

Sul Ross State University
Department of Business Administration

Business Strategy

GBA 5301:SW01
Summer II 2015
Room: NA

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Course Description:

Development of Business programs and strategies. Integration of course content across the MBA curriculum. Recognition of both internal and external variables in formulating business strategies.

Prerequisite: 15 SCH of MBA course work or permission of instructor

Course Material(s):

Thompson, et al; **Crafting & Executing Strategy – Concepts & Readings** – 19th ed.; McGraw-Hill 2014; ISBN: 978-0-07-753707-4

Course Objectives:

An advanced understanding of Business Strategy, from both theoretical and practical perspectives

A refined and expanded appreciation of the complex and dynamic nature of the environment of business

An enhanced appreciation for making decisions under uncertainty and or in dynamic market conditions

A refined and enhanced ability to apply strategic thinking to business situations

Advanced understanding of and appreciation for the interdependence among business functions

In sum, an advanced yet practical working knowledge of business strategy as an aid in further study and career pursuits.

Course Grades:

Grades are determined on a percentage/points basis. Course requirements follow:

Engagement/Responsiveness	10%	(100)
Online Sessions - 1	10	(100)
Discussion Forums	15	(150)
Readings – Overviews - Group	20	(200)
Illustration Capsules Response(s)	10	(100)
Chapter Discussion Set - Group	20	(200)
Final Exam	15	(150)
TOTAL	100%	(1000)

Grades in the course will be assigned as follows:

- A = 90 - 100%
- B = 80 - 89%
- C = 70 - 79%
- D = 60 - 69%
- F = Below 60

Note: It is my expectation that satisfactory work in this course is at the B level or above. Thus, unless you receive notification from me or your grade average reflects lower than this level (80%), you can be assured that you are doing as expected in the course.

Engagement/Responsiveness:

The purpose of this graded course component is solely a function of the fact that this is an online course. As such, it is critically important that you are “engaged!” That is – that you are active in the course; responsive in submitting work; timely in responding to various requests I may have and so forth. This is intentionally a small percentage but an important component nonetheless. In short, I want to try and ensure that each of you is “on top” of course components and that the course takes on a high priority in your life for the next several weeks.

Online Session:

On just one occasion, we will have an online session via "Go-To-Meeting" (training). This will help clarify various course components and help us create a more dynamic component to the course. I may ask that a few of you get together in groups of two or three (if you live in the same town) if the class is too large for the constraints of our site license. For the session, if you have a bona-fide reason for non-attendance, I will award partial credit. And, note that even if you do miss the session, the remaining course grades still enable you to do well in the course. I will try and schedule this where it works for most everyone's schedule.

Discussion Forums:

As this class is conducted on an online basis, it changes several things but leaves many things intact as if it were offered on an in-class basis. One element that does not change is that proper preparation and class involvement are important. Discussion forums are an effective device for keeping high levels of motivation and/interest in the course and thus, are an important component of the course. Rather than divide the course into groups (as this is a large class), I will force posts to discussion forums before it is possible to read what others have posted. This will help (but not eliminate) redundancy and so forth. And, it is my hope that this will have a better “feel” if you will with respect to posts; comments; etc. Discussion forum topics will be announced on the announcement page but you may not know the topic until close to when the forum begins. One objective with these is to get almost a reaction rather than a carefully and well developed and non-risky response.

Discussion forums are a valuable and integral part of the course. You are urged to contribute at your own initiative and online discussion grades, for example, will be based upon quality of comments more than on quantity. Thus, your *thoughtful contributions* are more compelling than your frequency of input!! More detailed expectations will be included with the individual forum(s).

Readings Overviews:

One of the primary reasons I chose the text is that at the back are several readings which provide a more pedestrian perspective on some of the topics we cover. From among the readings assignments I make, you will be expected to write a short overview of some of these assignments (I will make specific assignments on BB). The assignment will be to offer your thoughts about the reading; its relevance to the course; practicality and/or usefulness of the reading on the basis of a position in business, etc. This will be quite straight forward and will not require a great deal of work (except, of course, for actually reading the article). And, this will help to ensure that you are fully digesting the content of both the readings on strategy and the strategic concepts. This will also be a group activity with the hope being you share perspective(s) on the articles.

Illustration Capsules Responses:

For many chapters, there are short “illustration capsules” which highlight various strategy issues, approaches, policies and/or just points to ponder. I will provide specific question(s) for some of these for you to submit as short assignments. Once again, these are good vehicles for bridging the gap between “theory and practice.” Grades on these will be almost on a - *did you or did you not turn it in base*. In short, do not expect copious comments on these short assignments.

Chapter Discussion Set:

For many of the chapters which will *not necessarily be covered on the final exam*, I will assign a few *questions* which will provide an opportunity to link chapter content to a specific situation much as a manager might do. And, in the short amount of time we have, this will enable broader coverage of the topic than would otherwise be the case. These are very appropriate for a graduate course in strategy. One preliminary comment on responding to chapter related questions - when responding to these, make sure you answer the question as you think a working manager would

answer rather than what you think I might be after or how I might think about the situation. And, please avoid just repeating what the text has to say. At a minimum, try to express things in your own way and without the benefit of what has already been written in the text. As well, I do like to see practicality and thoughtfulness revealed in your responses but there is no deduction without these elements. We will only have one chapter discussion set. But it counts a large “chunk” of your grade.

Please submit these using the assignment tool in Black-Board. And, *please note that your responses to these questions should not need to be supplemented with outside inquiries except in a few instances. In short, most of your responses should flow from what you have learned from reading the chapter and the other elements of the class.*

You may work in groups of three and submit these as a group rather than as individual assignments. Please know that is the grade for all individuals in the group so make sure all work is high quality and of graduate caliber. And, please make certain that each group member appreciates what they did not do as well as what they did do for the group.

The question set should be typed and single spaced. Length will be dependent on the number of questions assigned and the depth of your answer. In fact, there is no minimum page limit but I may place a maximum limit!! Any question group with excessive mechanical errors (misspellings, typos, etc.) will be penalized. These will be evaluated on thoroughness of analysis of area(s), creativity and practicality revealed in responses, quality of organization, etc.

Final Exam

The purpose of this area is to make sure that each of you leaves this course with sufficient background and foundation in the content areas of the course. An additional and equally important objective of the exam is to help prepare you for the comprehensive exam of which strategy will be a component. The exam will be an online, timed and objective type (multiple choice) exam, we will have an online exam. The final will only be over about 6 to 7 chapters.

Final Points

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS CAREFULLY:

This syllabus represents the plan of action for the course. It is, in many ways, a contract between us. Should you lose this document, not understand any part of it, or most important, not agree with some component contained in it, please let me know and I will try to help with the issue. As well, if you have difficulty with any aspect of the course, please let me know as early as possible. I will work with you on fixing whatever may be broken but I have no way of knowing this unless you let me know!! And finally, make sure to modify the tentative schedule as necessary.

Tentative Course Outline

The assignments will be (in part) a function of class progress – some things will be etched in stone while others will not be as firm. We will firm this up as class progresses!! You will note that some items are already listed as to week when due – the actual and specific content will be available as deemed appropriate.

<u>Week*</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
July 6	Discussion Forum – Non Graded Group Formation	TBA
13	Discussion Forum - Online Session?	TBA
20	Illustration Capsule - Readings Overview	TBA
27	Readings Overview – Discussion Forum	TBA
Aug. 03	Chapter Discussion Set (group) - Due Illustration Capsule - Readings Overview	TBA
10	Wrap-up – Discussion Forum <i>Final Exam – Thursday, August 13</i>	

* Each of the dates is a Monday – this does not mean that everything for that week is due on that Monday

Other:

Please turn in assignments on time

Do NOT email assignments and/or Do NOT use the BB drop box or other like devices

You may write your assignments directly in the assignment submission area or include a word document or both (both is what I prefer)

Please do NOT submit documents in formats other than word.doc or excel... (if needed)

When submitting group work, only one person per group needs to submit. ***But all group members must be identified so everyone receives credit.***

You will note that we will NOT cover every chapter – only those I feel are the most critical to a solid foundation in strategy. But, I sure hope you read everything!!