



2018 Summer Syllabus

BRMB 5270-01: Business Strategy

Instructor:	Robert Spencer, MUS
Class:	Pigott 200, Thursdays, 9 am to 12:30 pm
Office:	Pigott 5 th Floor Adjunct Lounge, Thursdays, 12:30 to 1 pm, or by appointment
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I. Purpose and Objectives

As the Capstone for the Bridge MBA program, the goal of this course is to help you achieve an understanding of how to apply the business skills you have acquired to address strategic organizational challenges. To do this you will need to analyze the economic, market and competitive forces that shape business strategy and performance for a client. You will also be required to assess the change readiness for implementing whatever strategic recommendations follow from your analyses.

The context for your strategy and change work will be a real organization with an important strategic challenge or opportunity. Student teams will be formed to meet with and advise clients who will be interested in your insights. Students will be expected to use their knowledge and judgment in the spirit of stewardship in making suggestions that will help their clients address real operational problems and concerns. The clients of successful teams will value in their interactions and the project work products.

During the quarter students will need to draw upon a variety of skills to accomplish their work, including: negotiations, communications, problem analysis, financial analysis, brainstorming, decision making, library research, meeting management, report writing, executive briefings and presentations, and more. The objectives of the course are to:

- Learn how to assess the competitive environment of an organization and evaluate its current strategy in terms of potential opportunities
- Gain experience developing a strategy for an organization given new interests
- Work with a client to understand and help shape an organizational strategy
- Obtain practical experience in managing changes required to implement of elements of a strategy

II. Class Organization and Activities

This course involves both academic and practical work. Teams will be formed to work on a consulting project with an organization on strategic and implementation readiness assessments. Students will be divided into small groups for the consulting project.

This class contains three components. In one part of the course we will use Michael Porter's classic strategy work and augment it with discussions of a number of contemporaneous cases. Emphasis is placed on providing students with an understanding of principles of strategy development that are applicable to many organizational situations. Students will have the opportunity to interact with experienced business executives and get their assistance in team strategy formation work.

Most organizations have had disappointing change experiences and so we will use William Bridges classic change management work to assess change readiness. As it turns out, one of the most challenging things about managing change is not figuring out what to start but instead what to end. This will be a central focus for assessing the readiness of your organization for implementing the strategic change you help design.

The third component is a professional presentation to clients of the work performed. Successful teams will produce results they can reference in subsequent job searches.

Material covered in class during the quarter will be directly and systematically linked to the projects that are being executed. The explanation and rationale for the techniques and skills required to successfully develop strategies and strategic change projects will be developed sequentially. The few lectures in the course focus on topics relevant to the life cycle stage of any strategic consulting engagement.

Teams will be given a significant portion of each week to work on their projects and leverage university resources with the objective of producing high quality work products.

Client executives will be invited to class, their schedules permitting, to describe their products/services and industry, and to share informally their plans, objectives, activities and experiences, as well as the issues which affect the choices and decisions that have inspired their projects. The course is intended to be a great opportunity to interact with senior executives from a variety of local organizations and ideal for those near graduation!

III. Required Texts

- *Understanding Michael Porter: The Essential Guide to Competition and Strategy*, Joan Magretta, Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.
- *Managing Transitions*, William Bridges, Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1991.

IV. Grading

Student performance will be evaluated in six ways. First will be the contributions students make based on reading assignments and how the material is, or is not, germane to the team project work.

Second will be the preparation for class. There will be pop quizzes at the start of some classes to test reading comprehension, and as an inducement to arrive to class on time.

Third will be a case study discussion each client team will have to prepare. The purpose is to highlight how strategy and change concepts apply to the cases assigned.

Fourth will be a mid-term exam. This is a closed book exam with a mix of multiple choice and listing questions. The purpose of the mid-term is to assess your readiness to remember and apply key concepts to your team capstone projects.

Fifth will be your consulting report and presentation. These are expected to be of professional grade and reflective of your understanding of the strategy and change content of the course. Teams should view this as integrative across all the courses in the Bridge program and it should reflect your understanding of key organizational and financial indicators – e.g., your recommendations should have an estimated ROI. Since you may desire a recommendation yourself from your client, it is suggested teams use the SU Writing Center if they need to achieve a high quality work product.

Finally, students will get (and give) a peer assessment from their project teams. The purpose of this is to discourage “free rider” behavior and incent each team member to make the most of her/his capabilities and talents to the benefit of your client.

Grades will be based on the following sources of points:

Component	Points
Class Participation	8
Pop Quizzes	12
Case Discussion	5
Midterm	25
Client Report	50
Client Presentation	
Reflections & Peer Evaluation	+/-

An “A” will require 94 points, a “B” at least 82 points.

VI. Class Schedule

Date	Topics & Activities	Magretta Chapters	Bridges Chapters	Case/ Discussion
6/28	1. Course Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select Group Projects Consulting Best Practices 2. Project Kick-Off Meetings (with Clients?)	None	None	None
7/5	1. Project Status Reports 2. Writing Center Briefing 3. Strategy & Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Competition? 4. Strategy & Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Assessments 	1	1 & 2	Boeing & Fair Trade (How Do Tariffs Distort Competition?)
7/12	1. Project Status Reports 2. Strategy & Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Five Forces 3. Strategy & Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endings Checklist 4. Guest: Eric Moen, former CEO, Pacific Coast Feather on Business Models	2	3	Bridgewater & Culture (Role of Binding Principles)
7/19	1. Project Status Reports 2. Strategy & Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Advantage 3. Strategy & Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Transitions Neutral Zone Checklist 	3	4	Microsoft & LinkedIn (How to Manage Acquisitions)
7/26	Midterm 1. Project Status Reports 2. Strategy & Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating Value & Trade-offs 3. Strategy & Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Beginnings Checklist 	Exam: 1 to 3	Exam: 1 to 4	New Seasons & Gentrification (What is Value and to Whom?)
		4, 5	5	
8/2	1. Project Status Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Report Outline 2. Strategy & Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fit and Continuity 3. Team Rehearsals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem, approach and strategic findings 	6, 7	None	Ford Turnaround (The Importance of Focus)
8/9	1. Strategy & Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intrapreneurial Change 2. Team Rehearsals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings & ROI of recommendations 3. Course Reflections	None	None	What I Learned about Strategy and Change
8/15 or 16	1. Project Presentations 2. Reports Due 3. Peer Evaluations Due	None	None	None

VII. Course Policies:

- **No late submissions, no make-ups, and no late work will be accepted.**
- The ability function as a strategy adviser requires an ability to control expectations and respond to emergent situations. The instructor is available during or after class, or by phone to discuss questions or issues emerging for students in the class. Please call at least 24 hours prior to any requested discussion to reserve time.
- Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions much like they would on a consulting team. Your insights and interpretations are a critical part of your work as a consultant. As for class attendance, you are expected to attend all the sessions and come to class before it starts. Most classes will start with a discussion of emergent issues or concerns.
- There is no reason students should need to use computers during the class. Its is important for consultants to be “in the moment” with their clients and colleagues! Likewise, Cell Phones and PDAs must be turned off before entering the classroom.
- Academic Honesty Policy: This course includes a team project and encourages cooperative learning. Still, students using work authored or created by others anywhere (including the Web), are expected to provide appropriate reference and credit. Failure to do so will be treated as academic dishonesty resulting in dismissal from the course.
- If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an ‘invisible disability’ such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. This prohibition includes sexual misconduct, which encompasses sexual harassment and sexual violence. Seattle U remains committed to providing a safe and equitable learning, living, and working environment. Seattle U offers emergency, medical, and other support resources, as well as assistance with safety and support measures, to community members who have experienced or been impacted by sexual misconduct. Seattle U requires all faculty and staff to notify the University’s Title IX Coordinator if they become aware of any incident of sexual misconduct experienced by a student. For more information, please visit <https://www.seattleu.edu/equity/>. If you have any questions or concerns, you may also directly contact the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Equity (**email:** oi@seattleu.edu; **phone:** 206.296.2824