

Course Syllabus BSP 3001 Strategic Management

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Class Time: Thursday 8am-11am, 2pm-5pm

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to increase your ability to analyze the strategy of corporations. By strategy, I mean the distinctive approach that executives within corporations employ to win in their markets. We will discuss fundamental strategy theories and illustrate their use, with a special emphasis on corporate strategies in technology-based markets and Asian Pacific contexts. The course will progress from well-defined markets to high-velocity, entrepreneurial markets where the pace of change is often rapid, unpredictable, and ambiguous. The ultimate intent of the course is to help you work more effectively in your professional careers.

Course Format

This course is composed of three main components, with the assessment scheme as follows:

Component	Weight
Class Participation	30%
Strategy Critique Paper	30%
Company Video Presentation	40%
TOTAL	100%

Class Participation (Individual)

Although a variety of pedagogical methods will be used (e.g. lectures, in-class exercises, student presentations, etc.), classroom time will revolve primarily around *case discussions* and their associated readings. As in all such case-oriented classes, class attendance and participation are required. I will distribute specific study questions for each case a week prior to the in-class discussion.

The individual cases vary in their analytic difficulty, ranging from evaluating decisions already made (simple) to recommending a decision for a specific issue (more difficult) to defining the issues to be addressed then recommending a specific choice (most difficult). For these latter two types of cases, you will often find that your understanding of issues is improved if you put yourself into the position of the protagonists in the cases. Cases also vary in their conceptual difficulty, ranging from a single framework that is easily understood (easy) to multiple frameworks or one challenging framework (more difficult) to multiple and challenging frameworks (most difficult). Understanding the cases along these dimensions will help you prepare more effectively and allocate your time appropriately.

Prior to class, you should thoroughly read and prepare the day's case, including answers to the study questions. Please ensure that you have used the frameworks, tools, and ideas from the readings in your analysis as appropriate. Doing the reading(s) first is effective. Please also ensure that you have exploited the material in the case exhibits as much as possible. Many cases will have a question or two for which you have to make a specific decision recommendation. Your recommendation should be realistic, actionable, and supported by

analysis (including numerical where appropriate). You should understand the decision criteria, formulate and evaluate (quantitatively and qualitatively) alternatives, and select a choice. You should also understand the assumptions that underlie your recommendation. Finally, your recommendations should consider implementation: which executive/corporate branch should carry out your suggestions, when should they do it, and how.

During class, you should be prepared to lead off the discussion of any question in a significant way as well as to discuss salient issues which are not addressed per se in the assigned questions. As in any case discussion, it is crucial that you are well-prepared, listen carefully to others, and build on/critique previous comments. Clearly, you must participate in class if you are going to share your ideas with others. There is, however, no need to participate in every class. It is the quality of comments, not the quantity, that is most germane. Occasionally, students find that it is easier to participate effectively from the point of view of a particular person or functional area, or to take on the role of devil's advocate or expert (if expertise is possessed) on the topic. If you have particular knowledge of any case (e.g., you have worked for the case company), please let me know in advance.

Since so much of the learning from a case-based course occurs in the classroom, there are no unapproved absences. Specifically, any absence requires a written explanation (email is fine) that is given to me prior to class. One miss is fine, but more absences may result in downward adjustment of your grade. Please also note the days in the Course Schedule where no absences are allowed (i.e., video presentation day). The reasoning behind this apparently very stringent policy is that case classes demand active participation and attendance.

Below is a description of how your class contributions will be calibrated:

Outstanding contributor: Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive, yield one or more major insights, and provide direction to the class. Arguments are well-substantiated and persuasively presented. If this person were not a class member, the quality of discussion would diminish significantly.

Good Contributor: Contributions reflect thorough preparation. Ideas are usually substantive, provide good insights into the topic under discussion, and sometimes provide direction for the class. Arguments reflect clear thinking. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

Adequate Contributor: Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights, but seldom offer a major new direction for the discussion. Arguments are sometimes presented, and are fairly well-substantiated and sometimes compelling. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be somewhat diminished.

Non-participant: The person has said little or nothing in this class to date. Therefore, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed.

Unsatisfactory Contributor: Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, are often off-point, provide few (if any) insights, and give no constructive direction to the class. Clear argument on the topic at hand and/or integrative comments are absent.

Occasionally, some students find it difficult to participate effectively in class because of language or other challenges. Please speak with me if class participation is a significant concern for you.

Strategy Critique Paper (Individual)

Another key component of the course is a 6-8 paged paper (double spaced; excluding exhibits) where you will critique *one* particular strategy framework that we have covered in class. The intent of this paper is to help you think more critically about a particular strategy framework. All strategy frameworks—including the ones we learn in class—are ultimately analytical tools, and as analytical tools they are bound to have shortcomings. In particular, many of the strategy frameworks we cover are abstracted from empirical observations of companies in Western contexts, and as such they often lose their usefulness when applied to the Asian Pacific context. By critiquing a framework, analyzing its shortcomings, and giving recommendations of how the framework can be improved upon, you will acquire a more nuanced understanding of strategy and become more effective in applying the frameworks we learn to real-life situations in your professional life.

The specifics of the strategy critique paper are as follows. You will pick any *one* framework that we cover in class and critique its shortcomings. The critique should include a theoretical section where you discuss why the key ideas or assumptions underlying a framework is inadequate, an empirical section where you draw upon the strategies and performance of a real-life company to illustrate your theoretical critique, and a recommendation section where you discuss how the framework you critique could be improved upon.

You may submit your strategy critique paper at any time during the semester. But since many of the frameworks we discuss in later sessions are themselves critiques of the frameworks we discuss in earlier sessions, the task of critiquing a framework is considerably easier if you write (and submit) the critique paper late in the semester and focus on a framework we covered early on in the semester. To encourage you to think critically about each strategy framework yourself (rather than rely on my analyses of how certain frameworks are inadequate), I highly encourage you to focus on a framework we have just covered in class when you write your critique paper. A paper written late in the semester about a framework we covered early on will be graded much more stringently than a paper written about a framework we have just covered the week before.

Strategy Video Report (Team)

The final component of the course is a short strategy video report that students will produce in teams. Here, you will form teams with your colleagues, take on the roles of consultants, and analyse the strategy of a single medium-sized company or a branch/subsidiary of a large company in the format of a video presentation. The intent of this assignment is to enable you to work with the frameworks we discussed in class in the context of a specific company (or company branch/subsidiary) that is of particular interest to you. This assignment will also provide an opportunity for you to work with others and to improve your presentation skills.

All video reports will be shown in class at the end of the semester. Each video will be followed by a short period of Q&A from the entire class. You will also be asked to rate your teammates' contributions to the group. I will provide more details on this assignment later on in the semester.

Plagiarism

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own' (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. In case of any doubts, you should consult your instructor.

Additional guidance is available at:

<http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/adminpolicy/acceptance.html#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>

Online Module on Plagiarism:

<http://emodule.nus.edu.sg/ac/>

Course Schedule**I. INTRODUCTION**

Session 1 INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGY

II. STRATEGY AS POSITION: INDUSTRY STRUCTURE VIEW

Session 2 INDUSTRY ANALYSES: FIVE FORCES

Reading: The Five Competitive Forces that Shape Industry

Case: Apple Inc. in 2012

Session 3 BUSINESS STRATEGY

Reading: What is Strategy?

Case: Walmart

III. STRATEGY AS LEVERAGE: RESOURCE-BASED VIEW

Session 4 RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES

Reading: The Core Competence of the Corporation

Case: Eli Lilly and Company: Drug Development Strategy

Session 5 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION: LEVERAGING RESOURCES

Reading: Competing on Resources

Case: Toyota Motor Corporation: Launching Prius

IV. STRATEGY AS ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN: HIERARCHY VS. NETWORKS

Session 6 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICS:
FORMAL VS. RELATIONAL FORMS OF GOVERNANCE

Case: Hebei Dawu Group

Session 7 CORPORATE STRATEGY: NETWORK FORMS OF
ORGANIZATION

Case: Bosch India's Starter Motor and Generator Division

V. STRATEGY AS OPPORTUNITY CAPTURE: COMPLEXITY THEORY VIEW

Session 8 REAL-TIME STRATEGY: SIMPLE RULES

Reading: Simple Rules for a Complex World

Case: Mahindra and Mahindra

Session 9 STRATEGIC RENEWAL AND CHANGE: EXPERIMENTATION
AND PROBES

Case: Dropbox: "It Just Works"

VI. STRATEGY AS CREATION: INSTITUTIONAL THEORY VIEW

Session 10 PRODUCTS AND ECOSYSTEMS

Reading: Shaping Strategy in a World of Constant Disruption

Case: Linear Air: Creating the Air Taxi Industry

Session 11 PLATFORM BUSINESSES

Reading: Strategies for Two-sided Markets

Case: LinkedIn

VII. CONCLUSION

Session 12 STRATEGY VIDEO REPORT PRESENTATIONS