

Course Outline

Course Code : BSP3701A
Course Title : Strategic Management
Semester : 2024/2025 Sem 1, Academic Year (Aug-Nov 2024)
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Overview

This course focuses on the central question in business: “how do firms achieve success?” We will concentrate on the strategic responsibilities of leaders and focus primarily on what they do to achieve success.

We will introduce concepts and frameworks that are rooted in the theory of strategy and management, which have proved valuable in practice. Key concepts relating to strategy, customers, competition, competencies and the broader environment, will be combined with analysis of difficult choices senior leaders make to achieve their intent. Our approach is to focus on the thinking, skills and actions required of senior leaders to develop, communicate, and implement strategic choices towards firm success.

Our assumption is that firms operate in complex, competitive, changing, and global environments. We will specifically focus our discussions on Asia and will attempt to integrate current events into our discussions. We will deal primarily with issues of organizational effectiveness rather than organizational efficiency, or as Peter Drucker wrote, with "doing the right things" rather than "doing things right."

Course Objectives

- Clarify the concept and application of strategy, particularly in Asia.
- Demonstrate the importance and centrality of strategy for success
- Introduce frameworks that facilitate strategic thinking and action
- Introduce tools and techniques to help leaders develop the knowledge and competencies to identify, evaluate and choose between difficult options in a range of business situations
- Encourage an interest in strategy and the development of a view of how strategy can help you and your organization achieve success

General Guide & Reading

There is no need to purchase a textbook. Readings will be provided on Canvas.

Assessment

The best measures of your learning on this course are improved knowledge and understanding of business and strategy, improved performance on your job, promotion and wealth. All of these will surely follow if you commit to this class, though perhaps after some passage of time. However, it is also useful to offer feedback on your learning.

| Assessment Components | Weightage |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Individual Class Participation | 30% |
| Individual Strategy Critique Paper | 30% |
| Group assignment(s) (4 x 10%) | 40% |

Individual Class Participation (30%)

Sharing your views, experiences and perspectives will contribute significantly to our learning in class. You should always express your views, particularly when you disagree or when you believe the lessons are faulty. Contributions should be complete and insightful, not consultant-speak or sound bites. We will all learn more by learning from each other, so you must consider all opinions, though you are free to reject any.

It is important to avoid jargon, fads, and complex terminology, so that we can focus on core principles, concepts, and the key determinants of firm success. So please avoid using or introducing any term that is not found in the dictionary or that is not in common daily use.

Strategy Critique Paper (Individual) (30%)

Another key component of the course is a maximum 5 paged paper (double spaced; *excluding* exhibits and references but *including* executive summary) where you will critique *one* particular strategy framework that we have covered in class. Please provide the one paragraph single-spaced executive summary at the beginning. The intent of this paper is to help you think more critically about a particular strategy framework. All strategy frameworks—including the ones we learn in class—are ultimately analytical tools, and as analytical tools they are bound to have shortcomings. In particular, many of the strategy frameworks we cover are abstracted from empirical observations of companies in Western contexts, and as such they often lose their usefulness when applied to the Asia Pacific context. By critiquing a framework, analyzing its shortcomings, and giving recommendations of how the framework can be improved upon, you will acquire a more nuanced understanding of strategy and become more effective in applying the frameworks we learn to real-life situations in your professional life.

The specifics of the strategy critique paper are as follows. You will pick any *one* framework that we covered in class and critique its shortcomings. The critique should include a theoretical section where you discuss why the key ideas or assumptions underlying a framework is inadequate, an empirical section where you draw upon the strategies and performance of a real-life company to illustrate your theoretical critique, and a recommendation section where you discuss how the framework you critique could be improved upon. Illustrate your ideas with examples.

Group Assignments (40%, ongoing)

Four group assignments provide you the opportunity to evaluate an issue or theme within strategy as it applies to a topic of current interest which is to be specified. You can form your own groups of 4-5, with each comprising both genders, at least three nationalities and no more than 60% of any measure of diversity. These assignments will be provided on a continual basis during the semester.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge

the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own” (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. In case of any doubt, you should consult your instructor.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT do not require specialist knowledge to use. Many of these AI tools are commonly used in social media, for example, to create content and disguise and refine content created from programmes like ChatGPT. We understand that students will be drawn to using these AI Tools, as they would for any other electronic aid.

However, to be clear, normal academic rules still apply. As noted in the Code of Student Conduct: *“The University takes a strict view of cheating in any form, deceptive fabrication, plagiarism and violation of intellectual property and copyright laws. Any student who is found to have engaged in such misconduct is subject to disciplinary action by the University.”*

With respect to AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT and image generation tools), the use of these tools as inputs into your assignment development process is acceptable. However, if you use ChatGPT or any other such AI tool in your work, you must provide a proper representation of how you used the tool and what prompts you used to generate output. Failure to cite its use constitutes academic misconduct. Further, as with any information source, be aware that minimal efforts yield low quality results. You will need to refine your work and fact check the output, as you would double-check information from any source. Further, you should be selective in how and when you use such tools instead of using it for each and every assignment you create.

To summarise:

1. Always check with your instructors on what are the permitted uses of AI tools.
2. Have a discussion at the start of a course about the use of AI.
3. Where permitted, acknowledge your use of AI.
4. You remain responsible for the quality of your work and its appropriate representation.
5. Failure to follow the above steps can lead to a concern about plagiarism (academic dishonesty).

As always, you have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard.

Schedule and Outline

| Lesson/ Week | Date | Topic | Activity (preparation / cases & assignments / follow-up readings & resources) |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | 15/8/24 | Introduction | To discuss Ant Financial and Ebay (2020) |
| 2 | 22/8/24 | External Analysis | To discuss NIO (2019) Case to handout: Genzyme |
| 3 | 29/8/24 | Generic Strategies | Case: TikTok and Kuaishou (2021) |
| 4 | 05/9/24 | | Group Assignment 1: Samsung Electronics (in-class) |
| 5 | 12/9/24 | Internal Analysis | Case: Shopee's Short-Lived Venture into India (2022) |
| 6 | 19/9/24 | Diversification | Case: Amazon.com 2021 Group Assignment 2: Amazon.com |
| - | 26/6/24 | RECESS WEEK | |
| 7 | 3/10/24 | Vertical Integration and Opportunism | Group Assignment 2: Amazon.com 2021 (continued, in-class) Case: ZBJ: Building a Global Outsourcing Platform for Knowledge Workers (2019) |
| 8 | 10/10/24 | Alliances | Case: Jio and Facebook: Adding Value Through an Alliance |
| 9 | 17/10/24 | Mergers and Acquisitions | Case: \$19B 4 text app WhatsApp...omg |
| 10 | 24/10/24 | Innovation, Network Externalities | Case: Uber vs Didi: The Race for the Ride-Hailing Market Group Assignment 3: Uber vs Didi, In-class |
| 11 | 31/10/24 | DEEPAVALI HOLIDAY | --- |
| 12 | 07/11/24 | Blue Ocean Strategy | Case: Shein vs Zara: Digital Transformation in the Fast-Fashion Industry Group Assignment 4: Shein vs Zara, In-class |
| 13 | 14/11/24 | Ind. Strategy Critique | Finish Individual Strategy Critique |