

Course Outline

Course Code	: BSP3701C
Course Title	: Strategic Management
Semester	: Semester 2, Academic Year 2024/2025
Faculty	: Assistant Professor Sanghyun Park, PhD
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Overview

Why do some firms perform better than others? The many possible answers to this important question are the focus of corporate strategy. Strategy refers, in general, to the set of actions taken to achieve a particular goal, and corporate strategy refers specifically to the set of actions top management takes to achieve superior firm performance. The perspective adopted in this course is that of top managers making decisions regarding (a) what businesses their corporations should focus on and (b) how to run those businesses. We will explore different analytical models that allow us to identify opportunities and threats companies face in complex and competitive environments and to propose sound and realistic solutions to these problems based upon a deep understanding of firms' strengths and weaknesses.

Course Objectives

By adopting the perspective of the top manager, this course cuts across all the functional areas (economics, accounting, finance, and marketing) and builds on your previous work in the program. The value of understanding corporate strategy extends beyond those in top management positions—it is also essential for internal effectiveness and efficiency that functional specialists understand corporate strategy and their role within it. In addition, a deep understanding of corporate strategy is also important for external consultants, financial analysts, auditors, bankers, and individual investors trying to understand the value of other firms.

To capture the complex and pragmatic nature of business problems and strategic solutions to them, this course is taught through the case method. We will supplement the case discussions with reading, lectures, and conceptual discussions. A key objective is for you to develop your own personal synthesis and approach for identifying and solving the problems facing an organization. By the end of the course, you will be able to analyze:

- Industry structure to identify competitive opportunities and threats
- Firm resources and capabilities to formulate business-level strategies
- Corporate strategy as a decision to where and how to grow the corporation

General Guide & Reading

Cases will be distributed during the course, and course slides and other multimedia material will be available online after each session.

There is no need to purchase a textbook. However, if you want to read more, I recommend the following optional book: R. Grant. *Contemporary Strategy Analysis and Cases: Text and Cases*, 11th edition, Wiley

Assessment

Your final assessment (Letter Grade) in this course derives from a final numeric score, which includes the following three grading components:

Evaluation Components		% of Grade
Individual (80%)	Class attendance and participation	20%
	Case reports	30%
	Individual essay	20%
Group (20%)	Team final project & presentation	30%
TOTAL		100%

- Case reports:** For each case study, students are expected to submit individual reports. Each report is due by Monday noon of the corresponding class week. The reports should include your own answers to case questions (will be uploaded online) and other thoughts you may have. A case report cannot exceed two pages and should be typed with 11-point font, 1-inch margin all around on A4, and 1.5 line spacing. Plagiarism of any kind (copying from the Internet, including Chat GPT, other students in class, and prior class attendants) will be penalized by a negative full score of the assignment. I will randomly check your case reports with Turnitin for potential plagiarism.
- Team final project:** Your team will take on the roles of consultants, investment bankers, or managers to analyze the strategy of a real company (of your team's choice). You will apply the concepts, analytical tools, and frameworks of this module to analyze the company's external and internal environments, identify and analyze the key strategic problems it currently faces, and present a set of recommendations to maximize its long-term performance. This project is intentionally somewhat open-ended because each company and the issues it faces are unique, and thus, you should tailor your analysis accordingly. The choice about the relative weight to put on different issues, theories, and concepts in explaining the firm's activities and derived recommendations is yours. It will be evaluated based on whether the concepts you use in the analyses are relevant to the situation (i.e. did you pick concepts that best illuminate the firm's situation), applied appropriately (i.e. do they fit the context you describe, how your analyses incorporate relevant quantitative and qualitative data), offering novel ideas (i.e. do they introduce new perspectives or understanding of phenomena) and presented in a logical, coherent, and clear manner.
- Individual essay:** For the firm chosen for the team project, each team member will choose one non-overlapping recent issue (e.g. Artificial Intelligence, Environmental, social, and Governance (ESG), or geopolitical disruptions) or recent strategic decision (e.g. M&A, market entry) and articulate how it will shape its competitiveness in the form of the short essay. While I expect you to apply the analytical lens we covered in the class, the choice of the tools and focus is yours. The individual essay should be submitted by 11:59 pm Friday, April 25, 2025. It should not exceed 10 pages and should be typed with 11-point font, 1-inch margin all around on A4, and 1.5 line spacing. You are allowed to include additional materials (e.g. tables, charts, figures) in an appendix that does not count toward the length limit.

Schedule and Outline

Timeline	Topic
Week 1 (1/14)	Introduction to the Course and Strategy
Week 2 (1/21)	Industry Value Chain and Performance
Week 3 (1/28)	No class given Chinese New Year
Week 4 (2/4)	Platform and Network-Based Competition
Week 5 (2/11)	Industry Transformation/Innovation
Week 6 (2/18)	Resources, Capabilities, and Activities
<i>Recess Week</i>	
Week 7 (3/4)	Differentiation
Week 8 (3/11)	Corporate Strategy
Week 9 (3/18)	Mergers and Acquisitions
Week 10 (3/25)	Resource Pathway for Growth & Enlarging Competitive Horizon
Week 11 (4/1)	Shifts in Technological Environments
Week 12 (4/8)	Group project presentations
Week 13 (4/15)	Group project presentations

* Subject to change

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.

Additional guidance is available at:

- <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/administrative-policies-procedures/acceptance-record#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>
- <http://nus.edu.sg/osa/resources/code-of-student-conduct>