

COURSE OUTLINE

BSP3001 Strategic Management

Semester 2, 2016-2017

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This foundational course in strategy explores the basic concepts, analytical techniques, and strategic options that form the basis for strategic analysis and action. It gives an overview of all essential aspects of strategic management: strategy analysis (internal and external), formulation of strategies at different levels of the organization, and strategy implementation. We will also reflect on the strategic purpose of organizations, and their role towards shareholders, stakeholders and society in general. The intention is to provide students with strategy insights, with particular reference to Asian firms; reflect on strategic dilemmas; and practice strategy tools to enable students to become confident and creative strategic thinkers.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To become familiar with, acquire expertise in, and apply the concepts, frameworks and techniques of strategy in order to:
 - understand the reasons for good or bad performance by a firm
 - generate strategy options for a firm
 - assess available options under conditions of imperfect knowledge
 - select the most appropriate strategy
 - recommend means of implementing the chosen strategy
2. To enhance your ability to:
 - view business problems from a strategic perspective
 - develop original and innovative approaches to strategic problems that span national boundaries
 - create convincing plans of action for the resolution of business problems
3. To improve your analytical, discussion and presentation skills.

III. READING MATERIAL

The textbook for the course this course is *Strategic Management* by Frank. T. Rothaermel (#1 below). Other reference books are as follows:

1. **Strategic Management by Frank. T. Rothaermel (McGraw Hill)**
2. *Strategic Management and Competitive Advantage: Concepts and Cases* by Jay B. Barney and William S. Hesterley (Pearson)
3. We will also use several Harvard and Ivey cases, and cases from Singh, K., Pangarkar, N., & Heracleous, L. *Business Strategy in Asia: A Casebook* (Cengage, 2010) (SP&H).

IV. GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

The course grade will be calculated in the following way:

Class participation	(30 %)
IVLE quizzes (2)	(30 %)
Short group presentation	(10 %)
Group project and presentation	(30%)

1. Class Participation (30 %)

Participation in class is important and is closely tied with learning outcomes. It is thus essential that class participants be ready to discuss pre-assigned issues with respect to cases and readings. In analyzing a case, you should identify problems, explore strategic alternatives, and develop recommendations. I use the following questions to evaluate class participation:

- Is the participant a good listener?
- Do the comments reflect careful analysis?
- Do the comments add to our understanding of the situation?
- Is there a willingness to try new ideas (beyond repeating case facts)?
- Is the participant considerate of other class members?

Please read in advance the cases and the readings assigned for every class. If you are not prepared for any class, please let me know in advance so that I don't inadvertently embarrass you. Individuals and/or groups may be called on to present their analyses in class.

2. IVLE quizzes (30%)

You are expected to take part in 2 online quizzes, one around the mid-semester break and the second one towards the end of the course. These quizzes will be comprised of a series of objective questions and some essay type questions. The aim of these assessments is to further classroom learning by testing your understanding of the concepts. There will be no grace period given to students who have missed the deadline. Furthermore, if you miss out on a quiz, there will be no make-up assignment to compensate for the lost marks.

Note that there is a strict honor code in place for these quizzes (see the section Academic Honesty and Plagiarism below). These quizzes are *individual* tests and collaboration between students will not be tolerated.

3. Short group presentation (10%)

Each group is expected to make a short presentation on an assigned topic. You are encouraged to get in touch with the instructor if you need any clarifications or suggestions on the preparation of your topic. You may also choose another topic after getting approval from the instructor. The presentation should be about 12-15 minutes. Submit a hard copy of your slides and a 1 page executive summary before your presentation and post a copy on IVLE as well.

5. Group Application Projects (30%)

The objective of the group application project is to apply the concepts and frameworks learnt in the course to an episode of technology strategy in an industry. The project should be worked on in a team of four (preferred) or five students. In keeping with the spirit of the class, the project will examine a specific problem faced by a firm, how it chose to tackle it, and how it could do so better. I am open to studying both successes and failures. The more specific the problem you identify, the better.

Project Proposal. You can discuss your ideas with me from week 4-6. By **week 6** before the mid-semester break, you need to formally submit a one page project proposal and fix a meeting with me to discuss (in groups). This proposal is meant to define the boundaries within which your team would work on the application project. I will provide feedback/suggestions so as to align our expectations going forward. It will also be helpful if you mention how you plan to collect data for the project (e.g., archival sources, interviews etc.).

Final Paper. The final paper is due by the end of **week 11**. This should be about 4-5000 words (excluding references, exhibits, executive summary). This document should include a 1 page executive summary in the beginning. The paper will be evaluated on four dimensions:

- 1) What is the *puzzle* and the *insight* offered by the analysis—does it go beyond describing what happened to shed light on the fundamental causes.
- 2) The *quality* of the analysis and how well it integrates the concepts developed in the course.
- 3) How *relevant, useful, and well supported* are the lessons and recommendations presented.
- 4) The *readability* of the paper and readers' access to the ideas presented.

While you are probably aware of the conventions of properly citing material and ideas, I believe a short note on the subject is worthwhile. Material reproduced verbatim should be enclosed in quotation marks, with proper attribution made to the source. Ideas and concepts even if not quoted verbatim should be attributed to the author/ source, also via proper citation.

Presentation In the weeks 12 and 13, each group will be invited to present its findings for fifteen minutes. Two students from other groups will be assigned to *comment* on the project

for a maximum of 5 minutes. After this, there will be Q&A open to the class for another 5 minutes.

V. OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Please feel free to come and talk to me regarding any aspect of the course including your individual performance or issues discussed in class. Suggestions for improving the quality of class discussion are always welcome.

Some additional points worth note are:

1. *I plan to be prepared for every class and I expect you to do the same.*
2. *Group work is strongly encouraged* for purposes of case preparation for classroom discussion unless specified otherwise (e.g. case write-ups are individual).
3. **Laptops, hand phones, and other electronic devices may not be used in class.**
4. **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

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/>