

Western Kentucky University
Gordon Ford College of Business
BA590: Strategic Business Concepts and Applications
Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Feng Helen LIANG
Class: Section 741 Online

General Contact: Blackboard
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Required Text:

Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases: Competitiveness and Globalization, (11th edition), by Michael A. Hitt, R. Duane Ireland, Robert E. Hoskisson. Cengage Learning. ISBN-10: 1285425170.

Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to the strategic management process of organizations. The strategic management process is defined as the full set of commitments, decisions, and actions required for a firm to achieve a competitive advantage and earn above-average returns.

In this course we will identify, describe, and illustrate the concepts and frameworks required to undertake a strategy analysis, analyze and appraise business, corporate, international, acquisition, restructuring, and cooperative strategies, as well as recognize the issues associated with implementing strategies including corporate governance. We will also briefly touch upon issues relevant to the modern organization such as sustainability, social, and ethical responsibility and diversity. Our viewpoint will be that of the general manager who has responsibility for the long-term viability of the firm.

This course is primarily aimed at providing you with the frameworks for understanding the different parts of the strategic management process. The frameworks are targeted at promoting a systematic and rational approach to understanding strategy. In the first few classes, we will use these frameworks to map the environment surrounding the firm, analyze the competitive situation facing the firm, and understand the sources of competitive advantage that lie within the firm. Thereafter, the focus will shift to models of business, corporate, and international strategy. Finally, we will cover the issues associated with implementing strategy such as corporate governance.

The second goal of this course is application-oriented, namely to effectively apply the conceptual frameworks to business situations, case studies, and writing up a major research paper. This course will improve your application skills by analyzing case studies from a wide variety of industries, engaging in class discussions, and performing individual company analyses. These exercises will give you hands-on experience using the tools and approaches discussed in class. For the class to work well, and for you to benefit from it, participation in discussions and preparation for each class is essential.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

After completing this course you should be able to:

1. Complete an external and internal analysis of a firm
2. Identify the strategic problems of a firm
3. Develop solutions to a firm's strategic issues

4. Integrate skills acquired in finance, accounting, marketing, and MIS courses to create a successful firm strategy
5. Improve oral and written presentation skills through the analysis and reporting of case situations

Grading: The grade will be based on case and company projects, exams, assignments, and class discussion. The case and company projects will account for 25% of your final grade, three exams for 45%, assignments and class participation on the discussion board for 30%. No make-up exams will be given. Failure to complete the projects or missing an exam will result in failure of the class.

Point-based letter grade:

- A - 90% and above
- B - 80%-89%
- C - 70%-79%
- D - 60%-69%
- F - Below 60%

Course Requirement

Individual Tasks

I. Chapter and case assignments (20%)

For each chapter there is usually an assignment related to a chapter exercise and/or to a case. The purpose of the assignments is to apply the concepts from each chapter to a specific industry or firm, and to integrate skills learned from other business courses to solve strategic issues.

These assignments require reading the chapter and case material, doing some outside research, and answering a set of questions listed in the exercise or provided by the instructor. The students should write a one to two-page answer and turn in as a word document attachment through Blackboard. The answer can be essay format or in bullet points. Detailed instruction is provided for each assignment. The due dates are listed in the syllabus for each assignment. The assignments are graded on a pass/fail basis. Late assignments will not receive credit.

II. Discussion forum posts (10%)

For each assignment there is a corresponding discussion forum. We use the forums to develop and reinforce the understanding of concepts, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. The students are required to write at least two posts for each forum: one post is a new thread/post of (part of) their own answer to the assignment; the other is a post responding to others' post by making a "meaningful" comment, or providing some information not in the assignment but related to work/personal experience with business implications for the industry or firm in the assignment. A "meaningful" comment means the comment should add to the existing post with the student's own opinion/answer/research, or give new info such as a link to a newspaper article or video related to the firm/industry in the assignment. A reply simply saying "good point" etc. doesn't count as a "meaningful" comment. Discussion forum posts are due on the day after the due date of the assignment, as indicated in the title of each forum on Blackboard. The discussion forum posts are graded on a pass/fail basis. Late posts will not receive credit.

III. Exams (45%)

There are three exams each covering three to four chapters of the class. These exams are open book with a time limit, usually two hours. The exams will be released on Blackboard at specified date/time and the students must complete it before the due date/time. The exams contain true/false and multiple choice questions. Review slides will be posted on Blackboard before the exam. Students should complete the exam alone, using available material in the textbook. Discussion with other students is prohibited before the due date. Due to the time limit of the exam, the students should study the textbook BEFORE the exam, and are recommended to prepare a note summarizing the textbook material. There will not be enough time to look up answers during the exam

without PRIOR studying.

Group Tasks (25%)

The students are assigned to teams in this class, and required to complete two team projects, **a case analysis (15%) and a company analysis (10%)**.

We use **case analysis** to practice problem solving skills related to a specific strategic topic covered in the corresponding chapter, and company analysis to integrate all the topics in this class and skills learned in other business courses to solve a company's strategic issues.

The team will choose the company for the company analysis. Please send the name of the company to the instructor **BEFORE** you start working on the project **for approval** to avoid duplication between teams, by Nov 10, Tue.

Each team will turn in one paper and one powerpoint presentation for the case project, and one paper (no presentation requirement) for the company project. Only the presentation slides are required. No presentation is required. The grades of the two projects are based on the quality of group paper and presentation slides. Please send the paper and presentation to the instructor by email and also post in the corresponding discussion forum. In addition, the students are required to make at least one comment on others' report/presentation.

Please read **“Case&PaperGuideline” for detailed requirement** and **“GroupAssignment”** for group assignment and due date of the case analysis. The due date of company analysis is listed in the syllabus.

IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES PROTECTED BY THE ADA, IT IS REQUIRED THAT A COVERED STUDENT INFORM THE PROFESSOR OF THEIR STATUS WITHIN THE FIRST TWO CLASS MEETINGS.

Class Schedule

This course outline is subject to change by the instructor.

Module 1 Introduction and Course Overview, Chapter 1

Introduction and Organization of the class

Self introduction, due on discussion board Oct 15, Thu

Chapter 1 Strategic Management & Competitiveness

Exercise #2 (Page 29), due on Oct 17, Sat

Discussion Forum #1 due on Oct 18, Sun

Module 2 Chapter 2 and 3 the Nature of Strategic Management

Chapter 2 Analyzing the External Environment

Exercise #1 (Page 65), due on Oct 21, Wed

Discussion Forum #2 due on Oct 22, Thu

Chapter 3 Analyzing the Internal Environment

Exercise #2 Zara's core competency (Page 95), due on Oct 24, Sat

Discussion Forum #3 due on Oct 25, Sun

Module 3 Chapter 4 and Case Analysis

Preparing an Effective Case Analysis, Case Demonstration: Case #19 Krispy Kreme Doughnuts

Chapter 4 Business-Level Strategy

Case #29 Tesla, due on Oct 28, Wed
Discussion Forum #4 due on Oct 29, Thu
Review for Exam 1 (Chapter 1-4)

Oct 29, Thu: Exam 1 released on Blackboard, due on Nov 1, Sun

Module 4 Chapter 5 Competitive Rivalry & Dynamics

Exercise #2, Smartphone (Page 158), due on Nov 4, Wed
Discussion Forum #5 posts due on Nov 5, Thu

Module 5 Chapter 6&7

Chapter 6 Corporate Level Strategy
Chapter 7 Merger & Acquisition Strategy
Case #27 Tata Motors, due on Nov 7, Sat
Discussion Forum #6 due on Nov 8, Sun
Review for Exam 2 (Chapter 5-7)

Nov 8, Sun: Exam 2 released on Blackboard, due on Nov 10, Tue
Nov 10, Tue, send the instructor your choice of company for the second group project

Module 6 Chapter 8&9

Chapter 8 International Strategy
Case GM, due on Nov 11, Wed
Discussion Forum #7 due on Nov 12, Thu
Chapter 9 Cooperative Strategy
Case Redbox, due on Nov 14, Sat
Discussion Forum #8 posts due on Nov 15, Sun

Module 7 Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Corporate Governance
(No assignment for Ch10)

Nov 16-20 Company project week

Company analysis paper due on Discussion board and by email on Nov 20, Fri
Class discussion Forum #9 posts due on Nov 24, Tue

Nov 21, Sat: Exam 3 released on Blackboard, due on Dec 1, Tue

Nov 23-27 Thanksgiving holiday, no class

Your grade will be posted on Blackboard on Dec 7, Monday night. Please check your record.

Assignment Schedule
BA590: Strategic Business Concepts and Applications
 Fall 2020 Online MBA course
 Dr. Feng Helen Liang

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| BA590 Strategy Schedule | Oct 12 | 13 Enjoy your last day of freedom! | Oct 14 Class begins! Read Ln1 | 15 Self- introductio n due | 16 Read Ln2, Ch1 | 17 Asi#1 due (Ch1Ex2) AOL Pretest due |
| 18 Df#1 due Yoga class! | 19 Read Ln3, Ch2 | 20 | 21 Asi#2 due (Ch2Ex1) | 22 Df#2 due | 23 Read Ln4, Ch3 | 24 Asi#3 due (Ch3Zara) |
| 25 Df#3 due Yoga class! | 26 Read Ln5, Case KKD, Hitt_case guide, HBSCase Method, watch video “Inside HBS” | 27 Read Ln6, Ch4, Case Tesla | 28 Asi#4 due (Case Tesla) | 29 Df#4 due Read Ln7Exam1 Review Exam 1 released on BB | 30 Exam 1 | 31 Exam 1 |
| Nov 1 Exam 1 due on BB by midnight Yoga class! | 2 Rest Day! You’ve earned it! | 3 Read Ln8, Ch5 | 4 Asi#5 due (Ch5Ex2) | 5 Df#5 due Read Ln9, Ch6 | 6 Read Ln10, Ch7, Case Tata | 7 Asi#6 due (Case Tata) Read Ln11Exam2 Review |
| 8 Df#6 due Exam 2 released on BB Yoga class! | 9 Exam 2 | 10 Exam 2 due on BB by midnight Your choice of company due by email | 11 Read Ln12, Ch8, Case GM Asi#7 due (Case GM) | 12 Df#7 due | 13 Read Ln13, Ch9, Case Redbox | 14 Asi#8 due (Case Redbox) |
| 15 Df#8 due Yoga class! | 16 Read Ln14, Ch10 Work on company project | 17 Work on company project | 18 Work on company project | 19 Work on company project | 20 Company analysis due in BB Df#9 and by email | 21 Read Ln14Exam3 Review Exam 3 released on BB |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---------------|---|------------|--------------|
| 22 Yoga class! | 23 Read your classmates' company project | 24 Df#9 due (comments) Exam 3 | 25 Cooking | 26 Eating! Happy Thanksgivi ng! | 27 Gym! | 28 Exam 3 |
| 29 Yoga class! | 30 Exam 3 | Dec 1 Exam 3 due on BB by midnight | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 Yoga class! | 7 Grade posted on BB – please check your record | 8 Champagne! | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

KEYS TO THE SCHEDULE:

“Ch” stands for Chapter - indicating that you need to read that chapter. *Since you can see the entire term, I advise you to read ahead based upon your own schedule.*

“Ln” stands for Lecture Note – indicating that you need to read the lecture note, usually corresponding to a chapter.

“Df” stands for Discussion Forum - indicating that you need to post and read the postings for that forum. Since our “classroom” experience is based upon the Df, participation is required and crucial for our learning experience. Please post as early as possible so that others will have enough time to respond to your post. *Remember, I will be a poster too.*

“Asi” – indicates assignments. These are either a chapter exercise or case assignment. You will write one to two page answers to the questions listed in the assignment, based on chapter and case material, supplementary material provided by me, your own outside research, or your own experience.