Course: BUS 498-004 / 001, Advanced Business Modules, spring 2020
Class Times: Monday and Wednesday, 9 – 10:15 am / 12 – 1:15 pm
Location: Exploratory Hall L111 (9 am) / Robinson Hall B222 (noon)
Professor: Dr. Matt Theeke
Office: 212 Enterprise Hall
Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30 – 11:30 am
E-mail: mtheeke@gmu.edu
Course Website Address: Blackboard through “mymason” portal

Prerequisites:
Students must have completed general education requirements and all core courses (i.e., ACCT 301, BULE 302, OM 301, FNAN 301, MGMT 301, MIS 301, and MKTG 301; and senior standing).

Required Course Materials:
   - The mini cases and chapter cases listed on the class schedule are included in the textbook
2. Cases: Link to purchase cases below: https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/692886
   - i. Cola Wars Continue: Coke and Pepsi in 2010
   - ii. Trader Joes
   - iii. Walmart Stores
   - iv. Apple in 2015
   - v. Walt Disney Company
   - vi. Walmart Around The World
   - vii. Wells Fargo: Setting the Stagecoach Thundering Again
   - viii. Ryanair: Flying Too Close to the Sun (case competition)

Other Reading:
To supplement the cases and textbook I will also periodically assign articles from business publications that are related to course topics. Accordingly, it is also recommended that students read business publications such as Business Week, Fortune, The Economist, etc.

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Appendix A: Case Questions.......................................................................................Page 10
COURSE OVERVIEW, LEARNING GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

Strategic management, at its core, is the search for firm competitive advantage. This search is carried out by individuals within organizations in environments that are quite often highly dynamic and uncertain. Studying strategic management allows us to answer questions such as:

- Why does one firm succeed while a closely-related competitor fails?
- Is success sustainable or will it always be transitory?
- Why are firms in some industries (e.g. high tech) typically far more profitable than firms in other industries (e.g. airlines, steel)?
- What types of decisions can general managers make to influence the success of their firm?
- What impact do managers’ decisions have on the performance of the firm?

To capture the high level of complexity under which strategic management takes place, this course will predominantly use the case method to examine how general managers create and maintain competitive advantage for their organizations. We will examine critical strategic issues confronted by top executives of organizations. We will also take a general management and a multi-functional approach to these strategic issues, using all the core business functions covered in the School of Business curriculum, rather than a strictly functional one. This integrative perspective is essential because the formulation and implementation of effective strategies require a precise understanding of the interrelationships among the different functions and the relationships of these functions to the business environment.

Undergraduate Learning Goals:

Goal 1: 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.

Goal 2: 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.

Goal 3: Our students will demonstrate technical and analytic skills appropriate for success in business.

Goal 4: 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.

Goal 5: Our students will demonstrate knowledge and skills appropriate for specialization in their majors.

Goal 6: 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.
# CLASS SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Rothaermel Reading</th>
<th>Case</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>22-Jan</td>
<td>Introduction and Course Overview</td>
<td>Read articles posted on Blackboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>27-Jan</td>
<td>Strategic Mgmt Process</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapters 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>29-Jan</td>
<td>External Analysis: Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Coke &amp; Pepsi in 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>3-Feb</td>
<td>External Analysis: Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coke &amp; Pepsi in 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>5-Feb</td>
<td>Internal Analysis: Resources and Capabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Trader Joes</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>10-Feb</td>
<td>Internal Analysis: Measuring Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>Trader Joes (cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>17-Feb</td>
<td>Business-level Strategy: Cost-based (cont.)</td>
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<td>Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>19-Feb</td>
<td>Business-level Strategy: Differentation-based</td>
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<td>Apple in 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>24-Feb</td>
<td>Exam Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>26-Feb</td>
<td>Exam I</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>2-Mar</td>
<td>Industry Report Working Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>4-Mar</td>
<td>Feedback on Exam I</td>
<td>Industry Report Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>9-Mar</td>
<td>No Class - Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>11-Mar</td>
<td>No Class - Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>16-Mar</td>
<td>Business-level Strategy: Innovation and Entrepreneurship</td>
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<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>Apple in 2015 (cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>23-Mar</td>
<td>Team case presentations</td>
<td>Hard copy of slides due</td>
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<td>Ryanair: Flying Too Close to the Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>25-Mar</td>
<td>Team case presentations</td>
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<td>Ryanair: Flying Too Close to the Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>30-Mar</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy I: Diversification and Vertical Integration</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<td>Walt Disney Company: The Entertainment King</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>1-Apr</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy I: Diversification and Vertical Integration (cont.)</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Walt Disney Company: The Entertainment King (cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>6-Apr</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy II: Acquisitions and Alliances</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>ChapterCase 9: Disney Building Billion Dollar Franchises</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>8-Apr</td>
<td>Global Strategy</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
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<td>Walmart Around the World</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>10-Apr</td>
<td>Case Competition</td>
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<td>Ryanair: Flying Too Close to the Sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>13-Apr</td>
<td>Global Strategy</td>
<td>MiniCase 27: Alibaba and China's Ecommerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>15-Apr</td>
<td>Update on Firm Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>22-Apr</td>
<td>Strategy Implementation</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chaptercase 11: Zappos</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>27-Apr</td>
<td>Strategy Implementation (cont.)</td>
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<td>Wells Fargo</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>29-Apr</td>
<td>Course Wrap up and Review</td>
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<td>Wells Fargo (cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>4-May</td>
<td></td>
<td>Firm report due by end of day</td>
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</table>

The schedule and its contents are subject to change.
GRADE WEIGHTING AND SCALE

1. Exam 1 (Individual) 20  A = 93-100  C+ = 77-79.99
3. Class participation (Individual) 15  B+= 87-89.99  F = Below 70
4. Industry report (Team) 10  B = 83-86.99
5. Firm report (Team) 15  B- = 80-82.99
6. Case competition presentation (Team) 15
   Total points 100

Exams:

There are two course exams. No make-up exams will be given without prior permission. The course exams may consist of multiple-choice and/or short answer 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:

This is a case-based course that is heavy on discussion and interaction, and 15 points (15% of your grade) will be based on your contribution to class discussion and activities. Needless to say, not coming to class prepared to discuss the topic for that day will make it difficult to score well on this, as well as other components of the grading assessment. Furthermore, if you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out from your classmates what material was covered and what handouts you may have missed.

Many people are intimidated by the “obligation” of speaking up in class. Don’t be. Your anxiety will be reduced only through practice. Here’s the secret to cutting your stress level: BE PREPARED. If you have familiarized yourself with the case and readings, you will succeed if you speak up. Please keep in mind that the only measurable output of your preparation is your class discussion – but airtime is a scarce resource, so please use it wisely. Comments based solely on a “gut reaction” generally do not add much value. Participation that does not add any value is treated the same as not participating. Frequent non-quality contributions are not rewarded and in some cases may be penalized. What does class contribution entail? While not an exhaustive list, here are some key ideas:

1. Making evidence-based comments and recommendations
2. Respecting the opinions of others
3. Distinguishing between symptoms and underlying causes
4. Building on the comments of others
5. A high contribution-to-words ratio (i.e. simply taking up “air time” is not a valued contribution)
6. Demonstrating an understanding of the case and readings

Ideally, a contribution will increase the average class understanding of the discussion taking place. This is a lofty goal, yes, and not all comments will have this effect, but keeping this criterion in mind should help you ferret out good and not-so-good comments.
**Expectations Regarding Preparation For Class Discussions**

With respect to our in class meetings, I have high expectations regarding the level of preparation and professionalism. You should prepare for class discussions in the same way that you would prepare for a company business meeting. Being prepared means that you have carefully read all of the assigned materials (textbook and case) before the class meeting and that you have thoughtfully answered the case questions from Appendix A in way that demonstrates critical thinking. Like a business meeting in a company, you need to come to each of the class meetings prepared to share your insights and analysis on the readings and case questions. My goal is for everyone to be actively involved in the class discussion. To encourage involvement I may ask students to provide verbal or written input about the assigned case questions from Appendix A.

- **Calling on Students**: I will sometimes call on a few students to answer questions about the case and readings. While I may call on students at any point during the class, I will most often do so at the beginning or end of case discussions to solicit different perspectives on the case questions or to summarize the key findings of the case and the take-away lessons to be learned from it. Your input at this time builds towards your class contribution grade.

- **Collecting Written Input**: As mentioned above, my expectation is that you have thoughtfully answered the case questions in a way that demonstrates critical thinking prior to our class discussion of that case. To assess your written preparation for the discussion, I may periodically collect written input from all students on a case question of your choosing. Therefore, for each of the seven cases in Appendix A you need to bring a typed ½ page – 1 page answer to one of the case questions. Note: I am not looking for a right or wrong answer, only a good-faith effort to thoughtfully answer the case question using a combination of information from the case and concepts from the textbook. Each time I collect this it will be graded pass/fail (100% or 0%) and will be worth 1 of the 15 class participation points (1% of overall grade). I may collect this between zero and four times over the semester. To earn a passing grade it must be available when I collect it and it must comply with all of the following requirements (I will not accept late submissions):

  1. Must be printed, typed and ½ – 1 page in length (Double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, 1 inch margins)
  2. Must provide an answer to one of the numbered case questions from Appendix A for the case that we are discussing on that day.
  3. Must build on accurate and relevant information/evidence from the case (with in-text citations indicating the page number or case exhibit from which this case evidence was obtained).
  4. Must incorporate concepts from the textbook (with in-text citations indicating the page number from which the concepts were obtained).
  5. Paragraph, bullet or outline structure is OK as long as guidelines are met.

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1 As this is worth 1% each time it is collected, it could be worth between 0% - 4% of the overall course grade.
2 Use questions listed in Appendix A on page 10 for the 7 major cases (i.e., not minicases or chapter cases)
The 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 participation 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:

As some of the course activities will be completed in teams, please 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 schedules and location to ease coordination. To the extent possible, I will try to accommodate your team selection requests, but there may be instances where we need to add team members or rebalance teams to ensure that we comply with the case competition requirements.

Contributions to Team Projects

Throughout the semester you will be involved in various group projects. Like other professional settings, it is critical that all team members are effectively contributing to the group’s performance. To ensure that all students are participating, team members will be asked to provide feedback about other members’ contributions and this feedback will contribute to the final grade that individual students receive for team projects.

Industry and Firm Reports (Recreational Vehicle Industry):

Both reports will be completed in teams. The industry report consists of researching and analyzing an assigned industry. The firm report consists of researching and analyzing a firm in the industry. Both reports must be typed and not exceed 5-double spaced pages, excluding exhibits, with 1" margins and standard fonts (12-point - Times New Roman). 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.
Case Competition Presentations:

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), validation of whether recommended solutions address the key issues, analysis of why recommended strategies would work (qualitative and quantitative), integration, creativity and presentation (professionalism, persuasion, enthusiasm, clarity, flow, spelling, grammar, etc). Support your arguments with facts and when data or information are missing, make reasonable assumptions, which you can articulate and defend. For more information please refer to the case competition website: [http://business.gmu.edu/bus498/](http://business.gmu.edu/bus498/).

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.

E-mail: e-mail (mtheeke@gmu.edu) is the best way to contact me as I do not check my voice mail (703-993-4768) as frequently. I will occasionally send e-mail messages to the entire class. I will use the GMU mailing list associated with this class.

Honor System and Code: Honor System and Code: The Honor System and Code adopted by George Mason University will be enforced for this class: [http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/](http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/). In your work on all written assignments, keep in mind that you may not present as your own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement. You also may not borrow the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement. Please note: Faculty are obligated to submit any Honor Code violations or suspected violations to the Honor Committee without exception. The table below lists the recommended sanctions for different violations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UG-Non Freshman Students (including transfer students)</th>
<th>School of Business Recommendations for Honor Code Violations Approved May 2016</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Violation</strong></td>
<td><strong>First Offense</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>An F in the class; referral to Writing Center; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Failure to cite/attribute sources</td>
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<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>Cheating</td>
<td>An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. On a minor assignment (e.g., homework, quizzes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Cheating on a major assignment or exam, submitting course work</td>
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from another course as original work & at least one semester suspension & An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion, and at least one semester suspension

Lying (e.g., providing fraudulent excuse documents, falsifying data) & An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion, and at least one semester suspension & An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion

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) & An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one year suspension & An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and expulsion

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

**Disability:** Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit http://ds.gmu.edu/ for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

**Religion:** Students who will miss class for religious reasons should inform me of their anticipated absences as soon as possible.
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/csd/c/.

Writing: Unless otherwise specified, all writing assignments should be formatted as follows: double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-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/.

George Mason University has a writing center that can help you improve your English writing skills. 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.

Cell phones & devices: Cell phone and devices are distracting. Please turn off all audible signals before class.