle University Syllabus
David L. Gartenberg
MBA 5500 Competitive Strategy

Tuesday 6:00pm – 8:40pm

Classroom -- Piggott 103

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Office Hours (Pigott 433): Tue 5:10pm-5:50pm; 8:45pm-9:30pm and by appointment

Course Description

Competitive Strategy is the capstone course, designed to help students integrate and apply knowledge, skills, and experience gained at Seattle University and in the Business curriculum. The course will require you to think as a strategist about the fundamental issues required to establish a firm's path forward and achieve competitive advantage. It asks you to apply concepts from a variety of business fields and equips you with tools and techniques to understand how these fields come together. In the course we will examine organizations from the top and contemplate questions such as: How is this organization doing in comparison to its competitors? What should it look like in five, ten, and twenty years? What does it need to do to remain efficient, innovative, and able to adapt to a changing environment? How can it benefit its many stakeholders, including employees, shareholders, customers, and communities? Our focus will be on how firms create and sustain competitive advantage in today's complex, global business environment. By the end of the quarter, you will understand and be able to apply concepts and frameworks that enable you to:

- Analyze the firm's task and general environments.
- Formulate business and corporate strategies that match the firm's strengths with opportunities in its external environment and enable it to achieve competitive advantage.
- Identify firms' sources of competitive advantage.
- Understand how mergers, acquisitions, and alliances contribute to achieving competitive advantage.
- Design an organization that can effectively implement its strategies.
- Execute strategy through actions that meet ethical obligations and satisfy the interests of multiple stakeholders.

To explore these topics we will use a variety of formats, including lecture, discussion, cases, an individual project, and a team project.

Student Learning Objectives

Creative Thinking Skills: Students should be able to identify and assess relationships not immediately apparent in a problem situation and to develop innovative solutions to such unstructured problems.

Disciplined Thinking: Students should be able to apply currently accepted theories and methods to the solution of common types of problems related to their academic field of study.

Global Perspectives: Students should be able to understand global dimensions of business, including socio-cultural, political-legal, technological and economic environments.

Written Communications: By the end of the quarter, students should be able to create clear, concise, well-organized written business documents such as memos, reports, and executive summaries that can be used in an effective manner.

Oral Communications: Verbal communication skills are essential to your success in your career. Students should be able to organize their thinking and communicate it verbally in a concise and informative manner.

Teamwork and Diversity: Students should be able to recognize and appreciate contributions of individuals from diverse backgrounds and be able to contribute to the effective functioning of cross-disciplinary teams. This assumes demonstration of interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively in teams of diverse composition.

Course Materials

Required eTextbook – Rothaermel, F.T. 2014, 3rd Ed. *Strategic management: Concepts and cases*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 9781308754628. This e-textbook is accompanied by an online learning tool via the publisher's CONNECT Learning Management System. Once you have purchased your code (or if you want they offer a free trial if you are waiting for your student loans to clear), go to our class section's web address:

<http://connect.mheducation.com/class/d-gartenberg-rothaermel-3e>

1. Click the "Register Now" Button.
2. Enter your email address.
3. Enter your access code you purchased from the bookstore, or select "Buy Online", or you can "Start Free Trial" if you don't have an access code.
4. Complete the registration form, click "Submit"

You may also find Rothaermel's Facebook and Webpage to be valuable resources www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/pages/Frank-T-Rothaermel/233252110032097 and www.ftrStrategy.com

Recommended

Business periodicals – Students should regularly read at least one business periodical (e.g., *The Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week*, *Fortune*, *Harvard Business Review*, etc)

for the duration of the semester, this information can be referred to in class discussions. Albers offers a variety of activities such as the Executive Speaker Series, Career nights, mentor programs, and many others. I encourage you to participate in these programs.

Course Website

We will utilize Canvas for the class website. I will post a copy of the syllabus as well as additional information about the class as well as some other resources. We will use Canvas as the primary tool for communications. To access the course website, log into Canvas via the main SU webportal, login using your SU id and password, and Mgmt 5500 should appear in your drop down menu as a course for Spring 2016.

Scoring System

| Points | Activity | Percent |
|--------|--|-------------|
| 200 | Individual Research Paper | 20% |
| 200 | Exams 1 and 2 (100 Points each) | 20% |
| 200 | Group Paper | 20% |
| 50 | Peer Evaluation (from the group project) | 5% |
| 150 | Class discussion and participation | 15% |
| 200 | Homework | 20% |
| 1000 | TOTAL | 100% |

Grades

Grades will be calculated by taking the total number of points earned and dividing by 1000.

| | |
|----|-----------|
| A | >94% |
| A- | 90 to 93% |
| B+ | 87 to 89% |
| B | 84 to 86% |
| B- | 80 to 83% |
| C+ | 77 to 79% |
| C | 74 to 76% |
| C- | 70 to 73% |
| D+ | 67 to 69% |
| D | 60 to 66% |
| F | <59% |

Class Detail – Analysis, Formulation, Implementation

*Note – details are likely to change. Canvas announcements and calendar will always be your accurate source of information.

| Week | Date | Preparation | Assignment(s) Due (prior to class starting) | Class Discussion |
|------|--------|--|---|--|
| 1 | Apr 04 | - None | - None | - Course overview - Expectations - Class Inventory - Introduction to Strategy |
| 2 | Apr 11 | - Chapters 1 & 2 - Mini cases 2 & 4 | - Chapters 1 and 2 online homework | - Review chapters 1 & 2 - Breakout groups: mini cases 2 & 4 - Individual Research Paper overview |
| 3 | Apr 18 | - Chapters 3 & 4 - Mini cases 7 & 8 - <i>Case Analysis: How to Conduct a Case Analysis</i> - Table 1 / <i>When and How to Use Financial Measures to Assess Firm Performance</i> | - Chapters 3 and 4 online homework - Obtain agreement with me on the company for your Individual Research Paper | - Review chapter - Break out groups: mini cases 7 & 8 - Review <i>How To Prepare a Case</i> - Review <i>When and How to Use Financial Measures to Assess Firm Performance</i> |
| 4 | Apr 25 | - Chapter 5 - Case Study: Tesla Motors | - Chapter 5 online homework | - Review chapter 5 - Case study break out groups: Tesla Motors (in announced assigned Group Project teams) - Group Project overview - Team's announced for group project assignment |
| 5 | May 02 | - Exam 1 - Chapter 6 - Mini case 10 | - Chapter 6 online homework | - Exam 1 (Chapters 1-5) - Review chapter 6 - Break out groups: mini case10 |
| 6 | May 09 | - Ethics Week - Chapters 11 & 12 - Mini cases 19 & 28 | - Chapters 11 and 12 online homework - Submit name of company for group project | - Guest Speaker - Review chapters 11 & 12 - Breakout groups: mini cases 19 & 28 - Group project working time |
| 7 | May 16 | - Chapter 7 - Mini case 17 - Case Study: Grok: Action Intelligence for Fast Data | - Chapter 7 online homework - Individual Research Paper due | - Review chapter 7 - Group discussion: mini case 17 - Case study break out groups: Grok |
| 8 | May 23 | - Chapters 8 & 9 - Mini cases 11 & 26 | - Chapters 8 and 9 online homework | - Review chapters 8 & 9 - Breakout groups: mini cases 11 & 26 - Group project working time |
| 10 | May 30 | - Memorial Day-No Class | - No Assignments due | - While we will not meet, I will assign an <i>optional</i> short video that you briefly analyze (short email submission) to earn participation points. |

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|----|--------|---|--|---|
| 10 | Jun 06 | - Chapter 10 - Mini case 27 - Case study Amazon.com | - Chapter 10 online homework - Peer Evaluations - Group projects due | - Review chapter 10 - Group discussion: mini case 27 - Case study break out groups: AMZN - Group project working time (less time than the other weeks) |
| 11 | Jun 10 | - Exam 2 | | - 6:00-6:20 Optional Class 11 (Current events and course feedback as an opportunity to earn participation points) - 6:20pm Exam 2 |

Exams -- There will be two exams during the quarter, one in week 5 and one during finals. The exams will be closed book and consist of multiple choice and short answer essay questions. The exams will be based on the class discussions including the textbooks and case discussion. You may bring in a one page (two-sided) note sheet to each exam. The exams will focus on your understanding of the principles of Strategic Management.

Homework -- For every chapter, I have created a homework assignment using the online Connect system that you have access to via the same portal as our e-textbook. Each assignment is due 5 minutes **before** the relevant class session. To give you a chance to better learn the material and improve your score, there are no time limits to complete the questions. After you submit an assignment you will receive an automatically generated email with your score and detailed feedback on the answer. I will use the best 10 grades on the 12 homework assignments. Additionally, I have set up the Chapter 1's homework assignment to allow you to take it a second time (if you choose) in case there are any start up user issues getting used to the system. Each of your top ten homework scores will count as 2 percent of your course grade. In total 20% of your class grade is based on homework assignments.

Individual Strategy Paper -- The goal of the Individual Strategy paper is to allow you to apply the concepts that are discussed in class. You will choose a company to focus on for your individual research paper. Please obtain my agreement with your selection of a firm no later than class #3, Apr 18th.

Your paper should be approximately 10 to 15 pages (following APA reference guidelines) – appendices permitted. This assignment is due at the **start** of class #7, on May 12th. The paper should be submitted via Canvas. I will distribute a rubric ahead of time but you can anticipate the assignment to focus on:

1. Background
 - 1.1. The company
 - 1.2. Brief history
 - 1.3. Business overview
2. Mission, Vision, Values
 - 2.1. Identify the goals of the company (including mission, vision, values, financial, etc)

3. External Analysis
 - 3.1. Apply the PESTEL framework
 - 3.2. Apply the Porter Five Forces model
 - 3.3. Implications - Are there external industry trends that the company needs to address, monitor, or manage?
4. Internal Analysis
 - 4.1. Identify the firm's core assets and capabilities
 - 4.2. Perform a SWOT analysis (including discussion of strategic alternatives)
5. Competitive Advantages
 - 5.1. Based on your analysis and on information from the firm's website, why has this company been successful? What is the focus of the firm's competitive advantage (cheaper, faster, healthier, etc)?
 - 5.2. Does the firm have a stated corporate responsibility statement (CSR)? If so how do they "live" this in their operations? What advice do you have to either help them start, or to improve their current efforts?

Group Strategy Project -- Working in groups and teams is an essential part of many (most) business roles. In fact strong collaboration skills that achieve results are one of the bigger differentiators of high potentials in many companies. It is essential to be able to function in a group setting of peers, be able to assign work within a group, and hold each other accountable for the individual work.

The class will be divided into Group Project Teams of about 5-6 students per group. The goal of the strategy term project is to give you practical experience with the elements of strategic management. The experience will provide you with hands on application of the most critical concepts you will leverage during your careers.

The company must be a different firm/industry than used in the individual research paper assignment (getting a jump start from other people/prior student's work will be considered plagiarism). Please obtain my agreement for the company that your group selects by class #6, May 9th. We'll overview the rubric early in the quarter to aid in your selection.

Peer Evaluations -- Your class grade includes a score from your Group Project peers based on their assessment of your contribution to the group project. Each student will evaluate the other members of his or her group. You will be using a forced ranking and scoring system that I will distribute later in the quarter. The Peer evaluation will count for 50 points/5% of your overall class grade.

Governance and Policy Related Matters

If you are having difficulty in understanding any of the course material, please talk to me, I want to help you maximize the value of this class, and I am happy to work with you.

1. Ethics, Professional Conduct, and Academic Integrity - Ethics and ethical reasoning are integrated throughout the course. Seattle University is committed to the principle that

academic honesty and integrity are important values in the educational process. Academic dishonesty in any form will be addressed according to the Seattle University Academic Honesty Policy. This policy can be found at the address below:

http://www.seattleu.edu/regis/Policies/Policy_2004-01.htm

If you are not sure whether a particular action is acceptable according to the Academic Honesty Policy, you should check with your instructor before engaging in it.

2. Attendance and Class Participation -- Punctual arrival, full preparation, regular attendance, and active class engagement is *de rigueur*.

100% class attendance is expected. Class participation represents 15% of your grade for the quarter and will be evaluated each day. If you are not in class to participate you will not be successful in maximizing your grade in this class. Class participation is important; as a business executive/contributor it is important that you are able to integrate disparate concepts into meaningful thought and insight. We will have a classroom environment that encourages visionary thinking, creative problem solving and adeptly listening to the ideas of others. Given the critical nature of the classroom experience to enhance your learning, one cannot miss more than three classes and receive a passing grade. If you know you will miss four or more classes, you should not take the class this quarter.

Please avoid disrupting other students, and conduct yourself as a professional. Learn to appreciate diverse thoughts and ideas and treat others in the classroom with respect. Criticism, if necessary, should be constructive, balanced, and concise.

3. Electronic Devices -- As long as you are not disturbing the other students, you are free to use a laptop or other PDA devices for class use. Out of respect for others in the classroom, please do not use any device for non-class related activities. Please refrain from phone use or texting, as this will disturb the class. Note: No electronic devices of any kind are allowed during exams. Neither videotaping nor audio recording is allowed. Under extreme circumstances, audiotaping may be allowed but only with the expressed prior written permission of the instructor.

4. Writing Guidelines -- As a business executive, being able to communicate in an effective and consistent manner is vital to your role as a contributor - or leader - in an organization. Your ability to communicate your opinions through written and oral presentations and discussions is important in this class. For written documents, you should utilize the APA Reference Guide to editing and formatting. This can be found at <http://www.seattleu.edu/writingcenter/resources/>

5. Due dates -- Your Individual paper and your group project are “due” at the start of class on the designated day. You may email me your assignment in advance of the start of class. If you miss a class for any reason, the homework is due prior to the start of the class, so please ensure that you submit the homework – via Canvas- in advance of the scheduled class time.

6. **Late Assignments** -- Late papers, and Group Assignments will be penalized 5% per day that it is late (with the first day “late” beginning after the start of the class in which the homework is due).
7. **Class Participation** – Learning is enhanced by participation. Participation will be evaluated each class. Please see me if you are trying to contribute to the class but feel that you are not able to do so. I will work with you to ensure that you are given the opportunity to do so. Class participation includes both listening to others and contributing to the discussion.
8. **Grade Appeals** -- If you have a concern about a grade that you receive on any assignment in this class you are invited to submit a written appeal to me within one week of receiving the grade in question. The appeal should outline your specific concerns with the grade and evidence supporting why it should be changed. I will then review your appeal and respond as quickly as possible. Please do not appeal a grade during class. I am not able to properly assess grade appeals during class time.
9. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** -- If you have, or think you may have, a disability that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disability Services. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process. Additional information may be obtained from the Learning Center, Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process. I am happy to work with you to ensure your needs are met. In order to ascertain what accommodations may be needed, any student with special needs should bring this to my attention as soon as possible (and not later than the second week of class).
10. **Syllabus Changes** - On occasion, it may be necessary to make changes to the syllabus throughout the quarter. If deemed necessary, any major changes made will be posted to the class website via Canvas and communicated to the class in advance.
11. **Canvas** - We will utilize Canvas – the Seattle University Learning Management System - for class communications, submissions of assignments, grades etc. If you have questions or need assistance on how to use Canvas, please refer to the Canvas Student Guides prepared by The SU Office of Information Technology. I think that you may find the SU developed Student guides to be a better reference than the generic Canvas user guides. The Seattle U guides can be found at <http://www.seattleu.edu/canvas/students/> .
12. **CONNECT by McGraw Hill** - This is a digital teaching and learning environment that you will need to use/access for MGMT 5500. As part of the course material when you purchased your textbook you should have also received an access code for the McGraw Hill website, this is required for the homework assignments.
13. **Slideware** - Many of the slides used in class are derived in part or in whole from Frank T. Rothaermel and McGraw Hill, and they used with permission.