Course: SOM 498: Advanced Business Models, Spring 2015  
Day & Time: Mondays 4:30-7:10  
Location: Innovation Hall 206  
Office Hours: Mondays 3:30-4:30 & by appointment  
Professor: Dr. Masoud Yasai  
Office: Enterprise Hall 214  
Phone: 703.993.1859  
E-mail: myasai@gmu.edu

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 SOM 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 SOM.

The learning goals are the following:

- Will be effective communicators  
- Will have an interdisciplinary perspective  
- Will be knowledgeable about team dynamics and the characteristics of effective teams  
- Will be critical thinkers

The objectives are

- 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  
- To further refine research, analytical, critical-thinking, team building, and communication skills.
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).

Course Materials:


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:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A = 93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>A- = 90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B+ = 87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry report</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B = 83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Firm report</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B- = 80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case competition presentation</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total points</td>
<td>100</td>
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Exams:

The course exams will 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:

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:

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. 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.

Case Competition Presentations:

The case competition presentations must not exceed 15 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 Professor.
All work should be the original product of those turning in the assignment and uphold the University’s Honor Code. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.
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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
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| Week 1 (January 26) | Course Introduction  
Concept of Strategy                                    | Case Link: https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/335177 98  
Readings: Chapter 1                      |
| Week 2 (February 02) | The Strategic Management Process                                     | Reading: Chapter 2                                         
Case: Case 1: Wall-Mart Stores in 2003       |
| Week 3 (February 09) | External Analysis: Industry  
Structure, Competitive Forces,  
and Strategic Groups                                                 | Readings: Chapter 3                                       |
| Week 4 (February 16) | External analysis Continued                                          | Case: 2: Cola Wars Continue: Coke and Pepsi in 2010      |
| Week 5 (February 23) | Internal Analysis: Resources,  
Capabilities, and Activities  
Competitive Advantage and Firm Performance                        | Readings: Chapters 4 and 5  
Case: Samsung electronics.                          |
| Week 6 (March 02)  | Business Strategy:  
Differentiation, Cost Leadership, and Integration                 | Readings: Chapter 6                                        
Case: Apple Inc. 2010                            |
| Week 7 (March 09)  | **Spring Break**                                                      | Industry report due                                       |
| Week 8 (March 16)  | Business Strategy:  
Innovation and Strategic Entrepreneurship                       | Readings: Chapter 7                                        
Case: Responding to Wii                          |
| Week 9 (March 23)  | **Mid Term test**                                                    |                                                           |
| Week 10 (March 30) | Week off for April 18 case Competition                              |                                                           |
| Week 11 (April 6)  | **Case Competition in class presentations**                         | Case: Methanex                                            
All teams submit copies of presentations          |
| Week 12 (April 13) | **Case Competition in class presentations**                         | Continued                                                 |
| **Friday April 17** | Case Competition                                                     | All students attend the case competition  
presentations                                             |
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13 (April 20)</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy: Vertical Integration and Diversification</td>
<td>Readings: Chapter 8, 11&lt;br&gt;Case: Newell Co. <strong>Firm and industry report due</strong></td>
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<td>Week 14 (April 27)</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy: Acquisitions, Alliances, and Network</td>
<td>Readings: Chapter 9&lt;br&gt;Case: SGM</td>
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<td>Week 15 (May 4)</td>
<td>Global Strategy: Competing Around the World</td>
<td>Readings: Chapter 10,12</td>
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<td>Week 16 (May 11)</td>
<td><strong>Final Test</strong></td>
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