



STRA 4701 – 1A: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

SPRING 2021/2022

SYLLABUS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Strategic Management deals with decisions that fundamentally influence the *direction of the organization* and *effective implementation* of the direction chosen. This is intended to be a challenging and exciting capstone course. Its primary goal is to show you how to examine a business as a whole through integration of various business functional areas including accounting, finance, marketing, operation management, human resource management and etc. This course will teach you basic concepts, analytical techniques, and evaluation of strategic options that form the basis for strategic analysis, formation and implementation.

Course Objectives

I truly hope that by the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Think strategically from the perspective of a general manager
2. Analyze core business issues in business scenarios by using appropriate analytical techniques and skills and defend reasoned solutions
3. Identify the ethical challenges in strategic management and the role of managers in the process of guiding organizations to be socially responsible.
4. Design implementation of the strategy and organization of the firm for strategic success in sound and creative ways
5. Communicate ideas persuasively to inform and convince others in English

Strategic Management deals with the world of experience. The world of experience is not a world of certainty. Thus, within the classroom, reasonable people (with different experiences) will view management differently. Management involves *making* sense together, and is a creative and subjective process. Conjectures and knowledge based on personal experiences are highly valued within the conversation of this class. Creativity will be rewarded in your participation grade, individual assignments, and group project. This capstone course also rewards the diligent worker who has the ability to listen and think critically. This senior-level course requires that you process a great deal of material. Both the individual assignments and the end-of-term in-class assignment will test your ability to *understand* the material in the textbooks, readings, and class notes. *Please note that the evaluation of your case analyses and the assignment measures different skills.*



THE RELATIONSHIP OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TO OTHER BUSINESS COURSES

Up until this time, most of your education within the business school has emphasized a specialized, functional perspective of business situations. For example, in Accountancy, you have concentrated on how to both identify and produce the information necessary to manage and guide organizations effectively. In Finance, you have been concerned with how capital markets work and, in turn, affect the financing of a company's on-going operations. In Marketing, the focus has been on how to analyze, shape and respond to the needs of consumers as well as how to manage a company's marketing efforts. In Operations Management, the focus has been organizing the production activities of a firm so it is able to produce quality goods and services at an attractive price. Finally, courses on Human Resource Management have been concerned with the effective development and management of a company's human assets. All of these functional disciplines play a critical role in the success of a company, *but how do they fit together?*

In this senior-level capstone business course, we integrate these views together by taking the unique perspective of *the situational problems of the general manager*. The general manager's primary responsibility is to diagnose the critical factors that require attention in complex business situations and to find workable solutions to strategic and organizational problems. To solve such business problems, the general manager must be capable of understanding and using knowledge from each functional area to provide a "total business" (systems) perspective on issues pertaining to strategic management. The general manager must analyze competitive situations within industries in order to understand the sources of the firm's competitive advantage. Strategy is enabled and constrained by the economic and political conditions that prevail in an industry or country, as well as by the resources available to management. In today's increasingly global business environment, whether you are a newly hired employee or the CEO of the company, you must be capable of thinking like a general manager.



COURSE MATERIALS

Required Textbook:

Barney, J., & Hesterley, W. (2018). *Strategic Management and Competitive Advantage: Concepts and Cases* (6th Edition). Pearson Education. (refer to **B&H** in the later part)

Recommended References:

The Economist

Financial Times

Harvard Business Review

Wall Street Journal

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信報財經月刊



EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Preparation: I will assume that you have read everything assigned. Even if you are not presenting a case, please be sure to read the case carefully, as it will be the basis of class discussion. It is especially valuable and appreciated when you come to class with questions about the readings. Poor preparation is a disservice to your classmates and will negatively impact your participation grade.

Class Participation: Most of the learning in our class will occur through discussion. Thus, we want everyone's active participation. Meaningful participation requires having carefully read and thought about the day's material, but that is *not* sufficient. You also need to speak and while key insights are appreciated, you can also contribute by asking questions, politely disagreeing with comments, or following up on another student's comments with further insights or evidence. Good verbal communication skills are a key to a successful business career, and this is the place for you to practice. Non-academic chatting during class time is considered as highly unprofessional and thus strictly prohibited. I reserve the right to deduct 1 point from your participation grade for each time when you are found engaging in such disturbing behavior.

Assignments: Soft-copy individual assignments are expected to hand in on the specified date. I *do not* accept late assignments without acceptable reasons. There will be no credit provided for late assignments.

Attendance and Punctuality: You cannot contribute to our learning if you are not in class. At the same time, it is understood that you may have other responsibilities and priorities. To balance these considerations, you are allocated *two* excused allowances. You can use these as you wish (e.g., job interviews, family needs, health days) with no questions asked. On these occasions, you are still responsible for turning in your assignment *before* the class session that you will miss. Please note that I will not make arrangements for homework after the fact. For each absence beyond these two, *1 point* will be deducted from your individual participation grade. You may not use an excused absence on the day of the in-class assignment. In the event of illness, please bring a note from the Clinic to the next class session.

Please be on time. If lateness becomes an issue, I reserve the right to treat a class for which you are late as a missed class.

Technology: All mobile phones and other electronic devices should be turned off during class. Please do not leave and re-enter the class. Use of laptops in the class is NOT allowed except for required class activities.

Suggestions: If you have special inquiries or constructive suggestions concerning the progress of the class, please feel free to talk to me. You can make an appointment by telephone, e-mail, or simply leave a message in my mailbox located in the main office of MM department.



SUBJECT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:

- CLOS1. Explain the strategic management theories and concepts.
- CLOS2. Understand the impact of firms' internal and external environments on performance.
- CLOS3. Apply analytical frameworks to define and analyze strategic problems; and to formulate and implement business strategies.
- CLOS4. Explain the complex business opportunities and problems in a global context.
- CLOS5. Understand and apply the concept of business ethics in strategic decision-making.
- CLOS6. Demonstrate effective communication skills (oral and written).



GROUP PROJECT (40%)

a. Work Groups

At the beginning of the semester, you are required to form work groups of 4-5 students (the maximum is 5) in which you will participate to prepare one project analysis, presentation, and report write-up. You have the first two weeks to do the group formation, and you should vote one member as your team leader. The group formation is due by the end of Lecture 2. If you eventually have not found your group by then, I will have to randomly assign you to one of the groups.

b. Group Case Analysis, Presentation (25%), and Project Report Write-up (15%)

After the group formation, each group will be assigned to a case from the list on the last page. Group presentations start from Lecture 4. The group order is corresponding to the case ID. The presentation should cover the problems in the topic, based on what you have learned in the class. I will provide a guide note for your case analysis.

You need to finish the presentation within 45 minutes. You should do the case analysis, discussion, and presentation collectively as a team. I will judge the overall quality of your team's presentation. The presentation will contribute to **25%** of your overall assessment for this course. A score for the team performance will be the same for all the team members.

Each group is responsible to submit a project report within 2 weeks after the presentation. The project report write-up contributes to **15%** of your overall assessment. To encourage conciseness, please **limit your report NO MORE THAN 20 pages** (A4, double-space, 12 fonts).



CLASS PARTICIPATION (20%)

Individual class participation has a heavy weight in the overall score (20%). The evaluation of your class participation considers both class discussion and individual attendance.

Class Discussion

Class discussion is voluntary and highly encouraged. During the semester, I will arrange two or three in-depth case discussions in class. The cases should be prepared in advance and you have at least one week to study them. Your active and constructive participation during the case discussion is an important criterion for me to judge your performance for this category.

In addition, you can raise questions and answer answers raised by me or others during classes. You will receive a *smiling card* upon each time of a meaningful raise-/answer-question. The total number of smiling cards you receive during the semester determines your final score on class discussion.

Attendance

As an important part of class discipline, attendance and punctuality are important for me to judge your attitude to this course. A deduction of a maximum of 10 credits will be considered when being late to class frequently is observed. You fail this course if you are absent from class without request in advance for three times during the entire semester.

Your final score on class participation will be the sum of class discussion and attendance.



FINAL EXAM (40%)

Final Exam

The final exam will test your overall understanding of concepts and analytical techniques taught in the course. The format will be an open-book case study. The case material as well as the question sheet will be uploaded at the final exam time. You are required to submit your answer sheet to the TA before the deadline (will be announced later).

GRADING

The course grade will be calculated in the following way:

Class Participation/ Discussion (20%)
Group Projects (40%)
Final Exam (40%)

* Please refer to page 6 for details

Final Grade.

A+	80+
A	70-79
B+	65-69
B	60-64
C+	55-59
C	50-54
D+	46-49
D	40-45
F	Below 40



Course Outline

Lecture	Date	Topic	Textbook Reading	Note
1	Sep 6	Overview of Course: What is Strategy	Chap. 1	
2	Sep 13	Historical Evolution of Strategic Management	Chap.1	Group formation due
3	Sep 20	Strategic Analysis of External Environment: Political and Economic	Chap.2	
4	Sep 27	Strategic Analysis of External Environment: Social and Technological	Chap. 3	Group presentations start Groups 1 & 2
5	Oct 4	Strategic Analysis of External Environment: Five-force Model 1	Chap. 4	Groups 3 & 4
6	Oct 18	Strategic Analysis of External Environment: Five-force Model 2	Chap. 5	Groups 5
7	Oct 25	Strategic Analysis of Internal Environment: Resource-based View 1	Chap. 6	Group 6
8	Nov 1	Strategic Analysis of Internal Environment: Resource-based View 2	Chap. 7	Group 7
9	Nov 8	Strategic Decision-making: Business Strategy	Chap. 8	Groups 8 & 9
10	Nov 15	Strategic Decision-making: Blue Ocean Strategy	Chap. 9	Group 10
11	Nov 22	Strategic Decision-making: Corporate Strategy	Chap. 10	Groups 11 & 12
12	Nov 29	Finale: Course Summary and Conclusion		Groups 13 & 14

* Textbook refers to Barney & Hesterly's

* Academic calendar: https://english.hku.hk/general_files/AcademicCalendar202021.pdf



Cases used for group-led class discussion

Environmental analysis: Political

A New Approach to China: Google and Censorship in the Chinese Market (Group 1)

Environmental analysis: Economic

COVID-19: The Global Shutdown (Group 2)

Environmental analysis: Social-cultural

Dolce & Gabbana: Racism, stereotypes, or being funny? (Group 3)

Sons and daughters: Guanxi as a double-edged sword (Group 4)

Environmental analysis: Technological

WeChat: A Global Platform? (Group 5)

Industrial competitive analysis: 5-force model

China's "furious five" Smartphones (Group 6)

The Rise and Fall of BlackBerry (Group 7)

Internal analysis of resource and strategy: RBV

The Haidilao Company (Group 8)

Xiaomi: Designing an Ecosystem for the "Internet of Things" (Group 9)

Generic strategies

Ryanair: Defying Gravity (Group 10)

Blue Ocean Strategy

Pinduoduo (Group 11)

SpaceX, Economies of Scale, and a Revolution in Space Access (Group 12)

Corporate Strategy

Geely and Volvo (Group 13)

Jinjiang Group: Globalization through state ownership and political connection (Group 14)