Course overview, learning goals, and objectives

This capstone strategic management course explains why some firms outperform others. The course takes an integrative, multi-functional approach to the kind of broad organizational issues confronted by top executives. We will examine critical strategic issues that require a general management approach, using all the core business functions covered in the School of Business curriculum, rather than a strictly functional one. An integrative perspective is essential because the formulation and implementation of effective strategies requires a precise understanding of the interrelationships among the different functions and the relationships of these functions to the business environment. Thus, this course represents the synthesis course for the School of Business.

Undergraduate Learning Goals:

- Our students will demonstrate an understanding of the social, global, ethical, and legal contexts of business and will be able to reflect on the role of the individual in business.
- Our students will demonstrate an understanding of and the ability to apply knowledge of professional skills necessary for success in business including effective business writing.
- Our students will demonstrate technical and analytic skills appropriate for success in business.
- Our students will demonstrate an understanding of and the ability to apply knowledge of core business disciplines including accounting, finance, information systems, management, marketing, and operations management.
- Our students will demonstrate knowledge and skills appropriate for specialization in their majors.
- Our students will demonstrate an understanding of how research in the business disciplines contributes to knowledge and how such research is conducted.

Course Objectives:

- To familiarize the current literature of strategic management;
• To understand the complexities and challenges of multi-functional organizational problems;
• To focus attention on strategic issues confronting contemporary businesses;
• To facilitate the development of strategic thinking; and
• To further refine research, analytical, critical-thinking, team building, and communication skills.

Prerequisites:

Students must have completed general education requirements, all core courses (e.g., ACCT 301, ACCT 303 or ACCT 330; BULE 302 or BULE 303; BUS 303 or SOM 301; BUS 310 or OM 210; FNAN 301 or FNAN 303; MGMT 301 or MGMT 303; MIS 301 or MIS 303; MKTG 301 or MKTG 303; OM 301 or OM 303), and have senior standing. Consult Mason catalog for a complete list of course prerequisites.

Course Materials:

Required:  

Recommended:  
Any business publications such as the Wall Street Journal, Business Week, Fortune, Forbes, Economist, Financial Times, Harvard Business Review, etc.

Grading Weights and Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry report</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm report</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case competition presentation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

Exams (Individual)

The course exams may consist of case analysis, short essays and questions. Students will be required to apply concepts and frameworks from assigned readings and cases and in-class discussions. More details will be forthcoming.

Class Participation (Individual)

Since this course is a discussion/case-based course, your participation is critical to the learning experience. Much of the learning that will take place in this class comes from the chance to express ideas, listen to what others have to say, and discuss these ideas in order to develop your critical-thinking skills. Please take advantage of this opportunity to gauge and hone your communication skills. To do this you must prepare all assigned materials and participate in the in-class discussions, exercises and assignments. Do not underestimate the value of what you and your classmates have to say.

Because your participation is vital to the success of the class as a whole, daily participation grades will be recorded (feel free to meet with me as often as you like to discuss your current participation grades). Grades for class participation will depend on both the quality and the frequency of participation. Quality is much more important than frequency but a person with frequent high quality participation will merit a better grade than one with occasional high quality participation. Grades will be assigned each class based on:

Student shows evidence of careful analysis by using facts and evidence from the assigned materials to make arguments, as appropriate; student’s participation fits in with the flow of class discussion and demonstrates that he/she has been listening to and reacting to others’ points of view; student is able to influence the class to consider
important avenues that the class neglected; student is able to engage constructively in debating points with other students; and student presents recommendations justified by his/her analysis and/or by the discussion in the class.

Less value is placed on participation that repeats case facts without analysis or that disrupts the flow of the class discussion without good reason. Students will be called upon randomly to answer questions pertaining to the readings. If for some reason you are not fully prepared on a particular day, let me know before class so that I do not embarrass you inadvertently. I realize that work and traffic can present challenges to on-time attendance, but everyone is aware of this and should plan ahead to overcome these difficulties. Please note that you will not be successful by simply attending class and consistently being unprepared.

GMU catalog states the following on attendance policies for graduate and undergraduate classes:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important to the individual student and to the class as a whole. Because class participant may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Team Selection:

Select your own teams of five students. Since diversity and close coordination is a key part of management in dealing with complex, multi-functional organizational challenges, please consider complementary functional expertise and individual schedule and location to ease coordination.

Industry and Firm Reports – Online Travel Industry (Team)

Both reports will be completed in teams. The industry report consists of researching and analyzing the Online Travel Agency Industry. The firm report consists of researching and analyzing an assigned firm in the Online Travel Agency Industry. Both reports must be typed and not exceed 5-double spaced pages, excluding exhibits, with 1” margins and standard fonts (i.e., 11 or 12-point). The reports will be broadly evaluated on incisive analysis, the application of appropriate concepts and frameworks, the logic of arguments (qualitative and quantitative), and presentation (professionalism, persuasion, clarity, flow, spelling, grammar, etc). Exhibits are highly recommended to enhance the text. Graphics, tables, and bullets will help to make points in the most concise way and to clarify issues discussed in the text. Exhibits should be germane to the analysis and arguments, and should be referenced as appropriate in the text. Note, however, that the point of the information presented in the exhibits must be covered in the writing of the report. Please make sure all appropriate materials are referenced, use a broad range of references, and provide current and complete references (title, source, date, etc.). More details will be forthcoming. Please also refer to the case competition website: http://business.gmu.edu/bus498/.

Case Study Presentation (Team)

Each team will present their analysis of one of the cases studies assigned for class discussion. The case presentations must not exceed 20 minutes and all team members must participate in the presentation. All teams must provide a hardcopy of their PowerPoint slides (3 slides per page) the evening before the due date. Case studies will be assigned randomly to each team. Teams will prepare a thorough analysis of the case and make presentations to the class. Questions to be addressed in each presentation will be posted on BlackBoard.

Case Competition Presentations on Ryanair: Flying Too Close to the Sun? (Team)

The case competition presentations must not exceed 12 minutes and all team members must speak. All teams must provide a hardcopy of their PowerPoint slides (3 slides per page) on the assigned date. The presentations will be evaluated based on the following criteria: identification of key issues facing the case company, validation of why they are key issues (qualitative and quantitative), did recommended strategies address the key issues, validate why recommended
strategies would work (qualitative and quantitative), and presentation (professionalism, persuasion, enthusiasm, clarity, flow, spelling, grammar, etc). Support your arguments with facts and when data or information is missing, make reasonable assumptions, which you can articulate and defend. More details will be forthcoming.

Assignment policy:

All assignments and exams must be handed in on schedule and in-class (no e-mails). Late assignments and missed exams will drop a letter grade for every day they are late. You are to work only with your team members on the team assignments, not with other members of the class or anyone outside this section. Team members will receive the same grade, but if the team feels a particular student(s) did not adequately contribute, please do not include his/her name on the assignment. At the same time, please be fair and provide ample communication and time. That student will be given an individual assignment to be assigned by the instructor.

Email policy:
Mason requires that students use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. Faculty may only respond to emails originating from Mason email accounts. Please see http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information.

Business Library Liaison Information:
Jo Ann J. Henson, MLIS Business and Economics Liaison Librarian. Fenwick Library Fairfax Campus: http://infoguides.gmu.edu/business

School of Business Standards of Behavior:
The mission of the School of Business at George Mason University is to create and deliver high-quality educational programs and research. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni who participate in these educational programs contribute to the well-being of society. High-quality educational programs require an environment of trust and mutual respect, free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence, and lifelong learning. Students, program participants, faculty, staff, and alumni accept these principles when they join the School of Business community. In doing so, they agree to abide by the following standards of behavior:
• Respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others
• Honesty and integrity in dealing with all members of the community
• Accountability for personal behavior

Integrity is an essential ingredient of a successful learning community. Ethical standards of behavior help promote a safe and productive community environment, and ensure every member the opportunity to pursue excellence. School of Business can and should be a living model of these behavioral standards. To this end, community members have a personal responsibility to integrate these standards into every aspect of their experience at the School of Business. Through our personal commitment to these Community Standards of Behavior, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential.

Mason Honor Code:
To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. The School of Business recommended sanctions for honor code violations are available in the miscellaneous folder in Bb. http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=17&navoid=1310#Honor

Catalog:
The University Catalog, http://catalog.gmu.edu, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

Late assignments:
Late assignments will not be accepted.
**Make-up exams:**
No make-up exams will be given without prior permission.

**Extra credit:**
There is no extra credit opportunity available other than participating in the final round of the case competition.

**Electronic devices:**
Please turn off your cell phones and laptops.

**Disability Accommodations:**
If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructors. Please bring that form to me as I cannot provide any accommodations until I receive that form. Please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with me at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term so we can plan effectively. If you have contacted the Office of Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please let me know.

**Diversity:**
Diversity is a core value at Mason. We promote a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among our students, faculty and staff. Through our curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. Please read Mason’s Diversity Statement at http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversitystatement/.

**Religion:**
Students who will miss class for religious reasons should inform me of their anticipated absences by email preferably within the first two weeks of the semester.

**Counseling Center:**
George Mason University has a counseling center that can provide assistance if you find yourself overwhelmed by life, want training in academic or life skills, or the like. More information is available at http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/.

**Writing Guidelines:**
All writing assignments should be formatted as follows: single-spaced, Times New Roman, 11-point font, and 1-inch margins. To cite and reference professional or academic sources, please use APA style. Specific instructions for in-text citations and referencing are found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition or at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

To help manage citations and seamlessly create reference lists, Mason supports free software called Zotero at https://www.zotero.org/. This program offers: Centralized bibliography management, ability to sync across computers, ability for teams to combine contributions to the references, and word plug-in that allows citation management within MS word. George Mason University has a writing center that can help you improve your English writing skills. More information is available at http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/.

**Inclement weather and campus emergencies:**
Information regarding weather-related changes in the University’s schedule (e.g., closing or late opening) will be provided on the GMU website and via MasonAlert. Students sign up for the Mason Alert system to provide emergency information of various sorts at https://alert.gmu.edu. An emergency poster exists in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises and that further information about emergency procedures exists on http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert Miscellaneous: Electronic means such as SafeAssign may be used to check originality of work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Week 1 (T/R Jan. 21, 23) | Course Introduction  
The Concept of Strategy | Case Link:  
https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/695793 |
| Week 2 (T/R Jan. 28, 30) | The Strategic Management Process | Reading: Chapters 1 and 2  
Case: Case 1: Wall-Mart Stores in 2003 |
| Week 5 (T/R Feb. 18, 20) | Internal Analysis: Resources, Capabilities, and Activities, Competitive Advantage and Firm Performance | Readings: Chapters 4 and 5  
Case 3: Mobileye: The Future of Driverless Cars. |
| Week 6 (T/R Feb. 25, 27) | Business Strategy: Differentiation, Cost Leadership, and Integration | Readings: Chapter 6  
Case 4: Samsung |
| Week 7 (T/R Mar. 03, 05) | **Mid Term Test** | |
| Week 8 (T/R Mar. 10, 12) | **NO CLASSES** | Spring Recess |
| Week 9 (T/R Mar. 17, 19) | Business Strategy: Innovation and Strategic Entrepreneurship | Readings: Chapter 7  
Case 5: Apple Inc. 2015  
**Industry Report Due** |
| Week 10 (T/R Mar. 24, 26) | Corporate Strategy: Vertical Integration and Diversification | Readings: Chapter 8  
Case 6: Elon Musk’s Big Bets |
| Week 11 (T/R Mar. 31; Apr. 02) | **Case Competition in class presentations** | All teams submit copies of presentations  
Case: Ryanair: Flying Too Close to the Sun? |
| Week 13 (T/R Apr. 07, 09) | Corporate Strategy: Acquisitions, Alliances, and Network | Readings: Chapter 9, 11  
Case 7: Volkswagen and Tata Motors: A Strategic Alliance in India |
| **Friday April 10** | **School-wide Case Competition** | |
| Week 13 (T/R Apr. 14, 16) | Global Strategy: Competing Around the World | Readings: Chapter 10  
Case 8: HTC Corp in 2012 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14 (T/R Apr. 21, 23)</th>
<th>Strategy Implementation Review and wrap up</th>
<th>Readings: Chapter 11, 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 15 (T/R Apr. 28, 30)</td>
<td><strong>Second Test</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 16 (R May 07)</td>
<td><strong>Firm Report</strong></td>
<td><strong>Firm Report Due</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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# School of Business Recommendations for Honor Code Violations

*Approved May 2016*

## UG-Non Freshman Students (including transfer students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violation</th>
<th>First Offense</th>
<th>Second Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plagiarism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Failure to cite/attribute sources</td>
<td>An F in the class; referral to Writing Center; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion</td>
<td>An F in the class; referral to the Writing Center; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Representing someone else’s work as the student’s own (e.g., copying and pasting)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cheating</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. On a minor assignment (e.g., homework, quizzes)</td>
<td>An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion</td>
<td>An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cheating on a major assignment or exam, submitting course work from another course as original work</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; and at least one semester suspension</td>
<td>An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lying (e.g., providing fraudulent excuse documents, falsifying data)</strong></td>
<td>An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion; and at least one semester suspension</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egregious Violation (e.g., stealing an exam; submitting coursework from another class as original work across multiple courses; lying to an employer about academic performance, false identification or posing as another, in person or online)</strong></td>
<td>An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one year suspension</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and expulsion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>