

Course Syllabus | Autumn Session 2, 2017 V2 Oct 17
BUSMHR 7413 Syllabus
ADVANCED STRATEGIC ANALYSIS
Fisher College of Business

Monday / Wednesday

10:15 – 11:45 am

Gerlach 365

Instructor: Jeff Rodek
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Office hours: M/W: 12:00 pm – 1 pm (Also by appointment)

Course Description

The objective of *Advanced Strategic Analysis* is to improve your ability to analyze a firm's competitive situation and related strategies to create competitive advantage in a more realistic setting than is possible using the traditional case method. While many MBA level business courses offer insight into the basic strategy frameworks and tools, few students leave their MBA education adequately prepared to undertake the tasks associated with rigorous strategic analysis in real situations. Often this lack of preparation is due to difficulties students have translating the insights presented in conceptual lectures or pre-packaged case discussions to ill-structured, real-world business problems. This course emphasizes analysis of "real-world" firms.

We accomplish this objective by first briefly reviewing the theoretical frameworks and supportive tools for analyzing firms that you learned in the core strategy course among others. From here we go deeper to apply these frameworks and tools to firms using real-time raw data from industry sources. Overall, this course seeks to help students to bridge the gap between evaluating firms from a theoretical perspective via preset case studies and real-world analysis where you must identify the relevant information for evaluating a firm's profitability growth prospects and the sources of improved, if not sustainable competitive advantage within that industry. The ability to use these frameworks and tools appropriately helps student to efficiently identify relevant information embedded in massive amounts of publicly available data and information, how to assess the relationships among key variables highlighted by management theory, and how to interpret those relationships to develop educated opinions regarding the value creation opportunities in an industry and the viability of a firm's strategy in a specific context. Ultimately, the course is designed to provide opportunities to link theories from one's coursework with field data in order to create well-grounded insights about a firm.

The pedagogical approach taken in *Advanced Strategic Analysis* involves a mixture of discussion sessions and experiential workshops. The discussion sessions review the conceptual underpinnings and propositions associated with fundamental frameworks and tools of firm analysis, present examples of how these tools may be applied in practice, and provide recommendations to guide students in their own data collection and analysis efforts. In experiential workshop sessions students are asked to collect publicly available information regarding a well-known firm, conduct their own examination of the issues facing that firm, and present their analysis to the class as a whole. Group discussions accompany these workshops and offer opportunities for students to draw inferences from the data, practice identifying competitive issues, and discuss potential managerial activities that may address these issues. Ultimately, the process is designed to allow students to look at a firm through the lens of management theory to gain an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the company.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Required Materials:

Book: Zenger, Todd. (2016). *Beyond Competitive Advantage: How to Solve the Puzzle of Sustaining Growth while Creating Value*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.

Other readings will be available either in a digital course pack (HBS) or via links in Carmen.

- I reserve the right to add readings (*an example might be an article published after our first class*) or slightly modify assignments during the course.

Grading:

The overall course grade will reflect your performance in terms of the:

• Individual Assignment 1	(15 %)
• Team Assignment <i>checkpoint</i> paper	(5 %)
• Team Assignment <i>final</i> paper and presentation	(40 %)
• Class Participation	(15 %)
• Individual Assignment 2	<u>(25 %)</u>
	100 %

The requirements of the course are identical for everyone. This means it is not possible to “make up” for poor performance or absences through “extra credit” work. As required by school policy, grading will be based on relative rather than absolute standards, with an average grade likely to be 3.6 or lower.

Individual Assignment 1

Each student will write a short paper (approximately 4 pages) analyzing the strategic positioning of an assigned public company. The analysis will include traditional elements (Vision, Mission, Values, Strategies), Market position and a hypothesis regarding the company’s “Corporate Theory”.

The detailed prospectus will be available in Carmen.

Individual Assignment 2

Each student will write a final paper (approximately 5 pages) summarizing key learnings from the course text, articles, discussions, cases and guest lectures.

The detailed prospectus will be available in Carmen

Team Assignment

Students will choose teams on the first day of class. Each team will be required to conduct a workshop for the course along with one other team. Two rivals within an industry will be analyzed in each workshop, with each team analyzing one of the rivals and their competitor. Depending on class size (and the resulting number of teams) a workshop will comprise either a full or half class period. Teams will be responsible for conducting their own research and analysis, but collaborating in certain areas, using available data & information to develop their insights and recommendations.

The objective of the workshop is to provide students with an opportunity to examine a firm utilizing Competitive Analysis frameworks (Five Forces and Value Chain) and strategy evaluation tools (SWOT, VRIO) as well as applying concepts learned from the text, such as Corporate Theory. This team assignment will include “checkpoint” papers as well as a final paper and team oral presentation during the workshop.

To facilitate data collection, I suggest analyzing **public firms** to ease data collection efforts by providing access to a number of data sources (e.g., 10-Ks, published articles, corporate websites, etc.).

The detailed prospectus will be available in Carmen.

Class Participation:

Since much of our learning will occur through class discussions, the grading plan attempts to emphasize the *quality* of your questions and the insight you provide through your comments, not just quantity. I will assign different class members to be reporters for each class period. These students will note the contributions of their classmates; I will use this record to supplement my own contribution records.

This is an elective course so my goal is to provide an enjoyable learning opportunity for all of us! Please arrive on time and be prepared to contribute each day!

COURSE AGENDA

Session 1: Monday, October 16

Topics: Syllabus Review, Introduction to Creating Competitive Advantage, Strategy Toolset

Readings:

- “Perils of Bad Strategy”, Rumelt
- Beyond Competitive Advantage, (Preface, Introduction)

*Previously Assigned in Strategy & Implementation, MBA 6293 and/or MHR 7412

- “*What Is Strategy*”, Michael Porter, HBR
- “*Understanding Industry Structure*”, Porter’s Five Forces, HBR

Session 2: Wednesday, October 18

Topics: Strategy Frameworks and Analytical Tools (VALUE CHAIN, VRIO and SWOT) and Finding Data and Information

Readings:

- “CEO’s, Get To Know Your Rivals”, HBR, H00X5D, Fund
- “Ethical Dimensions of Competitive Analysis”, Porter and Rangan, HBR
- “Finding Information for Industry Analysis”, Rivkin & Cullen, HBR (optional)

*Previously Assigned in Strategy & Implementation, MBA 6293 and MHR 7412

- “*Creating Competitive Advantage*,” Ghemawat & Rivkin, HBR, VALUE CHAIN
- “*A Valuable Chain: Real World Strategies...*”, Barney & Clifford, HBR, 2010, VRIO
 - Note, this is Chapter 5, What I Didn’t Learn in Business School

Session 3: Monday, October 23

Topics: Corporate Theory

Readings:

- Beyond Competitive Advantage, (Chapter 1 Foresight, Insight, Cross-Sight)
- “How Ford’s Chief Became a Tech CEO”, Fortune, May 1, 2015
- “Ford Motor is Rethinking Car of Future”, Fortune, Nov. 30, 2016
- “How Ulta and Mary Dillon are Winning the Beauty Battle”, Fortune

Session 4: Wednesday, October 25

Topics: Business Models, Planning Elements, Blue Ocean

Readings:

- “Why Business Models Matter”, Magretta, HBR
- “How to Write a Great Business Plan”, Sahlman, HBR
- “Red Ocean Traps”, Kim & Mauborgne, HBR
- “Identify Blue Ocean’s by mapping”, Kim & Mauborgne, HBR
- “Finding an ‘Ocean’ Free From Rivals”, Fortune, Oct. 1, 2017 (optional)

*Previously Assigned in Strategy & Implementation, MBA 6293 and MHR 7412

- “*Blue Ocean Strategy*”, Kim & Mauborgne, HBR

Session 5: Monday, October 30

Topic: Guest Speaker, Kara Trott, Founder and CEO, Quantum Health

Readings: None

Session 6: Wednesday, November 1

Topic: Role of the Board of Directors & Strategic Planning Processes

Readings:

- “The Board’s Role in Strategy Development”, De Kluyber, HBR

Assignment: Individual Assignment 1 Due at beginning of class

Session 7: Monday, November 6

Topic: Financing the Corporate Theory (Capital Markets & Devaluating Complex Theories)

Readings:

- Beyond Competitive Advantage, (Chapter 3, Moral Hazard or Market for Lemons)
- “Activist Campaigns Yield Mixed Results”, WSJ, Oct. 6, 2015
- “Resisting Activists, and Winning”, *Fortune*, Oct. 1, 2017

Session 8: Wednesday, November 8

Topic: Team Project checkpoint review & General Discussion

Readings:

- “Google Gets Disciplined”, *Fortune*, Sept. 2015
- “The Queen of Pop”, *Fortune*, Oct 1, 2017

Assignment: Team Checkpoint Paper A Due at beginning of class

Session 9: Monday, November 13

Topic: M&A and Angel/Venture Capital

Guest Speakers: Michael Kindred-Pratt and Bob Wiggins, Rev 1 Ventures

Readings:

- Beyond Competitive Advantage, (Chapter 2 The Uniqueness Imperative)

Session 10: Wednesday, November 15

Topic: Make or Buy; Shaping Relationships

- Readings:**
- Beyond Competitive Advantage, (Chapter 4, Make or Buy; *Outsourcing*)
 - Beyond Competitive Advantage, (Chapter 5 Shaping External Relationships)
 - “Can P&G Find Its Aim Again”, *Fortune*, June 16, 2016

Assignment: Team Checkpoint Paper B Due at beginning of class

Session 11: Monday, November 20

Topic: Guest Speaker: Gary Binkoski, CFO, RG Barry Corporation

Readings: none

HAVE A GREAT THANKSGIVING BREAK!

Wednesday, November 22 - Friday, November 24

Session 12: Monday, November 27

Topic: Organizational Design and Strategic Leadership

Readings:

- Beyond Competitive Advantage, (Chapters 6 The Dynamic Design of the Organization)
- Beyond Competitive Advantage, (Chapters 7 Leading the Corporate Theory)

Session 13: Wednesday, November 29

Workshop 1: Teams 1 & 2

Assignment: ALL Team Papers Due

Session 14: Monday, December 4

Workshop 2: Teams 3 & 4

Session 15: Wednesday, December 6

Topic: Open Discussion

Readings:

- Articles TBD

Assignment: Final Individual Paper Due in class on December 6, or submitted to Carmen by Dec. __ (TBD)

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Attendance. Since class participation is part of the grading consideration, attendance matters. I will circulate a sign-in sheet at the start of each class for your signature. ***There will be one excused absence for the term (prior notification required via email). Any excused absences beyond the first or any unexcused absences will adversely impact your class participation evaluation, unless due to a true emergency. Excused absences are***

Regarding excused absences, I assure you I am extremely understanding about such issues, and realize that people (even MBA students!) have personal lives. I know there will be the occasional personal emergencies or business travel that comes up. I will excuse absences in the case of documented serious illness, family emergency, religious observance, civic obligations, or job interviews (but please try to avoid scheduling interviews during class sessions).

If we have a guest speaker, attendance in class is even more critical. Also, please be on time on guest speaker days rather than walk in while the speaker is already presenting. If you must arrive late, you MUST advise me in advance and I will notify the speaker before they start. In addition please stay in the room during the complete session. I trust you can understand the need for this discipline. We are collectively representing Fisher College and The Ohio State University.

Disability Services. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Technology: The use of laptops, smartphones, & other electronic devices is allowed in class, except during workshops and guest lectures. Please be considerate of others if using technology in the classroom – don't be disruptive.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct." The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct. I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct. If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated personally and required by the university to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.
