

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN LUIS OBISPO
ORFALEA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
GSB 562 – Strategy
Sean Porcher

Telephone: (805) 720-6856. Clearly state your name, purpose of your call, question/issue (if brief), and where you can be reached. Please be mindful of the hour in which you call. As in the business world, you will not be looked upon positively if you abuse access to your supervisor or call during non-business hours.

Email: sporcher@calpoly.edu NOTE: Email is a preferred method of communication, however it is not a substitute for meeting during office hours.

COURSE SYLLABUS

A. OFFICE HOURS.

Office Location: Room 322 in the Orfaea College of Business (Bldg. 3).

I have established MW 5PM-6PM as my standard office hours. If I need to change this time (due to schedule conflict), I will send out an email accordingly. I am also happy to meet outside of these times through the arrangement of an appointment at least one day in advance. Contact me via email or phone to make such an appointment. Office hours are on a "first come, first served" basis, unless you schedule a specific appointment.

B. SCHEDULED CLASS TIME.

Arriving on time is a form of respect and courtesy to your classmates. However, if you are running late, please show up late in lieu of driving recklessly or entirely missing class. Yes, there is a negative implication for being late on the attendance component of your grade (see grading section), but absence from the entire class results in a far greater deduction. Repeated failure to attend class or repeated late arrivals will put you at a disadvantage in achieving a desirable grade.

C. ETHICS.

All forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and falsification of records or other documents are subject to disciplinary action. Unless expressly allowed in writing by me (e.g., a group assignment, where you are allowed to collaborate with other members of your group), allowing another individual to assist (e.g. researching, drafting, or proofreading) with the completion of assignments or tests in any manner constitutes fraud and academic dishonesty. Source material must be appropriately credited (footnotes or other citations), or else you run the risk of being deemed to have engaged in plagiarism.

You are subject to the rules and policies of Cal Poly applicable to students, including rules regarding academic honesty and conduct. Those rules and policies are hereby incorporated by reference into this syllabus, and it is your obligation to research, know, and comply with all of those rules and policies. Subject to Cal Poly's policies, I will seek the maximum available penalty and punishment against all person(s) who cheat or otherwise violate the Cal Poly rules and policies regarding academic honesty and conduct, including (but not limited to) dropping you from the course and issuing the grade of "F" for the entire course (even if you would have earned an "A" in the course otherwise). You are on notice, so don't attempt to defend on the grounds that you "didn't know" that I would be so aggressive in pursuing penalties against cheaters.

Be kind to your classmates. Each classmate might be in a position to hire you, or fire you, in the near or distant future. I encourage lively discussion and debate, as long as it is analytical, respectful, and courteous in nature.

D. DESCRIPTION OF COURSE.

This course examines how firms gain a sustainable competitive advantage. To be successful, the firm's strategy must permeate all departments and functional areas. As such, this course integrates knowledge and skills gained from your years of studies and coursework in all facets of business. As such, strategy

will test your ability to assess the impact of the firm's strategy on specific departments within the organization. In drawing on these tools, we explicitly apply a general management point of view - we will analyze decisions and strategies in light of the total enterprise. We will also spend a fair amount of time on corporate strategy - how do firms create value with multiple business units. These issues will help you understand and cope with issues you will face in the business world. By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Analyze industry structure and environmental trends to assess industry potential;
2. Assess a firm's resources and their potential to generate a competitive advantage;
3. Explain how firms can add value across diverse lines of business;
4. Explain the elements of the strategic management process

Most of your other classes are narrow in scope and examine individual areas within the organization. This course examines the entire corporate environment and creating value across business units. Given that many of you will be working in a corporate environment at some point, you should have a basic understanding of how these types of enterprises function. In fact, not only will this course material help you understand your future work environment, it may actually help you land a job!

In order to help you "learn by doing," it is necessary for you to draw upon the skills you have acquired through your academic career and apply them across corporate functions to gain an appropriate competitive advantage. To accomplish this goal, it helps to have strategic concepts applied to real life situations. We will accomplish this by examining several business cases and through participation in a business strategy simulation.

My Commitments for the Course: I am committed to making this course FUN and a valuable learning experience for you. The class will be both challenging and rewarding, and I expect this to be an exciting one. I welcome your feedback regarding the class throughout the quarter. Please feel free to ask questions at any time, however large or small. It is easiest to reach me by email or during office hours, but I am always happy to set up an appointment with you.

E. Course Materials (REQUIRED):

NOTE: YOU MUST PURCHASE THE EXACT VERSION OF THIS TEXT! CASES VARY BY EDITION.

REQUIRED TEXT:

1. ***Strategy: Core Concepts and Analytical Approaches, 3rd Edition (2014/2015)*** by Arthur A. Thompson (THIS IS AN E-BOOK AND YOU WILL BE PROVIDED A LINK ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS)
2. BSG Online Simulation Registration (included with above E-BOOK)

F. GRADING (Note: I reserve the right to change the following grading methodology, including assignments and percentage value. I will make an announcement in class with any revisions.) My present intention is as follows:

Assignment	% of Course Grade
1. Online Multiple Choice Exams 2 @ 10% each	20%
2. Attendance and Class Participation	15%
3. Learning Exercises	15%
4. Business Strategy Simulation	35%
5. Final Team Paper / Presentation	15%

1) Online Multiple Choice Exams. There will be two exams during the quarter. Each exam is to be taken in class and individually. The purpose of each Case Exam is to measure your ability to recall concepts and learnings from the text and class discussions. These exams are created by the text author and are relatively generic. We will have an opportunity to review the exam and address any ambiguities as a class. Each Exam is worth 10% of your total grade. **The total Exam Score is worth 20% of your course grade.**

2) Attendance and Class Participation. For Attendance and Class Participation, just showing up won't get you these points. You must *actively and regularly attend and INTELLIGENTLY participate* in class. **This portion is worth 15% of your grade, dependent upon the quality (and frequency) of your participation and attendance in class.**

You can earn up to 10% of your grade by not missing class and intelligently participating. You can't get points if you don't show up. (Do you really expect to get a great job and then not show up for work at your own whim?) Also, just showing up won't get you these points; you must *actively, regularly, and INTELLIGENTLY participate* in class. This means, among other things, that you show evidence of doing the suggested reading **before** class.

You will earn up to 5% of your grade by presenting what you learned from one of four assigned cases. Each student will be assigned one of the four cases during the quarter. The students assigned to that reading will present the information to the rest of the class.

Missing classes (or showing up late) will adversely impact your grade on this portion. Regardless of how much you intelligently participate in class, for each session that you are not seated ON TIME (but are seated in the classroom before the end of class) you will have 1% deducted from your score in this category. For each absence, you will lose 3% deducted from your score (up to the maximum of 15% in this category). This means that 5 absences = 0% for class participation, regardless of how actively you participate when you do show up. See Policies for information on absences.

3) Learning Exercises. Each chapter has a set of learning exercises that will aid in our learning. There are a total of six that are required to be completed by your company co-managers. These six are identified on the syllabus. While it will aid in your learning and help you with your BSG company if you complete every chapter's exercises, you will only be required to complete the six outlined in the syllabus. **Each is worth 2.5% of your grade for a total of 15%.**

4) Business Strategy Simulation. You will be assigned a team along with your peers to compete in a Business Strategy Simulation. Each week you will be required to complete a "decision" that will impact the performance of your assigned company (just as in the real world). Your decisions will draw upon various areas of business management and you should utilize the skills of your peers to make decisions that will positively impact your business. There are several aspects of the BSG Simulation that compile the final grade you will receive. The breakdown of the BSG grade is as follows:

- Company Performance -70% (70% Investor Expectations / 30% Best in Industry)
- BSG Quiz 1 – 4%
- BSG Quiz 2 – 6%
- 3 Year Strategic Plan – 10%
- Peer Evaluations – 10% (5% Mid and 5% Final)

This portion is worth thirty-five percent (35%) of your grade.

5) Final Team Paper and Presentation. Your team will present to the class your reflection of the performance of your company throughout the quarter. These presentations will take place both during the last class period as well as during finals week. All papers will be due the day of the final. Treat this as a board meeting where you would be presenting the results of your company to the Board of Directors. You will also prepare a written recap of your company for the simulation period. Treat this as a corporate annual report. Your team will have 25 minutes to present your company. No more. No less. **This section is worth fifteen percent (15%) of your total grade will be based upon your team presentation and final report.**

I use the plus/minus grading system.

I use a percentage of total available points to determine your grade, with a plus or minus appropriately appended to grades:

(90%-100%)	=	A
(80%-89%)	=	B
(70%-79%)	=	C
(60%-69%)	=	D
(59% or less)	=	F

I don't give an A just because you are a graduate student and/or show up and/or are convinced in your own mind that you "really know the material" or "tried hard". To earn an A or A-, you must earn it and demonstrate that you have achieved **superior** attainment of course objectives.

A grade of "B" means **good** attainment of course objectives, exceeding mere acceptable standards.

A grade of "C" means **average** attainment of course objectives. Note that I do give Cs (and even Ds or Fs where that was the grade that was earned). Most credible employers would view a C in graduate school unfavorably.

A grade of "D" or "F" means that you functioned below the level of acceptable standards.

G. POLICIES

Writing skills, as well as oral presentation skills, are a major factor in your grade. Spelling and grammar do count, substantially. Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date and must be typed, double spaced.

You are responsible for knowing and complying with all Cal Poly policies applicable to students. Those policies are incorporated by reference into this syllabus.

Students with special needs should seek reasonable accommodations pursuant to the ADA. Please contact the Student Affairs Disabled Resource Center (DRC) at (805) 756-1395 or drc@calpoly.edu and they will arrange for reasonable accommodations as required by law. Please do so as soon as possible, because I will need to coordinate with the DRC on providing reasonable accommodations (and do feel free to discuss your needs with me as well, but please contact DRC as soon as possible).

Excluding exceptional exigent circumstances discussed with me in advance of the administration/due date of the assignment/test (e.g. documented substantial illness of an extended duration, death in the family, including a long term pet, or other compelling *force majeure*), assignments/tests may not be "made up" or rescheduled to a date other than the assigned date.

IMPORTANT NOTE: With the exception of exigent circumstances described below, I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE ASSIGNMENTS OR PERMIT EARLY TESTS OR "MAKE UP" TESTS. Employers are not interested in hearing excuses about why you can't perform a task on a specific schedule and on time. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if you have encountered an exceptional exigent circumstance, beyond your control, and without sufficient time to implement reasonable mitigation, then I will CONSIDER an exception to this rule. By way of example, admission to a hospital emergency room where you are under the care of a licensed doctor on the night before an exam would be considered as a potential valid excuse, provided that you promptly contact me and provide me with written documentation which indicates that your condition rendered you medically unable to take the exam. (Note: the medical documentation does **NOT** need to indicate the specifics of your condition - - I respect your right to privacy - - but it does need to indicate that you are under the care of a licensed medical professional and that your medical condition has rendered you unable to attend class. "Talking" to a doctor, friend, nurse, etc. does not constitute being under the care of a licensed medical professional.) Also, death of a close family member (including a long term pet) is highly likely to be deemed an exceptional exigent circumstance. I reserve the right to establish the duration of the extension associated with your specific situation. That is,

a two day illness does not justify a one week extension. Moreover, if you had two (2) weeks to complete an assignment, and you got sick the night before it is due, you will NOT receive an extension.

QUESTION: What are valid excuses which would mitigate an absence or delay?

ANSWER: Reliable, verifiable, documented evidence of: conflicting required coursework (e.g. participation in Cal Poly sponsored factory visit), job interview (not existing job duties - - you're supposed to be in class), illness, admission to a hospital for treatment, compelling and necessary pre-arranged travel out of town, death in family (including a long term pet), or a similar circumstance where an employer in the "real" world would not expect you to show up for work.

QUESTION: When do I need to provide documentation for my absence or delay?

ANSWER: I must receive hard copy documentation of a valid excuse no later than the beginning of the first class session that you attend following your absence or delay.

QUESTION: I am a follower of a religion which does not believe in the use of medical doctors, but instead utilizes a religious practitioner to assist with healing. Can my religious practitioner issue a valid excuse for my absence if I was under his/her care?

ANSWER: Yes; just make sure you follow the deadline requirements described above.

Invalid excuses include, but are not limited to, delays related to: traffic congestion, being stopped by police for traffic violation, hangover from cosmopolitan party, watching interesting people on campus resulting in time warp, etc.

Medical documentation for an excused absence does **NOT** need to indicate the specifics of your condition - - I respect your right to personal and medical privacy - - but it does need to indicate that you are under the care of a licensed medical professional and that your medical condition has rendered you unable to attend class.

ETS MBA EXAM. You cannot complete this course, and cannot receive a final grade, without taking the ETS MBA exam. This exam is a required culminating experience for the MBA program. You will receive an incomplete grade in this class (and you cannot graduate from the MBA program) if you do not take the exam on the scheduled date. The ETS MBA Exam is a test given during a 3 hour period on a single specific Friday during the academic quarter. That specific date will be announced to you early in the quarter. You MUST take this exam ON THE SCHEDULED DATE. If you fail to do so, you will not pass this course. The ETS MBA exam is a comprehensive exam of the knowledge that you have gained in the MBA program. This course is not a "prep" course for the ETS MBA exam. To prepare for the ETS MBA exam you should look at sample questions on the ETS website and review your notes from your MBA courses.

PASSING THE ETS MBA EXAM. In order to receive your MBA degree, you must receive a "passing" score on the ETS MBA exam. What is a passing score? The academic administration reviews the scaled scores of our MBA students and compares these scores to a benchmark of peer institutions. If your score falls below the benchmark, you will be required to perform an alternative assignment to receive your degree, such as a detailed 50 page research paper. Therefore, it behooves you to CAREFULLY TAKE THE EXAM and take your time to carefully consider each answer. Students who "guess" or randomly answer are likely to be required to perform the 50 page research paper.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO REVISION)

Although we may not discuss specific portions of material in class, I still expect you to read the material and know that material for the exam. (Note: This tentative course schedule is subject to revision from time to time.) **Read each assignment BEFORE the scheduled class session.**

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Class, Topic, Reading Assignment

April 1

Course Introduction

Syllabus Review

Introduction to Strategy

Read Chapter 1

April 3

Introduction to BSG

Read BSG Player's Guide

Read Chapter 5

Selection of BSG Company Teams

Choose a strategy for your company (Chapter 5)

Complete Chapter 1 Exercises (Recommended)

April 8

Charting a Company's long-term direction

Read Chapter 2

Complete Chapter 2 Exercises (Required)

April 10

Evaluating a Company's external environment

Read Chapter 3

Complete Chapter 3 Exercises (Required)

BSG Practice Round Debrief – Data Reset

April 15

Evaluating a Company's resources and ability to compete

Read Chapter 4

Complete Chapter 4 Exercises (Required)

April 17

The Five Basic Competitive Strategy Options

Read Chapter 5

Complete Chapter 5 Exercises (Required)

BSG Year 11 debrief

April 22

Supplementing the Chosen Competitive Strategy

Read Chapter 6

Complete Chapter 6 Exercises (Recommended)

April 24

Strategies for Competing in Global Markets

Read Chapter 7

Complete chapter 7 exercises (Required)

BSG Year 12 debrief

April 29
Exam Chapters 1-7

May 1
Diversification Strategies
Read Chapter 8
Complete chapter 8 exercises (Recommended)
BSG Year 13 debrief

May 6
In class work-day. Work on 3 Year Strategy

May 8
Strategy, Ethics and Social Responsibility
Read Chapter 9
Complete chapter 9 exercises (Required)

May 13
Building an Organization Capable of Good Strategy Execution
Read Chapter 10
Complete chapter 10 exercises (Recommended)
BSG Year 14 debrief

May 15
Managing Internal Operations: Actions that Promote Good Strategy Execution
Read Chapter 11
Complete chapter 11 exercises (recommended)
BSG Year 15 debrief

May 20
Corporate Culture and Leadership – Keys to Good Strategy Execution
Read Chapter 12
Complete chapter 12 exercises (recommended)
BSG Year 16 debrief

May 22
Exam Chapters 8-12

May 27 – NO CLASS

May 29
BSG Years 17, 18 and 19 debrief
In class work-day. Work on Year 20

June 3
BSG Year 20 debrief
Prepare for Final Presentations

June 5
Final Team Presentations

June 10 1:10 – 4:00
Final (Paper and Presentation Due)

Decision Round Schedule

All times are displayed in the US/Pacific time zone — (GMT -08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada); Tijuana

Decision	Deadline For Saving Entries
Quiz 1	9-Apr-14 10:00 pm
Practice Decision 1 - Practice Year 11	9-Apr-14 10:00 pm
End of Practice Period (Data reset to Year 11 and practice results are no longer available)	11-Apr-14 10:00 pm
Decision 1 - Year 11	16-Apr-14 10:00 pm
Decision 2 - Year 12	23-Apr-14 10:00 pm
Quiz 2	5-May-14 10:00 pm
Decision 3 - Year 13	5-May-14 10:00 pm
3-Year Strategic Plan	12-May-14 10:00 pm
Decision 4 - Year 14	12-May-14 10:00 pm
Mid-Game Peer Evaluations Available	13-May-14 11:59 pm
Decision 5 - Year 15	14-May-14 10:00 pm
Mid-Game Peer Evaluations Deadline	15-May-14 10:00 pm
Decision 6 - Year 16	19-May-14 10:00 pm
Decision 7 - Year 17	21-May-14 10:00 pm
Decision 8 - Year 18	27-May-14 10:00 pm
Decision 9 - Year 19	28-May-14 10:00 pm
End-of-Game Peer Evaluations Available	30-May-14 11:59 pm
Decision 10 - Year 20	2-Jun-14 10:00 pm
Company Presentations	10-Jun-14 4:00 pm
End-of-Game Peer Evaluations Deadline	10-Jun-14 11:59 pm