COURSE OUTLINE
BSP3001 Business Policy & Strategy
Semester 1, 2011-2012

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Course Description
This course gives an overview of all essential aspects of business policy and strategic management. The intention is to provide students with strategy insights; reflect on strategic dilemmas; and practice strategy tools to enable students to become strategic thinkers. The course will cover strategy analysis, formulation of strategies at different levels of the organization, and strategy implementation. We will also reflect on the purpose of organizations, their governance, and their role towards shareholders, stakeholders and society in general.

Course Objectives
Many students enter business schools hoping to quickly pick up the tricks of the trade, without spending too much energy on the laborious task of thoroughly understanding organizations and their environments. Often, tools and techniques are more highly valued than developing a strategic problem-solving ability. However, this may lead to superficiality as there are no shortcuts to learning to think strategically. Within the field of strategy there are many contradictory paradigms. Frameworks that fit one firm may be useless for another. In this course, the emphasis is not on filling in frameworks and applying standard recipes. On the contrary, students will be expected challenge recipes, question received wisdom, and exhibit unconventional thinking. These are objectives set for this course:

- **Knowledge.** To encourage the understanding of the many, often conflicting, schools of thought and to facilitate the gaining of insight into the assumptions, possibilities and limitations of each set of theories and tools;
- **Skills.** To develop the student's ability to think strategically, understand the language of business, craft strategies on paper and verbally in class discussion, critically reflect on existing theories and tools, to creatively combine or develop frameworks and tools and use them where useful;
- **Asia – focus.** To provide insights into strategies of Asian companies through cases, speakers and in-class examples.

Course Format & General Standards
The format of the course is based on a mixture of lecture, cases, readings and guest speakers. It is my belief that understanding both practice and theory, and acquiring the skill to apply one to the other, should be the core of this course. Classes will not be used to review readings (students should prepare readings before coming to class), but will be employed to give clarifying examples, discuss salient questions in management, for guest speakers, and for case discussion.

- **Case discussion:** I apply a 3-stage approach to learning with cases: 1. students thoroughly prepare the case at home; 2. in class students discuss their analysis in a small group; 3.
there is a plenary discussion in class. This will allow students to compare and ideas and learn from each other. Learning comes not only from understanding new concepts and applying analytical skills. Debating with others will sharpen someone’s analytical skills considerably and will help students to communicate their ideas clearly.

- **Readings:** In each of the classes the students should come prepared by reading the required materials in advance. The students should be ready to be asked to volunteer to open the discussion, do a short presentation, or answer specific questions regarding the case or other readings.

- **Guest speakers:** Considerable preparation time has gone into inviting several high-level executives to share experiences in class. These guest speakers are typically highly appreciated by students as they give insights into real-life strategy issues in companies. However, given their busy schedules, last-minute schedule changes are possible. Your understanding for any last minute changes is appreciated!

- **General standards:**
  - Active participation from students is a condition for the success of the course.
  - During class time mobile phones and other gadgets should be off and movement (leaving and entering class) should be minimal.
  - Please behave professionally, in particular when guest speakers are invited (arrive on time, appropriate dress, ask questions, etc).
  - All assignments submitted for this course will be checked for plagiarism.
  - Feel free during the semester to e-mail me or approach me if you have any questions on the topics discussed in class, your individual performance, or if you would like to give feedback on the course.

### Preliminary Course Schedule

**Week 1:**  
**Introduction to strategy**

**Topics:** Course Introduction, What is Strategy, Strategic Management.


**Case:** SMIT

**Week 2:**  
**External Analysis**

**Topics:** Industry Analysis & Trends, PEST Analysis, 5 Forces Analysis, Blue Ocean Strategy.


**Case:** IOI Group from Malaysia

**Week 3:**  
**Internal Analysis**

**Topics:** Competitive Advantage, Core Competence, Organizational Structure, Process, Culture.


**Case:** KAO Corporation

**Week 4:**  
**Designing Business Level Strategies**

**Topics:** Cost Leadership, Differentiation.

Case: tba

**Week 5:** Designing Corporate Level Strategies  
Topics: Diversification, Vertical Integration, Portfolio vs Synergy, BCG Matrix.

Case: Rodamas Group from Indonesia

**Week 6:** Network Level Strategies  
Topics: Alliances, Joint Ventures, Competition vs Cooperation, Organizational Dependencies.

Case: KLM Air France (p.823-836)

**Week 7:** Global Strategies  
Topics: Internationalization: Motivations & Patterns, Building Transnational Corporations.
Tomorrow’s global giants BHR Ghemawat, Hout

Case: Philips versus Matsushita (p.350-365)

**Week 8:** Strategy Implementation & Strategic Change  
Topics: Strategy Implementation, Re-Positioning the Organization, Strategic Change.

Case: COSCO

**Week 9:** Leadership & Corporate Governance  
Topics: Shareholders vs Stakeholders, Corporate Boards, Leadership Roles.

Case: tba

**Week 10:** Corporate Social Responsibility  
Topics: Ethics, Theories of Capitalism, Corporate Social Responsibility.

Case: NOKIA in China (documentary film)

**Week 11:** Project Presentations
**Week 12:** Project Presentations
**Week 13:** Final Test

NB: pls check the latest updates on IVLE.

**Grading and Assignments**  
The final grade for this course will be computed based on the following:

Class participation & discussion forum 20%
Take-home mid-term group assignment  10% (deadline: Friday Sept 23, 3pm)
Group project & presentation   30%
Final in-class test (case analysis)  40%

- **Class Participation.** Grades will be based on the quality and quantity of participation, but the focus will be on quality. However, absence from class sessions or seldom speaking up during class discussions will result in a low participation score. Please try to participate regularly.

- **Mid-Term Group Assignment:** the assignment will require application of ideas or models covered in class and will be made available on IVLE.

- **Group Project.** While teaching often makes use of cases, real life problems are never neatly summarized and presented in the form of a case. Strategy problems are messy and the way you research them is important in solving these “messes”. The group project gives you an opportunity to research a company or organization, apply your consultancy skills, and make a strategic plan for the CEO. More details regarding the group project will be made available in class.

- **Final Test.** The final exam will consist of a case with a small number of questions. The questions will require students to be able to apply their knowledge (dilemmas, theoretical concepts, tools, frameworks) to the practical case situation. This final test is **open book** and is preferably done on your laptop and uploaded on IVLE. This test does require deep understanding of the strategy concepts and extensive practice in the application of theory to a business situation. The best preparation for both is class participation.

**Literature**
This course strives to be “paper-less” where possible. Readings and cases for each session have been placed in the IVLE. Some readings are placed in the section “e-resources”. Please note that these may only be downloaded only **once** for copyright purposes.

There is no need for students to purchase a textbook. For reference purposes, below is a list of books we will draw from during this course: