Business Policy and Strategy

SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE | Summer Quarter 2017

Course information

Course code: MGMT 4890-01
# credits: 5
Location: Pigott 202
Class times: TTH 5:30-8:10pm
First session: 6/20/2017
Last session: 8/10/2017

Instructor information

Instructor: Brian Vincent
Phone: (206) 510-8353
Email: brianvincent@comcast.net
Office: PIGT 532
Office Hours: TTH 4:00-5:00pm and by appointment

Course description

This course introduces the most important concepts and frameworks of strategic management and helps you develop critical thinking skills for formulating and implementing strategy. We will focus on the perspectives and skills required to identify and diagnose critical strategic issues affecting firm performance, examine how firms can gain and sustain competitive advantages in the face of uncertainty and competition, and build on our understanding of complex business environment to devise realistic solutions to address those issues.

To be successful, a firm’s strategy must permeate all departments and functional areas. As such, in this senior-level capstone business course, we integrate and apply knowledge and skills gained from your prior studies (e.g., accounting, economics, finance, management, and marketing) to teach you to be a better—meaning a more systematic, logical, complete, critical—thinker about strategy. In doing so, we explicitly apply a comprehensive and integrated management point of view, and will analyze strategies in light of the general manager of a corporation. The skills you learn in this class will help you in whatever job you take after graduation as well as in your personal investing and employment choices, and ultimately, help you to work more effectively in your professional careers.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this course (i.e., by passing the course), you will be able to synthesize the set of concepts and frameworks you have gained to address challenging strategic management problems. In particular, you will be able to:

1. Analyze industry structure and environmental trends to assess industry potential;
2. Evaluate firms’ competitive positioning and assess firm-level resources and capabilities;
3. Formulate business-unit and corporate strategies to achieve competitive advantage;
4. Evaluate and manage complex ethical and social issues facing firms in implementing strategy and organizing the firm for strategic success.

Required readings and materials

Evaluation: Overview of assignments

A. Attendance/Participation/ASK Questions/News-bites ........................................ 35%
C. Mid-term exam (in-class) ....................................................................................... 15%
D. Final exam (in-class) ........................................................................................... 15%
E. Group Project and Presentation ......................................................................... 35%

You will be evaluated based on both your individual and learning team participation. Please note that you must successfully pass both the individual and the group portions of the course.

Approximate Grade Ranges/Grading scale:

A = 94-100
A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B = 84 -86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76
C- = 70-73
D+ = 67-69
D = 64-66
F = below 64.

Attendance, Participation, ASK questions & News-bites: 35%

Participation in all course activities is an integral part of this course. It is critical to the success of this course that all students read the material for each class and that each individual participate in the in-class discussions, cases, and exercises. Students will be evaluated on both their active participation and on their contribution to the learning of others. The value you bring to the class is your real-world working experiences. By sharing with others, we can all better grasp the principles being presented in the book.

Participation includes submitting Access Student Knowledge (ASK) Questions for class discussion. You will be required to turn in one ASK question per week. Each question should be 1-3 intelligent sentences and can cover course material, career situations, business ethics matter, job search, work or life experience. We may not use your ASK question in class, but you will get credit for turning in the assignment. All ASK questions will be shared anonymously unless requested otherwise.
The purpose of the ASK Questions, is to stimulate conversation and brainstorm openly in class, show that you are doing the reading and learn from our fellow students. The goal is to create a forum for unbound critical thinking.

ASK’s questions are due every Monday by 10:00 pm. My expectation is that I receive 4 ASK’s questions from each student.

**News-bites** are news headlines about your assign company. Each student will be assigned one Dow Jones Industrial Average company to track for the quarter. For each class you should come prepared to share your News-bite. Use whatever media you choose to find a News-bite subject.

**Midterm examination: 15%**

Closed book in-class examination will consist of multiple choice questions. July 13, 2017

**Final examination: 15%**

Closed book in-class examination will consist of multiple choice questions covering the entire quarter of course material covered. August 10, 2017

**Team Project Papers and Presentation: 35%**

The class will be organized in to teams comprising of five (or four) members on each team. The teams will work together on a quarter-long project. Each team is to select an industry and a company within their chosen industry for analysis. Each team is to research their industry and selected company using the AFI Strategy Framework.

**Team project progression**

- **Project proposal (10 point)** Each team will identify an industry and a company within their chosen industry for analysis. The team is free to choose the industry and company it will analyze. However the issues facing the chosen industry must be current within the last six months. (Suggestion: Select a company where plenty of information is available.) The proposal should include an overview of the industry and company selected. Not to exceed 1 page 1” margins 12 pt. type, Times new Roman, single space. The project proposal will be due June 29 by 10:00pm.

- **External environment analysis (30 points)** Each learning team will analyze the chosen industry by applying PESTEL and Porter’s five forces analysis to describe industry attractiveness and identify additional factors that may influence the industry’s attractiveness in the future. You will also develop a strategic group map with at least three other competitors. Not to exceed 3 pages 1” margins 12 pt. type, Times new Roman, single space. Industry analysis paper will be due July 13 by 10:00pm.
• **Internal company analysis (30 points)** each team will analyze the chosen company by providing an overview of the company’s performance, a detailed examination of the strategic challenges, an assessment of its recent strategic actions, and a final recommendation you have for the company. Not to exceed 3 pages, 1’ margin 12 pt type, Times new Roman, single space. The company analysis will be due July 27 by 10:00pm.

• **Team project presentation (25 points)** Each team will present to the class for 10-15 minutes. The team presentation is to be done in Powerpoint (not to exceed 10 slides) with all members participating. All presentations should follow this outline; situation analysis, assumptions and missing information, problem definition, development of alternatives, evaluation of alternatives and recommendations to management. Class presentations will take place the last two weeks of the quarter.

• **Team performance evaluations (5 points)** Each of you will be asked to evaluate every other team member anonymously at the end of the quarter.

**Instructional methods**

In order to achieve the learning outcomes, this course emphasizes active learning through case discussions and interactive lectures. I will use lectures to elaborate on key theoretical models and frameworks or to reinforce crucial concepts.

Each business case is intended to teach us something specific, yet each can teach many things. We will not attempt to exhaust each case of all its learning experiences, but rather build up a “tool kit” of analytical tools, skills, and insights, progressively over all the selected cases. Case discussion techniques provide a chance to learn the meaning of analytical rigor in situations other than open-and-shut problems. As such, there will be many cases that do not end up neatly packaged with an “answer”. You may discover that your preparation “misses” key points of a case, especially at first. This is a normal part of the learning experience.

Success in this course comes from being well prepared, which includes doing all of the readings on time, including the required textbook chapters and assigned case study. You should plan to spend at least 8-10 hours per week, in addition to time in class, for readings, cases, and other coursework. Active participation is also required. I will direct class discussions, the quality of your learning experience will be directly determined by your degree of preparation, active listening, and participation. A much richer kind of learning takes place when one is challenged by other people who have different backgrounds and therefore do not necessarily share one’s own point of view. So, if you miss a class discussion or activity, or if you show up unprepared to participate fully, then you not only deprive yourself of learning, but you also deprive your classmates of a learning opportunity.

**General course policies**

**Classroom norms**

During our first class session, we will jointly create classroom norms (or “agreements”) to which we will all abide so that we have the most productive and positive learning environment. Ethics and ethical reasoning is integrated throughout the course. **Plagiarism and cheating will provide sufficient grounds for dismissal and failing the class.**
Cell phones, laptops and recording devices
To minimize distractions and disruptions, all electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, recording, etc.) must be turned off during class except by prior agreement. Please respect my time and I will respect yours.

Canvas
We will utilize Canvas as the primary tool for communications including submissions of assignments, grades, discussion questions and etc. If you have questions or need assistance on how to use Canvas, please refer to the Canvas Student Guides: [http://www.seattleu.edu/canvas/](http://www.seattleu.edu/canvas/)

Business periodicals
You should regularly read at least one business periodical (e.g., Wall Street Journal, Business Week, or Fortune) or follow on Twitter (e.g., @WSJbusiness, @WSJD, @BW, @Forbes, @nytimesbusiness, @Inc, @FastCompany, @businessinsider, or @HarvardBiz).

University resources and policies

Support for students with disabilities
If you have, or think you may have, a disability that interferes with your performance as a student, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.

Academic policies on the registrar website
Be sure that you understand the following university academic policies, posted on the Registrar’s website: [https://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/academics/performance/](https://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/academics/performance/)

Library and learning commons [http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/](http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/)

Academic integrity tutorial [https://www.seattleu.edu/academicintegrity/](https://www.seattleu.edu/academicintegrity/)

Provisional schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Individual deliverables</th>
<th>Team deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>What is Strategy? Strategic Leadership</td>
<td>Syllabus Chapter 1 &amp; 2 Chapter case: Twitter</td>
<td>ASK</td>
<td>Team Selections</td>
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<td>6/22</td>
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<td>6/27-6/29</td>
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<td>2 External Analysis Internal Analysis I</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>ASK Project Proposal</td>
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<td>7/11-7/13</td>
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<td>4 Business Strategy I Midterm Exam</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>ASK External Environment Analysis</td>
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<td>Chapter case: JetBlue</td>
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<td>7/18-7/20</td>
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<td>5 Business Strategy II Corporate Strategy I</td>
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<td>Chapter case: NetFlix</td>
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<td>7/25-7/27</td>
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<td>6 Corporate Strategy II</td>
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<td>ASK Internal Company Analysis</td>
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<td>8/1-8/3</td>
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<td>7 Global Strategy TEAM PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>Project presentation</td>
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<td>8/8-8/10</td>
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<td>8 TEAM PRESENTATIONS FINAL EXAM</td>
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<td>Project presentation</td>
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I reserve the right to modify this schedule within reason, meaning sometimes we will spend more time on a certain topic and less on another. This allows me to ensure you are learning the subject matter, (and as this is my first time teaching this class, I need some leeway). Thank you for your patience.