



## 2021 Summer Syllabus

### **BRMB 5270-01: Business Strategy**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Robert Spencer, MUS
<b>Class Sessions:</b>	Via Zoom, Wednesdays, 5:30 pm to 8:40 pm
<b>Office:</b>	Anytime by appointment
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### **I. Purpose and Objectives**

The Capstone for the Bridge MBA program provides students the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of self-awareness and effective interpersonal skills, as well as reflect upon their vocational purpose. The course also provides students an opportunity to apply the management skills they now have to a broad range of strategic organizational challenges.

### **II. Class Organization and Activities**

This course involves both academic and practical work. There will be weekly lectures and discussions on strategy formation and change management. Strategy project teams will be formed to provide an opportunity to apply this and other knowledge from the Bridge MBA program in addressing the commercial interests of a real organization.

The course, however, begins in June weeks before the first class session. In the months prior the professor has been meeting with a variety of for profit and nonprofit organizations to develop projects. This culminates in a survey of students to get their preferences so they can be mapped to a project team. All of the projects have some strategic dimension and students will get a preliminary scoping document prior to the first class at which time they will meet their clients.

This course has three dimensions. In one part of the course we will study Michael Porter's classic strategy work and seek to apply it through discussions of a number of contemporaneous cases. The emphasis here will be placed on providing students with an understanding of the principles of strategy development that are applicable to most organizational situations.

The biggest challenge managers face in implementing strategy is the management of the organization changes involved. Most organizations have had disappointing change experiences and so we will use William Bridges classic work to consider how to overcome change issues typically associated with new strategies. 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. Students will be expected to apply such insights to the organizations in which they are doing their projects.

The third dimension involves self-reflection so students can monitor how they are evolving as a manager and influencer of others. This will start with a self-assessment and then projects will provide students an opportunity to exercise their business acumen in a relatively safe and supportive space. Student self-reflections at the end of each class session will help them get the most out of their experiences, a key for ongoing leadership development after graduation.

Material covered in class during the quarter will be directly and systematically linked to the readings and client work. The explanation and rationale for the techniques and skills required to successfully develop strategies and strategic change projects will be discussed concurrently. The lectures in the course focus on topics relevant to the life cycle stage of any strategic work.

There will be no class sessions on Thursdays. Instead, this time will be reserved for teams to work on their assigned projects. That work will require extensive research, relying on a variety of library and other resources, and client interactions to develop relevant useful work products.

### 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, 2017.

### IV. Grading

Student performance will be evaluated in four ways. First will be the contributions students make to weekly class discussions based on reading assignments and how it may apply to the organization where students have interned and/or are doing their team project. This will include discussions with the class as a whole and in team breakouts. This will require the student to come to class prepared and actively participate in discussions.

Second will be through tests and papers students will have as individuals. These will take three forms:

1. Each student will write a midterm 500+ word memo for their interned or team project organization on why the Porter and Bridges material is relevant.
2. A midterm exam to test student ability to recall and correctly apply strategy and change terms/concepts used by Porter and Bridges.
3. A Personal Reflections memo due at the end of the course describing how personal development goals were, or were not, met.

The third way student performance will be evaluated is in team project work. This includes two components. First, each team will lead a class discussion of a case study of an organization that has undergone (or is undergoing) a strategic change. Second, each team will have a project report and presentation based on the client work they have done. These provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their command of Porter's and Bridges' material.

Finally, students will get (and give) a peer assessment from their teammates. 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 for the benefit of their advisory client and team.

Grades will be based on the following sources of points:

Component	Points
Class Participation	5
Change Case Study Presentation (Team)	10
Midterm - Strategy/Change Memo (Individual)	15
Midterm – Quiz (Individual)	15
Project Presentation (Team)	15
Project Report (Team)	30
Self-Assessment Memo	10
Peer Evaluation	+/-

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

## V. Class Schedule

Date	Topics & Activities	Magretta Chapters	Bridges Chapters	Case Study	Assignments Due
Pre-work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students Assigned Projects</li> <li>2. Confidentiality Agreements Signed</li> <li>3. Read SU Student Guidelines for Projects</li> </ol>	N/A	N/A	N/A	My Capstone Project Interests (by 18 June)
6/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Client Introductions/Meeting</li> <li>2. Course Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus Review</li> <li>• Intro to Strategy &amp; Change</li> <li>• Project Planning &amp; Status Reporting Best Practices</li> <li>• Manager Self-Assessment</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	None	None	None	Signed Confidentiality Agreement
6/30	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Librarian Consultation</li> <li>2. Project Status Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present Scope &amp; Status Reporting Template</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Strategy &amp; Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is Competition?</li> <li>• Circular Economy</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Change Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change Process</li> <li>• Communicating Change</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	1	1 & 2	None	Self-Assessment Action Plan (Friday) & Project Work Plan (Monday)

Date	Topics & Activities	Magretta Chapters	Bridges Chapters	Case Study	Assignments Due
7/7	1. Project Status Reports 2. Strategy & Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Five Forces</li> <li>• Automation &amp; AI</li> </ul> 3. Managing Losses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endings Checklist</li> </ul> 4. Triple Bottomline	2	3	Amazon & Its Climate Change Initiative	
7/14	1. Guest: Eric Moen, former CEO, Pacific Coast Feather on Business Models 2. Project Status Reports 3. Strategy & Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive Advantage</li> </ul> 4. Change & Creativity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing Transitions</li> <li>• Neutral Zone Checklist</li> </ul>	3	4	Ford Turnaround	
7/21	1. Project Status Reports 2. Strategy & Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating Value &amp; Trade-offs</li> </ul> 3. Strategy & Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Beginnings Checklist</li> </ul> 4. Rehearsal: Problem, Approach & Findings	Exam: 1 to 3, 4, 5	Exam: 1 to 4, 5	Boeing & Financial Management	Midterm - Client Memo & Exam
7/28	1. Project Status Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Report Outline</li> </ul> 2. Strategy & Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fit and Continuity</li> </ul> 3. Rehearsal: Recommendations	6, 7	None	New Seasons: Gentrification & Social Justice	
8/4	1. Managing Resistance/ Emerging Thoughts 2. Rehearsal: Strategy & Change Implications 3. Course Reflections	None	None	Accenture as a Publicly Traded Entity	Self-Assessment Memo
8/11 or 12	TBD: Scheduled at client's convenience	None	None	N/A	Team Project Report & Presentation; Peer Evaluation

## VI. Course Policies

- **No late submissions, no make-ups, and no late work will be accepted.**
- The ability function as a consultant requires an ability to control client expectations and respond to emergent situations. The professor is available before 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. It 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.

## VII. University Resources

### Academic Resources:

- Library and Learning Commons (<http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/>)  
(This includes: Learning Assistance Programs, Research [Library] Services, Writing Center, Math Lab)
- Academic Integrity Tutorial (found on Canvas and SU Online)

### Academic Policies on Registrar website

(<https://www.seattleu.edu/redhawk-axis/academic-policies/>)

- Academic Integrity Policy <https://www.seattleu.edu/academic-integrity/resources-for-students/>
- Academic Grading Grievance Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy (only for those professional programs to which it applies)

### Notice for Students Concerning Disabilities

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 located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.

### Notice Regarding Religious Accommodations

It is the policy of Seattle University to reasonably accommodate students who, due to the observance of religious holidays, expect to be absent or endure a significant hardship during certain days of their academic course or program. Please see, Policy on Religious Accommodations for Students (<https://www.seattleu.edu/media/policies/Policy-onReligious-Accommodations-for-Students---FINAL.PDF>).

### Office of Institutional Equity

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](mailto:oi@seattleu.edu); **phone:** 206.296.2824) University Resources and Policies.