Course: Capstone Course - Advanced Business Models BUS 498 Section 001  
CRN: - 75276 
Class: 7:20 pm - 10:00 pm  
MONDAY MEETINGS 
Location: Planetary Hall 127 
Semester: Fall 2016 (updated Aug 27, 2016) 

Professor: Mahesh P. Joshi Ph.D. 
Office: 217 Enterprise Hall 
Contact: mjoshi@gmu.edu; (preferred email – mpjgmu@gmail.com) 
Office Hours: Appointment or prior to the class meeting (6:30 pm to 7:00 pm) 

Instructional Material: 
Required: Strategic Management: Concepts, Frank Rothaermel, 3rd Edition, 
Required: A packet of cases at discounted price at HBSP (Harvard Case website) 
Case Website details: http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/52470278 
Case 1: WII ENCORE? – product number: 712416-PDF-ENG 
Case 2: TIN MINING, INC. – product number: AN0007-PDF-ENG 
Case 3: RANDOM HOUSE - product number: W13402-PDF-ENG 
Case 4: TWO WAYS TO FLY SOUTH - product number: 707414-PDF-ENG 
Case 5: Competition Case – BEST BUY CO., INC. product number MH0038-PDF-ENG 
Recommended Extra Reading: The Wall Street Journal, Harvard Business Review, 
California Management Review, etc. (I will use the Wall Street Journal on Daily basis) 
Online materials: Please check Blackboard before each class: Courses.gmu.edu 

Course Prerequisites: Students must have completed general education requirements and all 
core courses and senior standing and degree status) 

Learning Goals and Objectives: This class integrates the specific core concepts you learned up 
to this point in the GMU and School of Business Curriculum. You will examine firms and 
industries from an historical and current economic perspective. Your analysis, both written and 
oral, will include the principles of finance, accounting, management, and marketing, with an 
emphasis on information technology as both the 'glue' that links the functional specialties together 
and as a driving force behind emerging business models. Understanding how the various 
functional areas fit together and determine the performance of the firm is the essence of this 
capstone course. You will also learn more traditional strategy concepts including: the strategy 
process, the role of top management, industry analysis, firm resource analysis, strategy 
formulation, including corporate and business level strategies, strategy implementation, 
innovation and growth. 

Additionally, this course will refine your strategic thinking skills now, before you graduate. You 
will master and apply strategic management frameworks to current events and your final project. 
In addition to the course content, the class will help you further develop important skills: research 
skills, analysis, creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, and team building.
The specific program learning goals linked to this class include:

- Our students will be effective communicators.
- Our students will have an interdisciplinary perspective.
- Our students will be knowledgeable about team dynamics and the characteristics of effective teams.
- Our students will be critical thinkers.

The objectives for this course are:

- To familiarize students with 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, problem-solving, team building, and communication skills.

**Approach to Learning:** This course is designed to be centered on active learning -- discussion and application -- rather than the traditional lecture-regurgitation format. Research strongly suggests, and our teaching experiences corroborate, that active learning is more effective and more interesting than traditional lecture-based teaching methods. Successful active learning requires a major investment from both students and faculty. You will need to study the assigned readings before each class, do a fair amount of thinking and writing, and be prepared to contribute to the class discussion. You should become a partner in the learning environment, which means asking questions, sharing your reactions, giving feedback to your colleagues and instructor, and staying on top of the workload. We will invest time and energy to help you attain your goals for the course, and work with you to develop your skills and abilities (more like a coach than a traditional lecturer). This approach requires more work from all of us, but the long run benefits warrant the extra effort.

We will use a combination of lecture, discussions (case based as well news items based) during most class periods. For each topic area, we will usually discuss the strategic management frameworks prevalent in different industry environments first. Then, we will devote class time to the application of these frameworks using both current events and your selected projects as a context.

**Student Responsibilities:** You should enjoy taking advantage of opportunities in this class to develop your analytical and strategic thinking abilities and polish your communication skills, so that you can graduate from the School of Management with confidence in your talents. Is this going to be hard? Yes. Are you going to get a significant return on your investment? We think so. As your instructors, we will create an environment that maximizes your potential to thrive in this course. As such, you should plan to spend a significant amount of time on this course and make sure that you are in a position to succeed - i.e., not trying to overload credits, not working 60 hours a week and trying to go to school full time. In other words, we expect that school is your first priority. If you have any questions about whether or not this is a reasonable time to take this course, given your competing non-school responsibilities, your instructor will be happy to sit down with you before the drop/add date to determine if you are in a reasonable position to
succeed. Put simply, you are responsible for providing yourself enough time and energy to succeed in this course.

The course primarily uses a combination of lectures, class discussions, case analyses; and group/individual assignments. The structure of this course is to achieve simultaneous learning and enjoyment. In other words, with my efforts and your inputs you will learn a great deal and have fun doing it. The more you are willing to contribute to the class, the more you will get out of the course. We will together create a jovial atmosphere while achieving and maintaining rigorous academic standards.

**Assignment policy and Special Accommodations:** All assignments and exams must be handed in on schedule. 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 else. Team members will receive the same grade, but if the team feels a particular student(s) did not adequately contribute, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will be willing to handle team problems up to the first test.

**Academic Integrity:** This is an Honor Code university. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. Please see http://oai.gmu.edu/ or the university catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. Specifically, we expect that:

A. Though, the tests will be open book, seeking help of others through any communication method is not permissible during the course of tests.

B. You will complete original work for this class. Research is important, but you must cite all your sources for all papers and presentations in this course. You may not paraphrase or quote without proper reference. You may not use materials prepared for other courses. You may not use material prepared by other students in the same or other sections of this course, past or present. You can feel free to ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes original work and what constitutes plagiarism.

C. In order to insure equity across sections of 498, electronic means will be used to check originality of work. Written projects must be submitted to “SafeAssign” prior to submitting them to the professor.

**Grading Policy:** Your learning in this course will be evaluated in several ways. This course takes a mastery-based approach to learning, and, logically, to the evaluation of your performance. You must demonstrate that you understand and can apply course concepts and skills in order to pass the course. We will help by providing detailed feedback and providing resources to maximize your opportunities to learn.
Grading Weights and Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Category</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1 (Ind)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test 2 (Ind) (cumulative)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.99</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation (Ind)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry Analysis (Team)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.99</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Firm Analysis (Team)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case presentation (Team)</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total points</td>
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**Tests:** The course exams will consist of two parts: short essay based questions in the form of True or False, but you have to provide justifications based on cases, current news items, textbook and class discussions. The second part will require students to analyze current news items. Students will be required to apply concepts and frameworks from assigned readings and cases and in-class discussions. More details will be listed on the Blackboard.

**Class Participation:** Since this course is a discussion and 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. To do this you must prepare all assigned materials and participate in the in-class discussions, exercises and assignments. Please note, every class your participation will depend on bringing a current news item that connects to a concept to be discussed in class as well as being well prepared for the assigned reading in the class. There are 4 cases assigned in the class and each student team must submit a case analysis (1000 words maximum) prior to the case being discussed in the class. Each submission MAY earn your team a maximum of two points towards individual class participation grade (if found adequate). Grades for class participation will depend on both the quality and the frequency of participation. Students will be called upon randomly to answer questions pertaining to the readings. 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 (including yourself). 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 for ease of coordination. Extensive use of Blackboard and email is highly recommended for completing team based tasks. Instructor may insert or remove certain students from any team to balance the background of the team.
Industry and Firm Reports: (Banking 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 an assigned firm in the industry. Each report must be typed and not exceed 3000 Words Maximum, excluding exhibits. 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.). Each team should have its report analyzed for plagiarism issues on the Blackboard.

Case Competition – In class case presentation (BEST BUY CASE): In week 10, each team will make a professional and dynamic presentation to a hypothetical audience of senior managers at the company you are researching concerning BEST BUY CASE. This presentation will be no more than 15 minutes long. The case competition is multistage process. First, you will make your presentation to the class and your instructor for a grade, which accounts for 15% of your final grade. The two top teams will be chosen to advance to the School of Business Case Competition. The top teams will take your feedback from the in-class presentation to develop a final presentation, to be given during the case competition to a panel of judges from industry and the School of Business Faculty. This case competition is entirely your own effort and NO Professors will not be available to coach advancing teams after the in-class presentations are made. The case competition is a single elimination, two-round competition. The best teams will make their presentation twice. Detailed instructions and grading criteria will be available in advance in class. More information about case competition is available at http://business.gmu.edu/bus498/

Please note: The presentations must not exceed 15 minutes and all team members must be part of presentation. All teams must provide a hardcopy of their PowerPoint slides on the assigned date. The presentations will be evaluated based on a specific set of criteria that will be listed on the Blackboard site. These criteria will focus on issue such as: identification of key issues facing the assigned 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. Presentation of the logic applied in deriving your choice and recommendation is the most critical element to your report and presentation. You may research the assigned case as long as you do not go beyond the timeline of the case. For instance if the case ends in 2014, you cannot include data and analysis form the years after 2014. More details will be provided on BB.
## PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments and Class Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Aug 29 (M)</td>
<td>Introduction; Team formation, How to analyze a case</td>
<td>Read current business news stories from Wall Street Journal Ch. 1 What Is Strategy? Ch. 2 Strategic Leadership: Managing the Strategy Process</td>
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<td>X Sept 5 (M)</td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>2: Sept 12 (M)</td>
<td>Industry /External Analysis, Competitive Advantage Firm Performance First Case: WII ENCORE?</td>
<td>Read current business news stories from Wall Street Journal Ch. 3: Industry Structure, Competitive Forces, and Strategic Groups &amp; Ch. 5: Competitive Advantage, Firm Performance, and Business Models Every one reads the case and each team turns in a “1000 words” report on the case</td>
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<tr>
<td>4: Sept 26 (M)</td>
<td>Firm / Internal Analysis Case 2: TIN MINING, INC.</td>
<td>Read current business news stories from Wall Street Journal Ch. 4: Resources, Capabilities, and Core Competencies &amp; Ch. 6: Differentiation, Cost Leadership, and Blue Oceans Every one reads the case and each team turns in a “1000 words” report on the case</td>
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<tr>
<td>5: Oct 3 (M)</td>
<td>What is a good SWOT Internal and External analysis revisited Case 3: TWOWAYS TO FLY SOUTH</td>
<td>Read current business news stories from Wall Street Journal Industry Report Due (team work) today Ch. 4: Resources, Capabilities, and Core Competencies &amp; Ch. 6: Differentiation, Cost Leadership, and Blue Oceans Every one reads the case and each team turns in a “1000 words” report on the case</td>
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<tr>
<td>6: Oct 10 (M)</td>
<td>First Test</td>
<td>Chapters 1–6 Cases 1, 2, 3 Individual work Please note the day of the test is Tuesday</td>
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<td>Oct 11 (T)</td>
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<td>7: Oct 17 (M)</td>
<td>Debriefing of the test; Understanding a Business Model;</td>
<td>Read current business news stories from Wall Street Journal Ch. 7: Innovation and Entrepreneurship Time to work on case competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>8: Oct 24 (M)</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy</td>
<td>Read current business news stories from Wall Street Journal Ch. 8: Vertical Integration and Diversification</td>
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<tr>
<td>9: Oct 31 (M)</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy Case 4: RANDOM HOUSE</td>
<td>Read current business news stories from Wall Street Journal Ch. 9: Strategic Alliances, Mergers and Acquisitions &amp; Ch. 10: Global Strategy; Every one reads the case and each team turns in a “1000 words” report on the case</td>
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<td>10: Nov 7 (M)</td>
<td>Best Buy Case Presentation – In class</td>
<td>Case power point due before class, In class Presentation by all teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>11: Nov 14 (M)</td>
<td>Class replaced by Case Competition – Nov 11</td>
<td>All students are required to be present for the final presentation (if your team is not selected). More details will be provided on BB.</td>
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<td>Nov 11 Friday</td>
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<td>12: Nov 21 (M)</td>
<td>Strategy Implementation</td>
<td>Read current business news stories from Wall Street Journal Ch. 11: Structure, Culture, and Control &amp; Ch. 12: Corporate Governance and Business Ethics Firm Report Due (team work) today Revisit Case 3: TWO WAYS TO FLY SOUTH</td>
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<td>13: Nov 28 (M)</td>
<td>Summary of the class</td>
<td>In class interactive strategy game – BiggieBills- All students must read the rules in advance (material will be posted on BB)</td>
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<td>14: Dec 5 (M)</td>
<td>Second Test</td>
<td>All chapters, all cases including BestBuy and news items</td>
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Joshi Fall 2016 BUS 498 section 001