Business Policy and Strategy

SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE | Spring Quarter 2018

Course information

Course code: MBA 5500
# credits: 3
Location: Law Annex 143
Class times: M 6-8:40pm
First session: 4/9/2018
Last session: 6/11/2018

Instructor information

Instructor: Joe Schlegel
Phone: (909) 518-9850
Email: schlegej@seattleu.edu
Alt Email: joe@thecmsolution.com

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:

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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

TEXTBOOK: Robert M Grant, Contemporary Strategy Analysis (Text Only), John Wiley & Sons Ltd. 2016. Available at SU bookstore. It is also available on Amazon.com.

***I will definitely be using the book as all our lectures and your discussion questions will be driven from the chapters and cases within the book. Please have the book in class day one. I don’t care which version, but I will be using the 9th edition. FYI – I understand your desire to stick it to the textbook publishing companies, but be aware that the pirates leave content out of their International versions.

Bloomberg news, Wall Street Journal, Economist, Fortune, Forbes, and other business news that is exciting to you and relevant to the topic covered during each session are highly recommended to share. Additional assigned readings/handouts from the instructor may be used as well.

Evaluation: Overview of assignments

A. Attendance/Participation/Discussion Questions…………………………… 33%
B. Individual Research Paper…………………………………………………. 33%
C. Group Project and Presentation…………………………………………… 34%

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 team 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: 30%

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 and swearing with others, we can all better grasp the principles being presented in the book.

Participation includes submitting Discussion Questions for class use. You will be required to turn in discussion questions every week that will cover the reading assignment OR past covered subjects OR current events. We may not use your discussion question/current event in class, but you will get credit for turning in the assignment.

The purpose of the Discussion Questions, (DQ’s), is to stimulate conversation in class and to show that you are doing the reading. The goal is to drive creative thinking. Please make them relevant to your work or life experience so we can brainstorm in class. Class discussion is more preferred than me performing Death by Power Point.

DQ’s are due by Friday at midnight via Canvas. No credit for any DQ’s turned in after the deadline, during class time or subjects covered during past chapters. YOU CAN ALWAYS TURN IN THE ASSIGNMENT AHEAD OF THE DUE DATE. Inevitably students forget about their DQ’s until late into the evening on Friday and one of three things happens;
1. Forget to submit and get zero points.
2. Turn in a weak effort at 11:58 p.m. and get zero points, (see examples below)
3. Turn in an entertaining alcohol induced DQ and maybe get some or all points.
This is the area that negatively impacts student’s grades more than others and it is self-inflicted. Please get it done.

We have 11 weeks of class and my expectation is that I receive 8 DQ’s from each student.

These DQ’s will be published for all to see so please don’t include any information that you do not feel comfortable sharing.

DQ1 is due day one of class and is a giveaway. It is a question from me to you…”Why did you choose to attend Seattle University?” Submit your answers via Canvas DQ1 assignment and prepare to share your answer during class one. All other DQ’s will be questions you are asking the class, examples below.
Example of a good DQ’s:

Joan Smith/Location strategy

“Amazon is looking for another headquarters location. They also just announced they are laying off employees at the Seattle corporate office. Why would Amazon abandon the Seattle community after investing so much in the past years? What are the positives for Amazon to relocate? What are the positives for Washingtonians? What are the positives for the new HQ residents?”

Joe Jones/Motivation

“All people need to be managed differently. Some workers respond best to positive reinforcement. However I feel like there is a gray area between positive reinforcement and special treatment. How do managers know when they’ve gone too far? And how do they deal with other workers who might be upset with this management?”

Sample of unacceptable DQ’s:

“On pg. 405 the text states that the most fundamental ingredient of effective teams is trust. What other traits are as important as trust within the team?”

“Do you think Starbucks is using a strong strategic plan?”

Group Project and Presentation: 34%

The class will be organized in groups. Each group is to select a business organization. (Suggestion: Select an organization where plenty of information is available, and/or where you have access to the management personnel). Each group is to research their selected organization on the following matters. The paper must include:

1. Organization’s Mission/Vision and Goals/Corporate Social Responsibility
2. Industry Analysis:
   a. External Analysis - PESTEL
   b. Industry analysis of Attractiveness/Profitability - Porter’s Five Forces Model
3. Identify and analyze the organizations competitiveness using either the Strategic Importance or VRIO framework
4. Perform a SWOT Analysis on the firm
5. Define the Organization’s Business Strategy, (Differentiation, Cost Leadership or Integration).
6. Define the Organization’s Design
   a. Structure
   b. Culture
   c. Control
7. If applicable, identify their product sets using the Boston Consulting Group’s Growth Share Matrix. Expound on areas of concerns or areas of innovation or growth.
8. Recommendations/Executive Summary. Using the information you have gathered, please identify Strategic Alternatives for your firm to implement for growth. Identify areas of concern and/or issues and possible solutions.

The Group Presentation is to be done in PowerPoint with all members participating. Members in each team will devise a strategy of analyze their selected industry for its attractiveness in terms of growth, profitability, social and cultural angles, global or local demand, and sustained competitive advantage using general environmental factors and industry specific framework, (PESTEL, Porter’s Five Forces Model). At the end, each team will present its findings as industry experts to inform investors whether to invest in this particular industry. Each one of the team member will present for 5 minutes.

**Individual Research Paper: 33%**

You will need to write a research paper on your selected company from the industry you choose. Throughout in your paper you will compare your selected firm (focal) to its nearest competitor (benchmark) from the same industry. At times, you may also need to use industry average performance standards. Selecting focal and benchmark firms from the same industry will help you collect background information on the industry value chain and its history. This information will feed in to your individual research paper investigating the determinants of your focal firm performance.

While comparing your focal firm with its benchmark, match the two on size determined either by net sales, total assets, or number of employees. You will analyze your focal firm performance using quantitative and qualitative data gathered from scholarly articles, databases, trade and business publications. Starting with financial ratios such as profitability, liquidity, leverage, and activity ratios you will draw excel graphs showing comparison in terms of financial performance to its benchmark and industry averages.
After identifying the differential quantitative performance between focal and benchmark, look for reasons as to: *Why do some firms perform better than competition given similar opportunities and constraints in the environment?* Explore firm’s internal resources and capabilities comparing it with the benchmark. Substantiate your opinion with data and facts to reach to conclusions and recommendations.

While analyzing your firm against its benchmark, you can take a position as a manager of the firm given the charge of analysis, a management consultant, or a critical business analyst. Resources and capabilities analysis include leadership, quality of human resource management, organizational structure, alignment of structure with strategy, marketing/advertising, organizational culture, issues related to organizational behavior i.e. motivation, conflict resolution, change management etc.

This exercise helps diagnose issues at the firm/organizational level, devise alternative strategies, and reach to formidable conclusions and recommendations. Your research paper should be between 10-12 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman font type, 12 font size, with one inch margins. These 10-12 pages exclude large graphs, appendices, large tables, pictures, and citations. Please use APA style for references and citations. Additional clarification if needed will be provided during the seminar.

**Instructional methods**

The learning methodology used in this course consists of reading the textbooks, lectures, and other assigned readings, class participation/case analysis, and group project and presentation.

My goal is to educate you on the coursework without boring you, so I will use a variety of exercises, videos, movies, guest speakers, and/or sock puppets.

**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/

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/

LIBRARY AND LEARNING COMMONS http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY TUTORIAL 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course Introduction, What is Strategy?</td>
<td>Syllabus, Chapter 1, Case 1, (Tough Mudder)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership, External Analysis Intro</td>
<td>T: Chapter 2, 3 Airlines industry case – Boeing Bloomberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>External Analysis Pt II, Internal Analysis</td>
<td>T: Chapter 3, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Internal Analysis, Competitive Advantage</td>
<td>T: Chapter 5,</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Formulation, Business Strategy, (business models), Ethics speaker</td>
<td>T. Chapter 6, Starbucks case</td>
<td>DQ5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Formulation, Business Strategy, (Innovation),</td>
<td>T. Chapter 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Formulation, Corporate Strategy, (Vert integration/Divers)</td>
<td>T. Chapter 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No Class/Memorial Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Strat Implementation, Org Design</td>
<td>T: Chapter 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Strategy Formulation, Global Strategy</td>
<td>T: Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/12-15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
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<td>Group Preso</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. Thank you for your understanding.