

*Sul Ross State University
Department of Business Administration
In Cooperation with the
Autonomous University of Chihuahua*

Business Strategy

GBA 5301- Web Based
Summer 2016
Section 1: W
Room: NA

Professor: Dr. William C. Green
Office: BAB 318
Office Phone: 837-8066; 8067(D)
Office Hours: TBA
wcgreen@sulross.edu

Course Description:

Development of business programs and strategies. In-depth integration of course content across the MBA curriculum. Recognition of both internal and external variables in formulating Business strategies. Emphasis on case method, readings and course assignments

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

Course Material(s):

Gamble & Thompson: *Essentials of Strategic Management; The Quest for Competitive Advantage*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Irwin, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-07-353030-7

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

An advanced ability to develop practical and comprehensive case analyses and solutions

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 GTT Sessions – 1 or 2	10	(100)
Chapter Discussion Set – Team	30	(300)
Case Assignments – Team	15	(150)
Discussion Forums	15	(150)
Readings – Overview(s) - Team	<u>20</u>	<u>(200)</u>
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 one or two occasions, we will have an online session via "Go-To-Training" (GTT). This will help clarify various course components and help us create a more dynamic component to the course. 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. ***Obviously, the readings presentations will utilize this format!***

Chapter Discussion Set:

For most of the chapters, I will assign several *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 two and submit these as a group rather than as individual assignments. Please know that is the grade for both 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 word processed 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.

Case Assignments:

You will be asked to write/assess two case assignments. The purpose of these is to provide a practical vehicle for tying things together and thinking strategically. Also, this helps insure that you appreciate the various linkages and nuances among all business functions. Finally, these are a primary component in helping us achieve the course objectives.

"Cases" should be typed and double spaced. Length will be dependent on the ***number of questions assigned to address the issues of the case.*** However, typical length usually falls somewhere between 4 and 5 pages (excluding exhibits). Any case with more than ten (10) mechanical errors (misspellings, typos, etc.) will be lowered by ten points. Cases will be evaluated on thoroughness of analysis of area(s), creativity and practicality revealed in your responses and the quality of organization, writing and clarity.

Remember that cases are written to inform in a professional, succinct and efficient way. Thus, verbosity should be avoided. This is also a team assignment but only for groups of two persons per team. As mentioned previously, you must prepare adequately for the case. I would think at a minimum, this would require an initial reading of the case for general content and then at least one or two more readings for fine tuning the detail and formulating your assessment of the case. ***Under no circumstances should you be tempted to search online for case information. I know that there is information out there but I have ways to compare what is submitted with what is***

available. If I find any occurrence of less than original work on these assignments, a grade of zero will be assigned for both members of the team!! This is an absolute with no exceptions.

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/Presentations:

From among the readings assignments I make, you will be expected to lead class discussion on two readings which will be assigned (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. *Two persons to a team.*

Note that an important objective of the MBA program is to enhance your ability to argue logically and professionally to an audience. You will be given this opportunity when presenting the reading material assignments. More detailed and specific discussion of this component will be considered in class.

Please note that part of your engagement/responsiveness grade may be awarded during the individual presentations and will be a function of the insight you exhibit as an audience member in terms of questions and/or comments you may have of the material being presented. Thus, it is vitally necessary that you listen carefully to the presentation and consider its merit and usefulness. Presentations via GTT will be scheduled at a later date.

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.

Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities needing academic or other accommodations to ensure full participation in the programs, services and activities at Sul Ross State University should contact the Office of Student Support Services, Ferguson Hall Room 112, Box C-117, Alpine, Texas 79832 (915) 837-8203.

Tentative Course Outline (see note below)

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignment*</i>
May 30	Forum – Syllabi – First Assignments Posted June 1 (Wednesday is first official day of class) Probable GTT session**	See BB
June 06	Assignments Due per BB	See BB
13	Assignments Posted per BB – Forum Probable GTT session	See BB
20	Assignments Dues per BB – Forum Tentative GTT readings presentations	See BB
27	Last Assignments Due per BB - Wrap-up	

* Assignment should be completed by the day it is assigned or at least during the week it is assigned (per BB) - ***also note that we will not cover all chapters nor all parts of the chapters we do cover!! Reading responsibility should be relatively easy to determine as Action assignments and chapter questions will correspond closely to chapter responsibility.***

** Any GTT sessions will be held on either Friday evening or Saturday morning – none will be held during weekdays

Note: This outline is only provided as a general guide – you should consult Black-Board and your SRSU email on a regular basis for specifics!!