Semester: Summer 2012  
Professor: Dr. Avinash Mainkar  
Course: Capstone Course: Advanced Business Models SOM 498  
Section, CRN, Location and Time:  
| A01 | 40188 | Enterprise Hall 277 | MWF | 1:00 pm - 4:05 pm |
Office: Workstation next to room 207 (Inside Enterprise Hall 206)  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Phone: Email is the best way to reach me  
Email: amainkar@gmu.edu  
Course Material:  
(b) Case packet: You will purchase the cases listed below electronically from Harvard Business School Publishing by clicking a link that I will send you by email. It will also be available in Bb.  
  
  In-class cases (used for essays, practice presentations, and class discussion)  
  How to Write a Case-Based Essay  
  Curled Metal Inc.--Engineered Products Division  
  Reed Supermarkets: A New Wave of Competitors  
  Monforte Dairy  
  Gemini Electronics  
  Autoliv QB: A Proposed Joint Venture  
  
Please keep in mind the copyright laws and act responsibly – you are representing Mason - as you purchase the case packet from Harvard Publishing. The publisher is easily able to know what percentage of the enrolled students in the class actually bought the case pack.  

http://harvardbusiness.org/about/copyright-information  

Course Website in Bb: 201240.40188 SOM-498-A01 (Summer 2012)  
Blackboard (Will activate once the enrollment stabilizes). PP slides and chapter questions will be available in
Bb ahead of time. I do not plan to use the “announcements” feature in Bb. Instead I will send emails when I have to communicate outside of class hours. These emails will be available in one Word file on the Course Content page in Bb. The course syllabus will also be available online. If you do not have access to the course website, please send me an email. I may have to add you in manually.

Use of electronic gadgets in class
Please turn off your cell phone, PDA, and/or laptop. Please print and bring a copy of the relevant class material to class if you would like to take notes (e.g., PP slides) or need to refer to it in class (case from the case packet). I plan to strictly enforce the laptop policy.

Overview 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.

Learning Goals
• Will be effective communicators;
• Will have an interdisciplinary perspective;
• Will be knowledgeable about team dynamics and the characteristics of effective teams; and
• Will be critical thinkers.

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 and all core courses (i.e., ACCT 301, BULE 302, SOM 301, FNAN 301, MGMT 301, MIS 301, and MKTG 301; and senior standing).

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.

(1) Individual Work

Course exams
There are two course exams. No make-up exams will be given without prior permission. More details will be available in the miscellaneous folder in Bb.
### Class Participation

| Preparation for class participation as judged by the quality of your four case essays. What to include in the essay? More details will be available in the miscellaneous folder in Bb. | 33% weight |
| Class participation during classes highlighted in green | 67% weight |

Your class participation is an essential factor in determining the success of this class. I will measure class participation on select days highlighted in green (see the last page). On such days you will get an instructor and/or peer-reviewed score as follows.

0: Either not available for class participation or not continuously engaged in all class activities

73 or 77 or 80: Continuously engaged in all class activities but no participation in class discussion

83 or 87 or 90: Participated in class discussion and activities, and the comments added to the understanding of the topic under discussion

93 or 97 or 100: In terms of quality, overall contribution to class participation was better than that of those who contributed to class

Calculating overall participation score for the semester: While calculating your average for the semester, I will drop your lowest score if you do some extra work by June 20, 2012. Please email me your material by this date. The lowest score could be for any reason: work-related travel, medical absence, family commitments, etc. The lowest score for class participation preparation (i.e., case essay) can’t be dropped.

**Option 1:** You will interview a person who has had at least ten years of full-time work experience. The person could be at any level (supervisor, department head, vice president, chief executive officer or owner-manager) in any company or organization (public, private, non-profit, large, medium, or small). Describe in 500 words the strategic management process used in this person’s company or organization.

**Option 2:** You will interview a person who has had at least ten years of full-time work experience. The person could be at any level (supervisor, department head, vice president, chief executive officer or owner-manager) in any company or organization (public, private, non-profit, large, medium, or small). Describe in 500 words a “strategic management” project this person has worked on or is currently working. For example, you may interview a person whose company recently acquired another company. Buying a company is a long-drawn out process and your contact person may have been involved in this process (e.g., identifying the potential companies for acquiring, negotiating with governmental agencies, or valuing the company to be acquired). Alternatively, your contact person may have been involved in developing a company’s mission statement or in setting up a joint venture in another country. As long as you can relate the project to class material and are able to provide the details in 500 words, the choice of your project does not matter.

**Option 3:** I will give you a case. You can write a case-based essay in 500 words.

(2) **Group Work**

A maximum of eight groups for each section and no more than five students per group. You must be in a group by the end of the second week of classes. You will work in the same group for all group projects. Groups will be self-selected. But I reserve the right to make adjustments (split a group or add members) to ensure that we do not end up with groups of two or three students. An example might help: If we have 32 people and six groups of five each are formed, the last group may only have two students. In such a case, I may move people to ensure
that this last group has four members. With this change, the class will have four groups of five and three groups of four students. Please keep such possibilities in mind as you self-select group members.

a) Practice group work (0%): Each team will present one of the assigned cases. More details will be available in the miscellaneous folder in Bb.

b) Industry and firm analysis written report (20%): Each team needs to turn in an analysis of the assigned industry and the assigned firm in that industry.

c) Industry and firm analysis presentation (10%): Each team needs to present its industry and firm analysis. We will have outsiders as judges, executives working in the region with some connection to GMU, who will also give you feedback on your presentation.

More details about the group projects will be available in the miscellaneous folder.

**Grade equity for group projects**
If you believe that someone in your group should receive a grade below that which the team receives, please send me an email within 24 hours of the project due date/time. The email should have “grade equity – your class name” as the subject line and should describe two things: (1) Why should this person receive a lower grade? (2) What efforts were made to solve the problem while your group was working on the project? If an appropriate email is received, I will ask everyone in the group to quantify everyone’s contribution. Based on that input, the individual’s grade will be calculated. There is no need to send an email if you believe your group worked well.

**Honor Code**
The Honor Code applies to all the work required for this class. I expect you to know and uphold the GMU Honor Code. Specifically:

**A.** Unless explicitly allowed, exams will be closed book. The use of study aids, memoranda, books, data, or other information is not permissible.

**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.

**C.** In order to insure equity across sections of 498, electronic means (SafeAssign) may be used to check originality of work.

If you are not sure if a particular behavior constitutes an honor code violation, please check with me or visit the GMU websites for related information:


[http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/)

Be aware that I will send any violation of the honor code to the Honor Committee and will probably recommend that the penalty be an F in the class.

**Other Notes**
1) 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.


University closings, late openings, or other weather related changes in the University's schedule will be announced on: GMU-TV, the University's main information line [703.993.1000], the On-line Gazette, and all local media outlets (although media coverage cannot be guaranteed). We will hold the class as long as the University is open. I will inform you of weather-related decision via e-mail.

3) Late submissions will carry a late penalty.

### Grading scale for your course grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.99</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.99</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-76.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.99</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Evaluation Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Tool</th>
<th>% of Course Grade</th>
<th>Important date(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>On the days highlighted in green + four case essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice work (group-level presentations)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Bring one printed copy to class and send a copy electronically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>June 4 - June 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry and firm analysis written report</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>June 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry and firm analysis presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Presentations on June 22. Bring four printed copies to class and send a copy electronically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Points</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Tentative Schedule of Classes

Class participation will be measured on the days highlighted in **green**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>1st Half (Approximate)</th>
<th>2nd Half (Approximate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 21(M)</td>
<td>Introduction &amp; Chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 23 (W)</td>
<td>Chapters 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25 (F)</td>
<td>Chapters 4 &amp; 5 and How to Write a Case-Based Essay (1st item in your case packet)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 28 (M)</td>
<td><strong>Holiday – No class</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 30 (W)</td>
<td><strong>Case: Curled Metal Inc.–Engineered Products Division</strong> (Individual case essays due for all + Class discussion) [No group case presentations]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1 (F)</td>
<td><strong>Case: Reed Supermarkets: A New Wave of Competitors</strong> (Group case presentations + Individual case essays due for those who are not presenting + Class discussion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 4 (M)</td>
<td><strong>Case: Monforte Dairy</strong> (Group case presentations + Individual case essays due for those who are not presenting + Class discussion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 6 (W)</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 8 (F)</td>
<td>Chapters 6 &amp; 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 11 (M)</td>
<td><strong>Case: Gemini Electronics</strong> (Group case presentations + Individual case essays due for those who are not presenting + Class discussion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 13 (W)</td>
<td>Chapter 8 &amp; 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 15 (F)</td>
<td><strong>Case: Autoliv QB: A Proposed Joint Venture</strong> (Group case presentations + Individual case essays due for those who are not presenting + Class discussion)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 18 (M)</td>
<td>Chapters 10 &amp; 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 20 (W)</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 22 (F)</td>
<td><strong>Industry and firm analysis presentations</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>