COURSE OUTLINE
BSP3001 Business Policy & Strategy
Semester II, 2013-2014

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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 short-cuts 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 to 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, where appropriate.

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 share 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. Some cases may be in the form of documentary films.

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.

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.
- All course assignments will be automatically 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Case/ Discussions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Good Strategy Bad Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>External Analysis</td>
<td>Porter's 5 Forces; Blue Ocean</td>
<td>NUS-NTU-SMU difference</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Internal Analysis</td>
<td>Core competence, competing on resources</td>
<td>Samsung’s Globalization (case)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Corporate Level Strategy</td>
<td>Khanna and Palepu; Amsden and Hikino</td>
<td>Samsung (film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Innovation Strategy</td>
<td>Govindarajan and Immelt</td>
<td>Aravaind (film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Global Strategy</td>
<td>Ghemawat and Hout</td>
<td>Tata-Daewoo (case)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Strategy Implementation</td>
<td>Gilbert</td>
<td>Deep Dive (film)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Strategy and Culture</td>
<td>Khanna and Song</td>
<td>Fast Retailing (case)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Managing Change</td>
<td>Bower and Gilbert</td>
<td>Bogota (film)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Final Quiz</td>
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Grading and Assignments

The final grade for this course will be computed based on the following:

- **Class participation** 30%
- **Discussion forum participation** 10%
- **Group project & presentation** 30%
- **Final Quiz** 30%

- **Class Participation & IVLE forum.** 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 in class and at the IVLE forum.

- **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 Quiz.** The final quiz 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 would be placed in the IVLE. There is no need for students to purchase a textbook. For reference purposes, below is a list of books you may want to draw from during this course:

- Good Strategy Bad Strategy, by Richard Rumelt
- Contemporary Strategy Analysis, By Robert Grant (8th edition)