BSP 3001: BUSINESS POLICY AND STRATEGY, SPRING 2013
(TENTATIVE SYLLABUS; SUBJECT TO REVISION)

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Synopsis
This course concerns fundamental issues in strategic management, or the set of decisions that senior executives have to make in the pursuit of superior corporate performance. The central theme of the course is the analysis of competitive advantage, which requires effective deployment of internal resources to adapt to and shape external environment. The first part of this course addresses competitive strategy for a single business. We will discuss key elements in an industry environment, a firm’s distinct resources and capabilities, and generic competitive strategies. The second part of the course addresses corporate strategy of a multiple businesses firm. We will discuss vertical, horizontal, and international diversification.

Prerequisites
This course is designed for final year business students. Students should have completed all foundation modules a prior.

Learning Objectives
1. To understand fundamental issues in strategic management as well as corresponding theories and analytical tools.
2. To practice the applications of strategy theories and tools in a range of business contexts.
3. To develop skills of collective learning and collaboration.

Teaching Modes
Students are expected to learn about theoretical elements of strategy mainly through studying assigned readings and textbook chapters prior to a class. Lecture will be kept to a bare minimum. Most time during the classes will be devoted to case discussion, with the focus of applying theories and analytical tools to real-world examples. This emphasis on interactive discussion places important responsibilities on students in terms of preparation and participation.

1. Preparation. Preparation for each class is critical, including careful reading of the assigned case and careful analysis based on the assignment questions. I encourage preparation in study groups as a mean for enriching the learning experience. I will assume that every student has prepared the day’s assignment prior to class.
2. Attendance. Students are expected to attend every class. In the case where you cannot attend a class for a legitimate reason, please send supporting documents to the BBA office (not to the lecturer). Otherwise, absenteeism will count against the class participation grade.
3. Participation. In case method pedagogy, active and thoughtful class participation is critical to individual and collective learning. When necessary, I will “cold call” students throughout the discussion. Class participation accounts for a significant portion of the total grade in the course (see below).
Assessments

1. **Class participation (20%)**. In evaluating class participation, the overarching criterion is “how significantly does this student’s participation contribute to the collective learning as a whole?” Such an evaluation will be done jointly by the lecturer and a few selected students in each class.

2. **Case reports (40%)**. Each student is expected to analyze and write a report for two of the cases discussed in this semester. Each report, with a maximum length of 3,000 words (all inclusive), accounts for 20% toward the final grade. No more than 2 members of the same project group (see below) should write about the same case. Students are expected to submit their reports before the corresponding case is to be discussed in the class.

3. **Final group project (40%)**. Students will be organized into project groups (5-6 members per group) and each group will pick a company to 1) identify one strategic challenge facing the company, and 2) provide suggestions about how to tackle the challenge. The chosen company should have major operation in the Asia-Pacific Region, and region-specific factors should be central in students’ analysis. The final project includes a presentation (20% toward the final grade) and a written report (20%; maximum length: 10,000 words all inclusive) component.

At the end of the course, an anonymous peer evaluation will be administrated to assess each student’s contribution to the group project, and final grade will be adjusted accordingly. In other words, members of the same group typically would receive different marks for their group project, dependent upon their varying contribution as evaluated by their peers.

Studying Materials

Studying materials for each topic, which will available on IVLE two weeks prior to the corresponding class, include:

1. Two to three assigned articles and/or textbook chapters
2. A case
3. Study questions for the above case
4. Lecture notes