

Saint Louis University, Madrid Campus
Faculty of Business Administration and Economics

**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
CAPSTONE COURSE
MGT-400 Summer 2008**

Prerequisite: Senior Standing and Completion of Business Core Courses
Credits: 3

Required Texts/Materials:

Strategic Management, 7th Edition, by Hill & Jones (Houghton Mifflin, copyright 2007)

Course Description:

Strategic Management deals with the central question of why and how some firms outperform others. While there is no “one best way” to run a successful firm, the field of strategic management has provided theoretical frameworks and practical tools and techniques of strategy analysis to aid strategic decision makers in dealing with the complexities associated with “successfully” running a firm.

Strategic Management / Business Policy (MGT 400) is the capstone, integrative course for graduating International Business students. This is an exciting, challenging course that focuses on how firms formulate, implement, and evaluate strategies. Strategic management concepts and techniques are studied. Students use all the knowledge acquired from prior business courses, coupled with new strategic-management techniques learned, to chart the future direction of different organizations. The major responsibility of students in this course is to make objective strategic decisions and to justify them through oral and written communication.

Part of MGT 400 will consist of interactive lectures on strategic-management techniques. We will examine the principles associated with the formulation and implementation of business strategy, as well as the latest research about business strategy, which challenges traditional ways of thinking. We will also rely heavily on case analysis in order for students to develop conceptual and analytical skills, the two key skills needed for developing effective competitive strategy.

Learning Objectives:

My aim in this course is not to make you an expert strategic decision maker over the course of three weeks. Good strategists develop over long periods of time and with many years of experience. My objective is to provide you with multiple opportunities to learn and utilize the various tools and techniques of analysis in formulating and implementing a successful strategy for a firm. I hope to be able to move you further along the continuum of novice to expert in the field of strategic management.

- Sharpen your ability to “think strategically,” evaluate situations from a strategic perspective, and reach sound strategic decisions.
- Define and describe the important vocabulary used in the field of strategic management.
- Appreciate the complex set of factors that influence business and managers.
- Understand the challenges of globalization and rapid technological change to strategic thinking.
- Improve the clarity and effectiveness of your writing.
- Become more confident and effective as a public speaker.
- Synthesize the many courses and experiences you have had as an IB major.
- Be more conscious about the importance of exemplary ethical principles, sound personal and company values, and socially responsible management practices.
- Understand the role of the executives, board of directors and organizational members in the strategy-making process.
- Think strategically about a firm, conduct a company situation analysis and determine a firm’s opportunities for gaining sustainable competitive advantage.
- Function effectively as part of a company’s strategy-implementing team.

GRADE COMPONENTS:

Class Participation	(25%)
Test on Chapters 1 – 5	(13.33%)
Test on Chapters 6 – 9	(13.33%)
Test on Chapters 10 - 13	(13.33%)
Group Case Analysis / Presentation	(25%)
Quizzes	(10%)

GRADE SCALE:

A	93%
A-	90%
B+	88%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	78%
C	73%
C-	70%
D	60%
F	- 59%

COURSE EVALUATION

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

(25%) Participation will be graded based on the **quality** of your input to class discussion, especially during **case discussions**. For quality participation you must demonstrate that you have not *simply read* the case but rather that you have *thoroughly analyzed the case* and that you have *developed recommendations that you can defend* with *sound arguments and concepts from the course*. It also includes useful questions addressed to the instructor or to other students making presentations. Students will be called upon randomly (**cold called**) on a daily basis to give answers or comment on questions and issues, especially regarding the business cases. Therefore, you will be expected to have read all required material before coming to class. Attendance is not participation. You must be prepared for every class and actively participate in the discussions in order to earn participation points. At the end of each class period I will give each of you a score based on the quality of your participation for that day.

BUSINESS CASE DISCUSSIONS:

The goal of this class is to enhance your ability to make effective strategic management decisions in complex business environments. The best method in a classroom setting for enhancing your understanding and use of strategic management tools is to provide you with opportunities to apply these tools and skills to real-world business situations. Thus, the course focuses on a wide range of challenging business cases that we will discuss in-depth each day. You are expected to read and then re-read (analyze) a case each afternoon in preparation for the discussion the following day. You will have a quiz on each case at the beginning of the class. I will randomly select students (cold call) at the beginning of each case discussion to present their view of the case.

I won't be looking for you to summarize the facts of the case; rather, I'll be looking for you to go beyond the facts, to provide your analysis of the problem or challenge, to provide sound recommendations to help the firm improve its performance in the future, and to provide solid support for your recommendations.

EXAMS:

(40%) There will be three exams, each worth 13.33%. The first exam covers Chapters 1-5 on Thursday, September 27th and the second exam covers Chapters 6-10 on Thursday, November 14th, and the third exam will cover Chapters 11-13. Most of the material on the exams will be taken from the text. However, **anything** that we discuss in class is potential test material, such as videos, guest speakers, or additional reading assignments.

To be clear, I am **not** going to summarize the book for you in this course. You are all capable of reading and understanding it yourselves. My role is to complement the material in the book with cases, videos, discussions, exercises, guest speakers, and other real world applications to provide you with opportunities to put the strategic management theories in practice. Therefore, **you must read the book in detail** to effectively participate in the class and perform well on the exams. If there are topics in the book that you would like to discuss or need help with that we do not cover in class, come and see me in my office hours or send me an email and we can set up a time to meet and discuss any issues you would like. Make-up exams will only be given if a valid excuse is provided for

missing the regular exam.

GROUP CASE ANALYSIS:

(25%) You will work in groups of two on a written case analysis and presentation. At the beginning of the course I will allow you to choose your group members. If you have no preference, I will assign you to a group. As a group you will do a case analysis that must be typed and turned in on December 11th. Your group will need to make a 30-minute presentation of your analysis, recommendations, and conclusions. Your presentation will be followed by an open class discussion, led by your group, about the case and your recommendations. You must be prepared to defend and support your recommendations during this discussion.

Case presentations will take place the final week of the course (June 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st). See separate handout on the WebCT called *Guidelines for Case Analysis Group Project* for instructions on how to do the case analysis and presentation. (For additional guidance you can also look at *Analyzing a Case Study and Writing a Case Study Analysis* in your textbook, p. C1).

This project will definitely require work outside of class. If you cannot meet with your group outside of class, you should not take this course. I reserve the right to adjust the grades of individual team members up or down, depending upon my judgment of individual contributions – in other words, I will be on the lookout for either heroic efforts or free riding. In addition, group members will submit a confidential **peer analysis** the day of the group presentation.

QUIZZES:

(10%) You are expected to read the assigned chapters, cases, and articles before we cover the material in class. The purpose of the quizzes is to ensure that you have read the material. Quizzes will be announced and may take place on any day of the course. If you are not present to take the quiz on the date it is given, you will earn a score of zero. There will be no opportunities to makeup missed quizzes. I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

WEBCT:

Your use of WebCT is required for this course. I will provide you with material on WebCT throughout the course and it is your responsibility to check WebCT daily for any updates, new materials, or announcement. I will use the Discussion Board to post announcements. On the first day of class you will be required to send me a message through the WebCT to show me that you have registered in the system for our class. For every day that you are late in sending the email, you will lose a point on your first exam.

PROFESSIONALISM:

In this class we will operate just like in any other professional environment. You are expected to arrive on time and prepared. Assignments and projects are to be turned in on time and according to format guidelines. Performance that would get you reprimanded in the business world will earn you and F in this course.

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Because of the intensive 3-week structure of the course, one day is actually equivalent to

three regular class sessions. Therefore, attendance in this course is mandatory every day. Missed classes are only excused for special circumstances for which you must provide written proof. If you must miss a day of class, it is your responsibility to get the notes and to find out about any assignments that may have been given out that day. Missing an unexcused class session will negatively affect your overall grade.

CLASS INTEGRITY:

Cheating (which includes plagiarism on written assignments) is unacceptable and will result in the immediate failure on the assignment or test involved. It could also result in failure of the course and expulsion from the University. Just to be clear, plagiarism occurs when you use someone else's words or ideas and intentionally or knowingly present them as your own. As a word of advice, do not put your reputation, a priceless asset, on the line for the chance at a better grade.

RECOMMENDED READING MATERIAL:

- The Wall Street Journal
- Forbes Magazine
- Fortune Magazine
- The Economist
- Business Week
- Harvard Business Review
- Business Horizons
- Fast Company
- Wired