Course: MBA 678: Strategy and Organizational Leadership, Fall 2012
Section: Section 001: Thursday, 7:20-10:00 pm, University Hall 1200
Section 002: Thursday, 1:30-4:15 pm, Sandbridge Hall 107
Office Hours: Thursday, 4:15-5:00 pm, 6:30-7:15 pm & by appointment

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Course Overview:
Strategy explains why some firms outperform others. Consequently, strategy concerns the management and leadership of the total organization and the creation of value leading to superior performance. At every firm, managers and executives must define the scope of its operations and, within that chosen scope, how the firm will compete. Corporate-level strategy addresses issues regarding the scope of the business, while issues about how to compete within the chosen market segments reflect the firm’s business-level strategy.

This course takes an integrative, multi-functional approach to the kind of broad organizational issues confronted by top executives. We will be examining critical strategic issues that require a general management approach rather than a strictly functional (i.e. marketing, finance, accounting, etc.) 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.

The learning goals are:
- To improve analytical decision making and
- To integrate the various functional disciplines.

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; and
- To further refine analytical, critical-thinking, and communication skills.

Course Prerequisites:
Students are responsible for taking the necessary pre-requisites/co-requisites for this course.

Course Materials:
Readings: ISBN # 9780077324452

Recommended Reading: (1) Strategy as Action: Competitive Dynamics and Competitive Advantage, Curtis M. Grimm, Hun Lee, & Ken G. Smith, 2006, Oxford University Press, ISBN # 0195161440
Grading Weights and Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>A = 93-100</td>
<td>C = 70-79.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam (cumulative)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>A- = 90-92.99</td>
<td>F = 69.99 and below</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy executive interview &amp; presentation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B+ = 87-89.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B = 80-86.99</td>
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<td>Total points</td>
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Assignment Description and Policy:

*Midterm and final exam:* The midterm and final (cumulative) exams will be taken in-class and involve analyzing an assigned case, popular business press articles or scenarios and then applying course concepts and frameworks. More details will be forthcoming as the time approaches.

*Strategy executive interview & presentation:* Each team will complete an interview(s) with an executive(s) of a local firm that is/are responsible for the organization’s strategy. Select your own teams of 3-5 students. Since diversity and close coordination is a key part of management in dealing with complex, multi-functional organizational challenges, please consider complementary skills and individual schedule and location to ease coordination. More details on the content of the interview will be forthcoming as the time approaches.

*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 strategic thinking 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 so 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 have 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.

*Assignment policy:* All assignments and exams must be typed and handed in on schedule. Late assignments and missed exams will drop a letter grade for every day they are late. Please note that points earned by individuals in teamwork assignments may be adjusted by peer evaluations.

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.
MBA 678—FALL 2012—TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Please check Blackboard for any changes to the schedule and additional readings before each class. Assignment sources: C = Chapters in textbook; H = Harvard Business School Publishing coursepack cases and articles; B = Blackboard articles and video links; D = Discussion based on your own research and analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1 8.30.R</td>
<td>Introduction to strategy</td>
<td>C: 1, 2</td>
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| W2 9.6.R | Intro to strategy Comp adv and firm performance | B: How to improve strategic planning  
B: The perils of bad strategy  
B: Video links  
B: Navigating the new normal: A conversation with four chief strategy… 
B: How chief strategy officers think about their role: A roundtable  
C: 5 |
C: 3  
B: Video link |
| W4 9.20.R | Industry analysis                         | B: Magazine publishing industry  
D: What changes are driving the pharmaceutical industry and what effects are they having on industry structure and profits? |
| W5 9.27.R | Firm analysis                              | H: HUGE and Digital Strategy  
C: 4 |
| W6 10.4.R | Firm analysis                              | H: eHarmony  
C: 6 |
| W7 10.11.R | Midterm exam                              |                                                                            |
| W8 10.18.R | Business strategy: Innovation and entrepreneurship | H: Performance Indicator  
C: 7  
D: Has Sirius XM been able to appropriate value from its innovation? Why or why not? |
| W9 10.25.R | Competitive dynamics                       | H: Brighter Smiles for the Masses—Colgate vs. P&G  
H: Competitor analysis: Anticipating competitive actions |
| W10 11.1.R | Corporate strategy: Vertical and product (diversification) scope | H: Taiwan’s United Microelectronics Corporation (UMC)  
H: Best Deal Gillette…Proctor & Gamble’s Acquisition…  
C: 8 |
B: Running a winning M&A shop  
B: Not by M&A alone  
B: Video link |
| W12 11.15.R | Corporate strategy: Geographic scope (global strategy) | H: Grolsch: Growing Globally  
C: 10  
B: Video link |
C: 11, 12 |
| W14 12.6.R | Strategy executive interview & presentation |                                                                            |
| W15 12.13.R | Final exam (cumulative)                    |                                                                            |