

SHR 247 INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

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Office Hours: Thursday 11:00-1:00 pm, and by appointment
Class time and location: Tue/Thu 9:30-10:50 p.m., SOM 102

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

1. Ireland, Hoskisson and Hitt, *Understanding Business Strategy: Concepts* (3rd edition) 2012. Bring your book to every class.
2. Cases, role plays and simulations to be purchased from the HBS Publishing Website.
 - a. Case Pack URL: <http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/access/14360408>
 - b. Role Play URL: To be provided later
 - c. Simulations URL: <http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/access/14360377> Please see specific instructions later in the syllabus.
3. Additional articles and materials may be distributed in class or posted on the course site.

OTHER REQUIRED READING

1. Wall Street Journal, Marketplace Section.

COURSE OVERVIEW & LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Strategy refers to the overall pattern of activities that firms use to compete in the marketplace. The course is divided into two broad parts. In the first, we will study business level strategies, or strategies that firms pursue in order to gain competitive advantage in a single market or industry, including how firms combine their market positioning with their resources and capabilities to generate and sustain competitive advantage. In the second part, we will examine corporate strategies, or how firms gain competitive advantage by operating in multiple markets or industries simultaneously.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of competitive advantage;
2. Analyze industry structure and environmental trends;
3. Assess a firm's resources and capabilities with regard to their potential to generate competitive advantage;
4. Understand the concepts of corporate advantage, corporate scope and some typical corporate strategies.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

This is an interactive class, where the students are expected to actively contribute to their own and others' learning. Hence, students are also expected to work on course material outside the class.

The course will use a mix of textbook chapters, case studies, discussion boards, articles, and in-class exercises. This will be a fast-paced course with particular emphasis on critical, analytical, and where possible, quantitative thinking. **Active participation (in class and online) will be an important determinant of your performance in this course.** You are required to have completed all readings and case analyses before coming to class.

The course is divided into 8 modules. The Blackboard website, accordingly, is divided into 8 learning modules. Each learning module will broadly follow the Module Plan, which will provide the objectives, key learning activities and expected learning outcomes for that module.

EVALUATION

Strategic management often demands working with a team on highly complex issues. Accordingly, a substantial part of the course is devoted to group activities. Your course grade will be based on the following components:

Component	Individual or Group	% of total grade
Class Participation	Individual	10%
Exams		
Mid-term	Individual	15%
Final	Individual	25%
Exercises, Quizzes and Case Write-up		
Homework (Case Write-up)	Individual	3%
Homework (Blackboard)	Individual	3%
Online Self-Assessment Evaluations	Individual	6%
Discussion Board Posts	Individual	5%
In-class Exercises	Individual/Group	8%
In-class Discussion Leadership	Group	5%
Group Project		
Discussion Board Leadership	Group	10%
Final presentation	Group	7%
Class review of presentation	Group	3%

The final letter grade will be based on the sum of the scores on all individual components. Letter grades will not be assigned for individual components. Grading will be based on the following scale:

Total Score	Grade
87.50-100.00	A
80.00-87.49	A-
75.00-79.99	B+
70.00-74.99	B
67.50-69.99	B-
65.00-67.49	C
60.01-64.99	D
Less than 60.00	F

Note: In the past, approximately 40-45% of students have received an A or A-, and around the same proportion received a B or B+.

PLAN AHEAD! There are no make-up assignments for any component of the course nor are there any extra credit assignments available. There are no exceptions to this rule, unless you have a doctor's note indicating that you were physically unable to attend. In this case, your medical reason should be submitted to me as soon as possible.

Class Participation

A large part of the learning in this course comes from class discussions. Hence, **classroom participation is essential**. There will be “cold calling” (where I randomly pick a person to answer a question or comment on some aspect of the course material). What really matters in classroom participation are substantive contributions to the class discussion from your part. Quality of preparedness and contributions will be judged by the knowledge of facts and demonstration of analytical skills and research. Also important are i) how relevant the comments are to the day's topics, ii) how much these comments build on other comments made in class, and iii) the use of classroom and textbook concepts. Criticisms should remain impersonal and positive to foster a positive discussion culture in the classroom.

Above all, do not be afraid to be wrong! I do not penalize “wrong” comments (or views that run against the dominant view in the class) as long as they are backed up by logical arguments and concrete evidence. A “wrong” comment that leads to substantive discussions and learning will be considered a valuable contribution. However, I will penalize any irrelevant, egregious or offensive comments.

I reserve the right to assess class participation based on my judgment.

Exams

There are two exams, both to be taken individually – one mid-term exam and one final exam. More information regarding the exams will be provided closer to the exams.

Case Write-ups

In order to give you some practice with writing case analysis, you will have to complete one case analysis. You may choose any one of the six cases in the HBS Course Pack for this write-up. However, **you must submit your write-up before the case is discussed in class.** The case analysis will require you to answer one (or two) case questions. Your answers should be limited to no more than 1 page, single spaced, Palatino Linotype 11 font, with 1" margins and no footnotes. You do not need to do any external research to analyze these cases. **Please limit yourself to information given in the cases.** However, you may work in your groups to prepare for the case discussion. The case questions will be posted on Blackboard inside each learning module.

These write-ups may be processed through Turnitin. Please refer to the syllabus statement on Turnitin.

If you have not used Blackboard to submit assignments, I recommend that you write your answers in Notepad or Word, and then cut and paste into Blackboard. Also, do not use any fancy formatting as this often creates technical issues and in any case, the instructor cannot see any formatting. So, a series of well-written paragraphs is more than adequate.

Online self-evaluations

In order to help you keep track of your progress, the course will include 5 online self-evaluations, each worth 1 point. In addition, there is a syllabus quiz worth 1 point. These quizzes will generally contain 10-20 multiple-choice or True/False questions from material that has been covered in class or is in the textbook. You can take these at any time of your convenience until the due date. You can attempt the evaluations any number of times but only the final attempt will be used for grading. **You are allowed to refer to your textbook and other material when taking these evaluations.** These self-evaluations will be included on the Blackboard website inside the relevant learning module.

Homework on Blackboard

Corresponding to each online self-evaluation, the learning modules on Blackboard will also contain a "20-minute" homework. Usually, these will comprise one to three short assignments. The objective of these assignments is to help you think about the course material without the pressure of evaluation. Try to complete them before attempting the online self-evaluations. However, you can complete them any time till the due date for the online self-evaluation. All reasonable attempts on a homework assignment will receive full credit. If you do not complete a homework assignment, you will receive zero credit on that assignment.

Discussion Board Leadership and Posts

To provide additional opportunities for voicing your thoughts and for learning from others, this course includes discussion boards.

Each student will be expected to participate in two types of discussion board activities. The first, leadership of a Group Project Discussion Board, is part of the group project, and is to be completed in groups of 4. Further details are provided in the group project section.

The second type of discussion board activity is posting as a participant. Each student is expected to actively participate in at least **one** Group Project Discussion Board other than the one they are involved in leading. This Board will be assigned by the Instructor during the semester. You are free to participate in more than one Group Project Discussion Boards if you wish.

The quality of participation will be evaluated primarily on the content, not the length or the number. On the Group Project Discussion Boards that you are a participant, over the course of the semester, I expect each student to make about 6-7 high quality posts.

Keep your online contributions relevant, precise and brief, typically between 1 and 2 short paragraphs per comment. **All contributions, whether leading the discussion or responding to comments in a discussion, must be in complete sentences.** So, no short forms or abbreviations will be accepted. You can add your analyses (quantitative or qualitative) or post evidence that you think is important and useful in taking the discussion forward.

Do not comment on or respond to every comment made in the forum. Pick the two or three most important points you think are relevant and make those points well. If you are responding (whether positively or negatively) to someone's comment, be respectful (of others' viewpoints), thoughtful, evidence-based, and analytical. Simply agreeing or disagreeing with someone does not take the discussion forward and will not be considered a contribution. It is usually very valuable to link aspects of a case or discussion to elements of other cases we may have discussed or to some concepts in the textbook. As with class participation, I am not looking for the "right" answer but comments that further the learning objectives of the course.

Your comments will be evaluated based on relevance, logic, evidence, and directness. Contributions will be graded once during the semester and once at the end of the course. The intermediate grade is only to provide you feedback on how you are doing and to help improve your contributions. I reserve the right to assess discussion posts based on my judgment.

In-class Exercises

This course has four graded in-class exercises, comprising two negotiations and two simulations. The simulations are to be completed in groups of 2 while the negotiations are to be completed individually. The grading on these exercises will be simple. If you turn in something that shows reasonable, good-faith effort, you will get full credit. If you do not turn in the exercise or turn in something that evidently shows lack of effort, you get 0. An example of the latter would be turning in a blank sheet with just your name.

Two simulations and one negotiation role-play will need to be purchased from the HBSP website. If it is a group assignment, one purchase per group is sufficient. The specific URLs will be provided closer to the date of the exercise.

In-class Discussion Leadership

Each group of 4 students is expected to lead one in-class discussion of a recent news Wall Street Journal news article from the MARKETPLACE section. You should be in the same group as in your group project (see later). The discussion will focus on analyzing strategic issues in the article, and is expected to last about 15 minutes. The discussion will begin with a 2-minute summary of the article and identification of key issues by the leading group. The class will then discuss the article for about 12 minutes. At the end of the discussion, the leading group will summarize the key learning points from the class discussion. You are free to choose any article but given the time limit, anything more than 1.5-2 pages long may be infeasible. In order to facilitate the discussion, the leading group will email me a copy of the article (if needed, you can cut and paste into Word) **one week prior to the due date assigned to your group**. I will post the article on Blackboard and make copies and bring them to class. Failure to mail me the article in time will result in a 1-point penalty.

Group Project

The group project, to be completed in groups of 4, involves following and learning about an industry or a company of your choice. You are free to form your own groups. **However, you must e-mail me the names of all your group members by 9/4. I will randomly assign group numbers by 9/5.**

The project itself consists of two related components. The first and the most important component, is leadership of a Group Project Discussion Board. Each group will maintain and lead a discussion board pertaining to their industry or company of choice. On this discussion board, the group is expected to provide the class with their understanding of the key strategic issues faced by the industry or the company.

You are free to choose any industry or company that is not mentioned in the Tentative Schedule later in the syllabus. You should start making posts by providing a basic background of the industry or company (approximately 1-2 pages of material or about 10 minutes of a podcast), and identifying the key strategic issues you expect to find in this industry (e.g. price competition, new technology changes, changing customer preferences etc.). You may use subsequent posts to post **and comment on important** recent news articles, videos or other material that highlight strategic issues in the industry or company. For instance, if you are following the supermarket industry, you may post an article about how profitability in this industry has been declining over the last few years and comment on why you think that is happening (beyond what is in the article). Generally speaking, the first few posts should be on providing a basic background of the industry or company, with subsequent posts focused on analyzing recent strategic issues. **You must provide the name of the company or industry you wish to follow by 9/10. You must make the first post by Oct 1.**

The instructor grading of the Group Project Discussion Board will be based on the quality of the material chosen for posting, the quality of the comments made on the posts, and the insights provided by the group into the strategic issues in the industry or company. **Note that more posts are not necessarily better.** Quality will be given more weight than quantity. However, I do expect more than a handful of posts during the semester. Furthermore, credit will be given

to continuous posting during the semester (as opposed to posting during the last few days of the course). **Over the course of the semester, I expect to see about 12-15 high quality posts.**

Contributions will be graded once during the semester and once at the end of the course. The intermediate grade is only to provide you feedback on how you are doing and to help improve your contributions. I reserve the right to assess discussion posts based on my judgment.

Towards the end of the semester, you will have the chance to make a 5-minute presentation summarizing the key learning points from your project.

Since this is a group activity, the grade will be given to the group as a whole.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy

A large part of the learning in this course comes from class discussions. Hence, you are expected to attend all classes and contribute to all discussions. **I will not keep track of either excused or unexcused absences.** While coming to class a few minutes late or leaving class a few minutes early on occasion and without disrupting the class is acceptable, doing so often or in a manner that disrupts the class will be penalized.

Classroom Policies

Laptop computers must remain closed during all class sessions unless the class discussion requires the use of a laptop. In such cases, the computers must be solely used for class purposes. Use of portable electronic devices during class is not permitted unless the class discussion requires the use of these devices. Per Whitman policy, no food or drinks (except water) are permitted in the classroom.

Case Analysis and External Research

Hindsight is 20/20. The objective of case analyses in this course is to help you think about the situations as the protagonists saw them, not to critique their decisions based on what we know now about those situations. Hence, *unless explicitly permitted, limit yourself to the information given in the case.* You do not have to do perform any research to conduct your case analysis. This applies to all case analyses, whether individual or group. Any attempt to access the Internet or other sources for solutions, suggestions, discussions, reviews or for any other information about the cases will be considered a violation of Academic Integrity.

Classroom policies

Laptop policy: Laptop computers can be used in class for taking notes and other course-related tasks such as research. However, they cannot be used in class for any activity not related to the course such as for checking emails, IMs etc.

Cell phones, PDAs and other portable electronic devices: Use of portable electronic devices during class is not allowed except when permitted by the instructor.

Food & drink policy: We will be following the Whitman policy of having no food and no beverages other than water in the classroom. Your understanding of the necessity of this policy and your cooperation are greatly appreciated.

Important note about deliverables

All deliverables must be of professional quality. Hence, to avoid being penalized, all deliverables must be well-organized, cleanly-formatted, contain no typos, and written in formal business language. Credit will be given to use of **relevant** quantitative analyses, and **relevant** innovative visual tools and graphics. Finally, **any deliverables submitted late will not be graded.**

Use of student work

Copies of student written work may be used for pedagogical purposes. An example of this would be using student answers to an exam question to illustrate what strong answers look like. Any student work so used will be rendered anonymous through the removal of the name and other identifiers. Student work may also be used for teaching evaluation and assessment.

Statement Regarding Academic Integrity

Syracuse University sets high standards for academic integrity. Those standards are supported and enforced by students, including those who serve as academic integrity hearing panel members and hearing officers. The presumptive sanction for a first offense is course failure, accompanied by the transcript notation "Violation of the Academic Integrity Policy." The standard sanction for a first offense by graduate students is suspension or expulsion. Students should review the Office of Academic Integrity online resource "Twenty Questions and Answers About the Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy" and confer with instructors about course-specific citation methods, permitted collaboration (if any), and rules for examinations. The Policy also governs the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. Additional guidance for students can be found in the Office of Academic Integrity resource: "What does academic integrity mean?"

This course has a zero tolerance for violations of academic integrity. Some examples of violations of Academic Integrity in this course include but are not limited to:

- Referring to, receiving or attempting to receive information about assignments, cases or exams from any source that is not permitted under the syllabus. Such sources may include the Internet, books, classmates, current and past students, and faculty (except the instructor)
- Copying or attempting to copy from others during exams or copying assignments or working on someone else's assignments (not in your group)
- Disclosing or attempting to disclose, without prior approval, either electronically or in any other form, information about or in an assignment or exam to anyone not authorized to receive such information
- Discussing a group assignment, deliverable or exam with someone outside your group including friends, acquaintances, classmates, current and past students, and faculty, with the objective of obtaining or providing assistance in completing the assignment, deliverable or exam or in a manner that may vitiate the learning objectives of the course.

- Discussing individual assignments, deliverables or exams with anyone except the instructor with the objective of obtaining or providing assistance in completing the assignment, deliverable or exam or in a manner that may vitiate the learning objectives of the course.
- Claiming participation in a deliverable or assignment without having participated
- Willfully misrepresenting your identity in any manner including in an exam or in an online discussion.
- Obtaining or attempting to obtain, exam or assignment questions in advance of the exam or of the posting of the assignment.

In line with University policy, all violations will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office.

Syllabus Statement for Turnitin

This class will be using Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention system. The ease of using the Internet has made it very easy for students to “cut and paste” material into papers that they are writing without proper citation. I will submit all/some/ papers that you write in this class to Turnitin, a service that identifies “matched text.” I will then interpret the originality report, based on your writing capability and writing style. In this class, you will also be given the opportunity to submit your own papers to Turnitin to check that all sources you have used are properly acknowledged and cited. Note that all submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

Statement Regarding Disability-Related Accommodations

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services(ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible. You are also welcome to contact me privately to discuss your academic needs although I cannot arrange for disability-related accommodations.

Religious Observance Policy

SU's religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through [myslice/student services/enrollment/my religious observances](http://myslice.syr.edu/student-services/enrollment/my-religious-observances) from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class.

	Date	Module	Topic	Reading (Chapter)	In-class Discussion Leader	In-class Exercise/ Homework
1	8/28 (Tu)	Foundations	Introduction Financial Analysis Review			
2	8/30 (Th)	Foundations	Financial Analysis Review			
3	9/4 (Tu)	Foundations	What is Strategy? Competitive Advantage	1		Car Sales (Negotiations) Online Syllabus Quiz (Due 11:59 pm)
4	9/6 (Th)	Foundations	Competitive Advantage			Salt Harbor (Negotiations)
5	9/11 (Tu)	Analyzing Environments	Industry Analysis	3		OSE 1/HW 1 (Due 11:59 pm)
6	9/13 (Th)	Analyzing Environments	Industry Analysis		Group 1	Cruise Inc./ Supermarkets Inc. (Videos)
7	9/18 (Tu)	Analyzing Environments	Industry Analysis		Group 2	Cola Wars (Case)
8	9/20 (Th)	Analyzing Environments	Internal Analysis	4	Group 3	OSE 2/HW 2 (Due 11:59 pm)
9	9/25 (Tu)	Business-level Strategy	Cost Leadership Strategy	5		Costco (Video)
10	9/27 (Th)	Business-level Strategy	Cost Leadership Strategy	5	Group 4	Netflix (Case)
11	10/2 (Tu)	Business-level	Differentiation Strategy	5	Group 5	BMW (Video)

	Date	Module	Topic	Reading (Chapter)	In-class Discussion Leader	In-class Exercise/ Homework
		Strategy				
12	10/4 (Th)	Business-level Strategy	Strategy in Technology Industries			Wintel (Simulation)
13	10/9 (Tu)	Business-level Strategy	Strategy in Technology Industries		Group 6	Facebook (Prospectus) OSE 3/HW 3 (Due 11:59 pm)
14	10/11(Th)	Business-level Strategy	Strategy in Technology Industries			App for That (Case)
15	10/16 (Tu)	MID-TERM EXAM				
16	10/18 (Th)	Leadership		2	Group 7	
17	10/23 (Tu)	Multiproduct Strategies	Introduction to Corporate Strategy	6	Group 8	
18	10/25 (Th)	Multiproduct Strategies	Diversification		Group 9	Disney (Case)
19	10/30 (Tu)	Acquisitions	Acquisitions	7	Group 10	Kraft Foods (Discussion) OSE 4/HW 4 (Due 11:59 pm)
20	11/1 (Th)	Global Strategy	Concepts	8	Group 11	
21	11/6 (Tu)	Global Strategy	Global US Firms		Group 12	L'Oreal (Case)
22	11/8 (Th)	Global Strategy	Global Foreign Firms		Group 13	Tata (Case)
23	11/13 (Tu)	Alliances	Alliances	9	Group 14	OSE 5/HW 5 (Due 11:59 pm)
24	11/15 (Th)	Innovation	Introductory Concepts	10	Group 15	

	Date	Module	Topic	Reading (Chapter)	In-class Discussion Leader	In-class Exercise/ Homework
	THANKSGIVING BREAK					
25	11/27 (Tu)	Innovation				Backbay Battery (Sim.)
26	11/29 (Th)		Final Project Presentations			
27	12/4 (Tu)		Final Project Presentations			
28	12/6 (Th)		Review			
	12/10 (Mo)		FINAL EXAM (12:45-2:45)			