

**Western Kentucky University**  
**Gordon Ford College of Business**  
**BA590: Strategic Business Concepts and Applications**  
**Spring 2021**

**Instructor:** Dr. Feng Helen LIANG

**Class:** Section 450, Monday, 5:30 – 8pm, Grise Hall 437

**General Contact:** by email and phone

**Office Hours:** by appointment

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**Required Text:**

*Strategy: Core Concepts and Analytical Approaches.* Please look to the last page of this syllabus for information about the book and Simulation required for the class.

**Course Description**

Concepts and business strategies focusing on viewing the organization as an integrated whole. Use of Business Strategy Game (BSG) involving student teams working on a business simulation and cases aimed at challenges and opportunities facing a business.

**Course Objectives**

The objectives of this course are as follows:

1. To develop thought processes and analytical skills critical to strategic thinking.
2. To build your skills in conducting strategic analysis in a variety of industries and competitive situations and, especially, to provide you with a stronger understanding of the competitive challenges in a global market environment.
3. To integrate concepts and models learned in previous coursework with real world situations, assessing business risk, competitive advantage and strategic options.
4. To help you become much more proficient in using personal computers and online tools for business analyses.
5. To gain experience in working effectively in groups by harnessing the diverse skills, abilities, and perspectives of individual group members.
6. To raise your consciousness about the importance of ethical principles, personal and company values, and socially responsible management practices.

**Grading Policies**      Point equivalent (1000 points)

Grading is complicated by the BSG website, which will co-mingle some grades in its reports. I will sort it all out for class grades purposes.

**1. Team components (70%)**

- 1.1. Game performance (50%). Including: end of chapter exercises 2.5%, 3 year plan 5%, simulation performance 30%, quizzes on the game (2 done individually) 10%, and team company presentation 2.5%.
- 1.2. Team cases (2 cases, 20%). Each team will choose two cases to write a case report paper and present the case to class. Only the paper is required. No presentation slide is required. You can choose any case

from the four team cases: Tesla, Netflix, Pepsi, and Disney. Cases will be assigned in class.

## **2. Individual components (30%)**

2.1. Chapter quizzes (12 quizzes, 20%).

2.2. Participation (10%)

### **Point-based letter grade:**

A - 90% and above

B - 80%-89%

C - 70%-79%

D - 60%-69%

F - Below 60%

*Students are expected to be familiar with the Western Kentucky policy on Academic Honesty. In this class academic dishonesty on an exam or a paper will result in an “F” for the course, and will be reported to the proper officials.*

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. Team Activities**

A significant portion of this class will require teamwork. Your team will have to work together, utilizing the skills you have developed over the course of your MBA program.

**1.1. The Business Strategy Game:** is an online exercise where class members are divided into teams and assigned the task of running an athletic footwear company in head-to-head competition against companies managed by other class members. Company operations parallel those of actual athletic footwear companies. Just as in the real-world, companies compete in a global market arena, selling branded and private-label athletic footwear in four geographic regions — Europe-Africa, North America, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.

Company co-managers must make decisions relating to plant operations, distribution and warehouse operations, work force compensation, online sales at the company’s web site, sales and marketing, and finance. The challenge is to craft and execute a competitive strategy that results in a respected brand image, keeps your company in contention for global market leadership, and produces good financial performance as measured by earnings per share, return on investment, stock price appreciation, company image, and credit rating. This is a competitive simulation. Your team will be graded against other teams in the class. With the simulation are two quizzes, a three-year strategic plan and a presentation on your company.

All aspects of The Business Strategy Game parallel the functioning of the real-world athletic footwear market, thus allowing you and your co-managers to (1) think rationally and logically in deciding what to do and (2) get valuable practice in making a variety of different business decisions under circumstances that mirror real-world competitive conditions.

It’s imperative to use **Player’s guide, video tutorial, and help sections** from the BSG website to find answers to any questions you may have and perform well in the simulation game.

**1.2. End of chapter exercises:** Your team will need to complete End of Chapter (EOC) exercises for chapters 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9 on the BSG website.

**1.3. Three year strategic plan:** Your team will be asked to submit a three year plan using the BSG game system for your BSG shoe company. Your team score is tied to whether your company meets or beats its stated performance targets for EPS, ROE, credit rating, image rating, and stock price for each of the three years of the strategic plan. The scoring is based on the principle that a company’s strategic plan was “good” if management met or beat the targeted levels of performance and if these targets contained some “stretch.”

**1.4. Team case analysis:** There will be two Team cases. Written papers, as well as class discussion are expected outcomes of this exercise.

**1.5. Team presentation on simulation performance:** On the last day of class, each team will give a presentation about their company, outlining successes and failures. More details will be shared in class.

## **2. Individual Activities**

**2.1. BSG in game quizzes:** There are two quizzes about the BSG simulation to assess your understanding. You will access these through the BSG site. These are to be done by each team member, and are scored separately.

**2.2. End of chapter quizzes:** Each chapter will have a short quiz covering the material of that chapter.

**3. Participation:** I expect you to be prepared on course material, any cases we discuss, and to actively participate with your team in class.

## **SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES**

### **Case Method**

The case method allows you to acquire low-cost experience. It provides the benefit of *applying* concepts and theories, learning by doing, where experimental and risky solutions are encouraged and supported. It also provides you with practice in wrestling with important global management issues.

The case method is intended to lead us to the right questions, to build discussion and debate, and to force us to reconcile differences in analysis with those of our peers. In preparing a case, *begin* by reading it through at least two times:

(1) Very briefly to get a “feel” of the situation (e.g., the company, its products and markets, its problems, and the people involved). This will allow you to see what’s important in analyzing the case and what is relatively less important.

(2) Carry out your analysis in response to assignment questions (if provided) for the case. Financial analysis and careful attention to the exhibits and tables are necessary for the development of recommendations that are sound. *Document your analysis to help you organize and integrate your thoughts. Be sure to write down supporting arguments for your recommendations and be prepared to provide an alternative argument for any solution.* These case preparation notes will provide you with a valuable aid for your in-class participation, and are to be turned in on the day of discussion.

Each team will choose two cases to write a case report on, and one team will be appointed (randomly) to lead the in-class discussion. There is no specific requirement on the format of presentation.

For more help and insights refer to the case guides in Blackboard folder “Textbook and course related references”.

### **Reading Assignments/Schedule**

Reading assignments may be given to the class during ANY class period. This means that if you miss a class, it is imperative that you call the instructor or someone from the class and make sure you know the assignments.

### **Determination of Team Grades**

Each individual's team grade will be determined through the following process. Each team member will rate the performance of all team members (including themselves) on a scale from 50 to 150, based on

work done on the project. When you assign scores the cumulative total for the team must be equal to the number of members in team multiplied by 100.

The percentages assigned to each team member from each team member will be averaged to arrive at an individual's percentage of the team grade. This will be multiplied by the team grade to arrive at the individual's score.

This procedure will be explained in detail at the end of the class. The important consideration at this point is that you realize that your team grade will depend in part on evaluations by the other members of the team. And, you will have an opportunity to evaluate your team members.

#### Example

Susie's team made a 90 on the team project. Her team members rated her in the following way: Susie, 100; Billy, 80; Deloris, 65; Quincy, 75; Jimmy, 80. Total = 400. Divided by 5 = 80, this is her percentage of the team grade. Therefore, Susie's grade is:  $0.80 \times 90 = 72$ .

Someone who did extra work may end up with an average above 100, for example, 110; this would be multiplied in the same way:  $1.10 \times 90 = 99$ .

These ratings will be done during the last class, after all presentations are finished. They will be kept confidential.

These ratings are extremely important towards the determination of your final grade.

## Class Schedule

This course outline is subject to change by the instructor.

### **Module 1 Introduction and Course Overview (Mar 8)**

Chapter 1 What is strategy?

Chapter 2 Long-term direction

Ch1&2 Quizzes (Mar 9 Tue midnight)

### **Module 2 External and Internal Analysis (Mar 15)**

Chapter 3 External environment

Chapter 4 Internal analysis

Case Costco

Ch3&4 Quizzes (Mar 14 Sun)

### **Module 3 Business Level Strategy (Mar 22)**

Chapter 5 Five generic business level strategies

Chapter 6 Additional strategic choices

Case Under Armour

Ch5&6 Quizzes (Mar 21 Sun)

### **Module 4 Cases and International Strategy (March 29)**

Cases Tesla, Netflix (Team presentations)

Chapter 7 International strategy

Ch7 Quiz (Mar 28 Sun)

### **Module 5 Corporate Level Strategy (April 5)**

Chapter 8 Diversification strategy

Cases Disney, Pepsi (Team presentations)

Ch8 Quiz (April 4 Sun)

Ch2, 3, &5 end-of-chapter exercise (April 9 Fri, after Decision Round Yr11-13)

Ch7&9 end-of-chapter exercise (April 11 Sun, after Decision Round Yr11-14, before 3-yr plan)

### **Module 6 Strategy and Ethics (April 12)**

Chapter 9 Strategy, ethics and social responsibility

Ch9 Quiz (April 11 Sun)

### **Module 7 Strategic Execution (April 19)**

Chapter 10 Organization

Chapter 11 Internal operations

Chapter 12 Corporate culture and leadership

Ch10, 11, 12 Quizzes (April 18 Sun)

### **Module 8 Simulation Game Summary (April 26)**

BSG Team presentation

## **BSG Assignment & Decision Round Schedule**

All times are displayed in the US/Central time zone — UTC -06:00

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
BSG Quiz 1 Deadline	28-Mar-2021 23:59 PM
Decision Round Practice Year 11	30-Mar-2021 21:00 PM
Decision Round Practice Year 12	01-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
Decision Round Data Reset to Year 11	03-Apr-2021 23:59 PM
Decision Round Year 11	04-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
Decision Round Year 12	06-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
BSG Quiz 2 Deadline	07-Apr-2021 23:59 PM
Decision Round Year 13	08-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
Decision Round Year 14	10-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
Decision Round Year 15	12-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
3-Year Strategic Plan	12-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
Decision Round Year 16	14-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
Decision Round Year 17	16-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
Decision Round Year 18	18-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
Decision Round Year 19	20-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
End-Game Peer Evaluations Available	21-Apr-2021 23:59 PM
Decision Round Year 20	22-Apr-2021 21:00 PM
End-Game Peer Evaluations Deadline	25-Apr-2021 23:59 PM

## Textbook Information

### BSG ValuePak Registration Procedure

It is important that each individual student register a BSG ValuePak account. Only registered students gain access to the BSG ValuePak course materials and features (chapter-end quizzes, exams prepared by the instructor, BSG quizzes, peer evaluation exercises, name listing in the instructor's online grade book, and more).

To register:

1. Launch your web browser and go to <http://www.bsg-online.com/>.
2. Click the button for **New Students**.
3. Enter your **Company Registration Code**. Make sure that you enter the registration code for the company that you have been assigned. The company registration codes are:

Members	Company	Company Registration Code
Andrew Cobb, Leslie Jones, Gabby Saalfeld	Company A	75247-HLG-A
Houston Natcher, Bianca Soma, Ethan Porter,	Company C	75247-HLG-C
Landon Arnett, Ryan Gann, Christian Tooley	Company D	75247-HLG-D
Brandon Harris, Alex Reynolds, James Rimington	Company E	75247-HLG-E
Matthew Baldeck, Jake Brown, Stephen Humphries	Company F	75247-HLG-F

4. Complete the brief registration form and click the Continue button at the bottom of the form.
5. Select your payment option:

#### Use a Pre-Paid Access Code

On the next page, enter the pre-paid access code (PAC) that you purchased and click the **PAC Registration** button, if applicable.

#### Use a Credit/Debit Card

Then click the **Credit/Debit Card Registration** button on the next page. The registration fee is \$144.95 for each team member. Have a credit/debit card ready. Payment may be made using Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express. Should you not have a credit card, the easiest alternative is to use a teammate or friend's credit card to pay your registration fee and then reimburse him or her by cash or check.

Following registration, you will be directed to your Corporate Lobby page where you instantly have full access to all BSG ValuePak materials and can view/print the text chapters, the chapter-end exercises, the Player's Manual for The Business Strategy Game, and browse through all the course materials and assignments. You should spend 15-20 minutes familiarizing yourself with the menus, links, and information appearing on your Corporate Lobby page.

At your earliest convenience, you and your teammates should decide on a company name and enter it using the link at the top of your Corporate Lobby page.