



GORDON FORD COLLEGE *of* BUSINESS

MGT 590 Strategic Business Concepts & Applications, Fall 2025

Contact Information

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Office Hours:

Thu 4pm–5pm CHAN 3042 or Zoom, or by appointment

Preferred Communication Method and Expected Response Time

Email is the best way to reach me. I usually reply to your email within one business day. Please include your full name and class (MGT590) in your email and copy ALL group members if the email is related to group work. Do NOT send me email through Blackboard email or message system. The current setting in BB does not allow reply to your email.

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 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 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 framework 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 strategies 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.

Prerequisites

This course must be taken in the final third of your program of study. Most students find success when they take this course after all the core classes.

Required Text and Materials

Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases: Competitiveness and Globalization, (12th edition), by Michael A. Hitt, R. Duane Ireland, Robert E. Hoskisson. Cengage Learning. ISBN-10: 1305502140. ISBN-13: 978-1305502147. This book is available from WKU bookstore or [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). Later or earlier editions of the textbook will work for this class. All required assignments and cases will be posted on the course website. You do NOT need a digital access code with the textbook.

Recommended/Optional Texts and Materials

Current events and business news are highly recommended and will be incorporated in the final term project. Students are encouraged to read at least one business newspaper daily. See information related to student subscription to WSJ and other suggested readings in BB course folder “Textbook.”

Course Format:

100% asynchronous online course with no required synchronous meetings. There will be assignments, discussion posts, and exams due on Sundays. Students are encouraged to work on these assignments throughout the week as listed in the schedule.

Course Objectives/Outcomes

Course Objectives	Practice/Experience in Course	Assessment of Outcome
Complete an external and internal analysis of a firm	Chapter assignments, discussion boards, case assignments, and company analysis project	All submissions will be read and graded for completeness, application of concepts, and insights
Identify the strategic problems of a firm	Chapter assignments, discussion boards, case assignments, and company analysis project	All submissions will be read and graded for completeness, application of concepts, and insights
Develop solutions to a firm's strategic issues	Case project and company analysis project	All submissions will be read and graded for completeness, application of concepts, and insights
Integrate skills acquired in finance, accounting, marketing, and MIS courses to create a successful firm strategy	Case project and company analysis project	All submissions will be read and graded for completeness, application of concepts, and insights
Improve oral and written presentation skills through the analysis and reporting of case situations	Case project and company analysis project	All submissions will be read and graded for completeness, application of concepts, and insights

Course Requirements

Individual Tasks (70%)

I. Chapter and case assignments (16%)

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 instructions are 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 (9%)

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 a 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 (30%)

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%)**, and **team evaluation (5%)**.

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 read the instruction in the Case&PaperGuideline and send the name of the company to the instructor **for approval BEFORE** you start working on the project to avoid duplication between teams, by **Sept 21, Sun**.

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 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 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" posted on BlackBoard for group assignment and the due date of the case analysis. The due date of company analysis is listed in the syllabus. At the end of the semester, each student will give peer evaluation of the team members based on their effort and contribution to the team projects. The peer evaluation is worth 5%. **Students who fail to participate in group work will be dropped from the group upon consensus of other group members and will receive a failure grade for this class.**

Course Policies

Grading: Chapter assignments and discussion board postings are read and graded within the same week as submitted. Case projects and company analysis projects are graded and returned within a week.

Email/Communication: I am available via email, text, or phone. Email is the best way to reach me because I can work on an answer for you before getting back. I will respond as quickly as I can, usually within one business day.

Zoom meetings: I am available to meet with a student, or team, via zoom by request. Please schedule with me beforehand and use the link provided at the top of this syllabus.

Late Work: Generally late work is not accepted. Please communicate any issues you may have about work completion beforehand.

Group Work: The students are assigned to teams in this class and required to complete two team projects. The teams will be assigned by the professor. Students will give peer evaluation of the team members based on their effort and contribution to the team projects. The peer evaluation is worth 5%. Students who fail to participate in group work will be dropped from the group upon consensus of other group members and will receive a failure grade for this class.

Grading Scale

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

Point-based letter grade:

A - 90% and above

B - 80%-89%

C - 70%-79%

D - 60%-69%

F - Below 60%

[Technology and Technical Skill Requirements](#)

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Course Schedule

This course outline is subject to change by the instructor.

All the assignments, discussion posts, exams, and team projects are **due on Sundays**. However, you are recommended to work on these assignments during the week as indicated in the calendar. All the due date/time are in US Central Time.

Module 1 Introduction and Course Overview, Chapter 1

Introduction and Organization of the class

Self-introduction, due on discussion board Aug 24, Sun

Chapter 1 Strategic Management & Competitiveness

Assignment#1 Competition in the airline industry, due on Aug 24, Sun

Discussion Forum #1 due on Aug 24, Sun

AOL pre-test due on Aug 24, Sun

Module 2 Chapter 2 and 3 External and Internal Analysis

Chapter 2 Analyzing the External Environment

Assignment#2 Auto industry, due on Aug 24, Sun

Discussion Forum #2 due on Aug 24, Sun

Chapter 3 Analyzing the Internal Environment

Assignment#3 Zara's core competency, due on Aug 31, Sun

Discussion Forum #3 due on Aug 31, Sun

Module 3 Chapter 4 Business Strategy and Case Analysis

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

Chapter 4 Business-Level Strategy

Assignment#4 Case Tesla (All class, homework; **Team1 paper**), due on Aug 31, Sun

Discussion Forum #4 due on Aug 31, Sun

Review for Exam 1 (Chapter 1-4)

Exam 1 due on Sept 7, Sun

Module 4 Chapter 5 Competitive Rivalry & Dynamics

Assignment#5 FedEx and UPS, due on Sept 7, Sun

Discussion Forum #5 posts due on Sept 7, Sun

Module 5 Chapter 6&7 Corporate Strategy and M&A

Chapter 6 Corporate Level Strategy

Chapter 7 Merger & Acquisition Strategy

Assignment#6 Case Tata Motors (All class, homework; **Team2 paper**), due on Sept 14, Sun

Discussion Forum #6 due on Sept 14, Sun

Review for Exam 2 (Chapter 5-7)

Exam 2 due on Sept 14, Sun

Module 6 Chapter 8 International Strategy

Assignment#7 Case IKEA (All class, homework; **Team3 paper**), due on Sept 21, Sun

Discussion Forum #7 due on Sept 21, Sun

Module 7 Chapter 9 Cooperative Strategy

Assignment#8 Case Haier (All class, homework; **Team4 paper**), due on Sept 21, Sun

Discussion Forum #8 posts due on Sept 21, Sun

Sept 21, Sun, send the instructor your choice of company for the second group project

Module 8 Chapter 10 Corporate Governance

Chapter 10 Corporate Governance

(No assignment for Ch10)

Sept 22-Oct 5 Company project weeks

Company analysis paper due on Discussion board and by email on Oct 5, Sun

Class Discussion Forum #9 posts and team evaluation due on Oct 5, Sun

Exam 3 due on Oct 5, Sun

Your grade will be posted on Blackboard by Oct 9, Thu. Please check your record.

Assignment Schedule
MGT590: Strategic Business Concepts and Applications
 Online MBA course
 Dr. Feng Helen Liang

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MGT 590 Strategy Schedule	Aug 18 Class begins! Read Ln1	19 Read Ln2, Ch1 Self- introduction	20 Work on Asi#1 Airline industry	21 Read Ln3, Ch2 Df#1	22 Work on Asi#2 Auto industry	23 Df#2
24 Yoga class! AOL Pretest due; Self-introduction post, Asi#1, Df#1, Asi#2, Df#2, due	25 Read Ln4, Ch3	26 Work on Asi#3 Ch3Zara	27 Read Ln5, Case KKD, Hitt case guide, HBS Case Method, watch video “Inside HBS” Df#3	28 Read Ln6, Ch4, Case Tesla	29 Work on Asi#4 Case Tesla	30 Df#4 Read Ln7Exam1R eview Exam 1 released on BB
31 Yoga class! Asi#3, Df#3, Asi#4, Df#4, due	Sept 1 Work on Exam 1	2 Work on Exam 1	3 Read Ln8, Ch5	4 Work on Asi#5 FedEx&UPS	5 Df#5 Read Ln9, Ch6	6 Read Ln10, Ch7, Case Tata
7 Yoga class! Exam 1 due on BB Asi#5, Df#5, due	8 Work on Asi#6 Case Tata	9 Df#6 Read Ln11Exam2R eview Exam 2 released on BB	10 Work on Exam 2	11 Work on Exam 2	12 Work on Exam 2 Read Ln12, Ch8, Case IKEA	13 Work on Exam 2
14 Yoga class! Exam 2 due on BB Asi#6, Df#6, due	15 Work on Asi#7 Case IKEA	16 Df#7	17 Read Ln13, Ch9, Case Haier	18 Work on Asi#8 Case Haier	19 Df#8	20 Read Ln14, Ch10
21 Yoga class! Asi#7, Df#7, Asi#8, Df#8, due Your choice of company due by email	22 Read Ln14Exam3Revi ew Exam 3 released on BB Work on company project	23 Work on company project	24 Work on company project	25 Work on company project	26 Work on company project	27 Work on company project
28 Yoga class!	29 Work on company project Exam 3	30 Work on company project Exam 3	Oct 1 Work on company project Exam 3	2 Work on company project Exam 3	3 Work on company project Exam 3	4 Work on company project Exam 3

Oct 5 Exam 3 due on BB; Company analysis due on BB Df#9 and by email; Df#9 due (comments); Team Evaluation due	6 Relax	7 Relax	8 Relax	9 Grade posted on BB – please check your record	10 Champagne !	11
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Note: All the assignments, discussion posts, exams, and team projects are **due on Sundays as in this table. However, you are recommended to work on these assignments on the weekdays as indicated.**

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 chapter exercises 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.

Technology and Technical Skill Requirements

- Students must be proficient in the use of computers, the Internet, browsers, Microsoft Office Word, and other common applications.
- Students must be able to use their WKU email, as well as the following tools in Blackboard Ultra: course messages, assignments, discussion board forums, tests, blogs, journals, wikis, and groups.
- Some courses may require Zoom or Teams for meetings.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader may be needed to read some files. This plug-in is available free. (URL: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
- Students may be required to submit assignments as Microsoft Word documents (.docx), using the most recent Microsoft Office suite. Microsoft Office 365 is provided to WKU students free of charge at the following address: <https://td.wku.edu/TDClient/34/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=12>

Technology Assistance

If you have technical problems, please contact of the following:

- WKU Information Technology Services Helpdesk: <https://www.wku.edu/its/service-desk/> or call 270-745-7000
- Blackboard Student Support: <https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student>

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Western Kentucky University and Gordon Ford College of Business Policies

ADA accommodation

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodation directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Title IX Discrimination & Harassment

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Academic Integrity

The maintenance of academic integrity is of fundamental importance to the University. Thus it should be clearly understood that acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated and that anyone committing such acts risks punishment of a serious nature.

Academic Dishonesty

Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in a course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary sanctions. A student who believes a faculty member has dealt unfairly with him/her in a course involving academic dishonesty may seek relief through the Student Complaint Procedure.

Plagiarism

To represent written work taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his/her own. One must give any author credit for source material borrowed from him/her. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage without reference to the source after having changed a few words is also plagiarism.

AI resources

In this class you are free to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, DeepSeek, Google Bard, Bing, Dall-E 2, Stable Diffusion, etc. on assignments and activities in this course. If you chose to utilize AI, you will be **expected to properly document and cite this information**. For this course, we will use the American Psychological Association (APA) style for citations and references. *Examples of citing AI are available at:*

<https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage](#). In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- Weekly discussion boards with faculty and student participation,
- Weekly announcements to provide direct instruction on course material and assignments, and
- Timely and detailed feedback on assignments provided within one week of submission.

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