

SGMT 6000 B/U 3.00: Strategic Management



Course Outline Fall 2019

Revised: April 22, 2019

Section B:
Tuesdays 2:30–5:30pm, beginning Sept. 10, 2019
SSB N106

Section U:
Tuesdays 7:00–10:00pm, beginning Sept. 10, 2019
TBD

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Prof. Sheremata is a tenured associate professor who specializes in strategy formulation and execution as well as the management of technology and innovation. She has taught at Schulich since 2002 and before that at Tulane University. Prior to her career in academia, she worked in IBM for 13 years managing new product development in R&D labs, developing new business and product plans, managing the introduction of new products, and working as executive staff for IBM's highest level of management.

Brief Description

This course examines business and corporate strategy. The focus is on strategic management, the process of choosing and defining purposes and objectives, formulating and implementing a viable strategy and monitoring strategic performance. It deals with the organization in its totality and demonstrates how and why the various functions of business are interdependent and need to be coordinated if the organization is to perform effectively. The course elaborates on the applicability of the strategic management discipline to a variety of sizes and types of organizations.

Prerequisites: All 5000-series Required Foundations of Management Core Courses.

Contents

Course Learning Outcomes.....	2
Deliverables at a Glance.....	2
Course Material.....	3
Student Preparation for Class and Class Participation: Expectations.....	3
Class-by-Class Syllabus.....	5
Written Assignments, Project and Exam: Descriptions.....	13
Evaluation of Written Assignments, Project, and Exam.....	15
Calculation of Course Grade.....	18
General Academic Policies: Grading, Academic Honesty, Accommodations and Exams.....	18

Course Learning Outcomes

This course focuses on the strategic management of the modern firm. It consists of three modules that deal with three aspects of strategic management: (a) strategic analysis, (b) strategy formulation, and (c) strategy implementation.

How do firms gain competitive advantage? To answer this question, we will adopt the perspective of the general manager—the person who is ultimately responsible for firm performance. Managers must apply judgment when formulating strategy and guiding its implementation, because answers that are clearly right or wrong are rare in strategic management. However, analysis is also required. Judgment without rigorous analysis is like shooting hoops in the dark. This course is designed to help students develop the judgment, analytic capabilities, and knowledge necessary to effectively formulate and execute business- and corporate-level strategies.

Lectures and readings will highlight concepts and tools that can help managers improve firm performance. Case discussion then helps students apply concepts and tools to analyze the management of the firm. Throughout, students will learn to integrate the perspectives of functions like finance, marketing, and operations. Upon completion of this course, students should have a greater understanding of the choices managers face and how their decisions affect firm performance.

Using this case-based approach, this course is designed to help students attain the following objectives:

- Acquire core knowledge bases of strategic management and learn how to apply them to become an effective manager.
- Develop an informed understanding of the logic behind profits in the modern firm.
- Develop the skills needed to perform strategic analyses of firms and industries.
- Develop a capacity to formulate and execute business- and corporate-level strategies.
- Develop the skills and perspectives required for leadership positions within firms.
- Develop the written and oral skills needed to be an effective manager in the global economy.

Deliverables at a Glance

In the table below, the impact of each task on your final grade for the course is indicated in the “% weight” column.

Assignment/Task	Quantity	% Weight	Total %	Author
Assignment 1 (Five Forces)	1	10		Individual
Assignment 2 (Generic Strategies)	1	15		Individual
Comprehensive Exam	1	25		Individual
Group Project Presentation	1	5		Group
Group Project Report	1	20		Group
Class Participation Preparation (Quizzes)	5	10		Individual
Class Participation Actual	1	15		Individual
			100%	

**Late assignments will not be accepted.
Each student is required to keep a backup copy of each assignment.**

If you are facing personal circumstances that might interfere with your performance in this class, please alert me as soon as possible and I will try to help you complete the course. If you contact me after missing several classes, or an exam, my ability to help you will be limited. If you require special accommodations because of a disability, please advise me as soon as possible.

Please include the section letter of your class to the subject line of any e-mail you send me.

For additional details, see Written Assignments, Project, and Exam: Descriptions on p. 13 and Evaluation of Written Assignments, Project and Exam on p. 15.

Course Material

Required reading for this course includes the following textbook and course kit, which are available for purchase from the York University bookstore. <http://bookstore.blog.yorku.ca>

1. Dess, G., McNamara, G., Eisner, A., & Lee, S. 2019. *Strategic Management* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
2. SGMT 6000 B/U York University Course Kit, prepared by Prof. Sheremata

The assigned readings in this book and the course kit must be read to complete this course successfully. **These readings are not optional.**

Used and older versions of the text are perfectly acceptable, but please check with classmates to make sure you are reading the correct chapters and page numbers since they will differ from those in the syllabus. Older versions of the coursekits differ and are missing a great deal of material you will need.

A course website been created within *Canvas LMS* (Learning Management System). It contains general information for Schulich students and information and materials specific to this course. Please check it frequently, since I will post announcements and any changes to the schedule or readings on Canvas. I will announce any change to the syllabus in class before posting any revisions on Canvas.

I will also post a set of slides on Canvas after each class. These slides can be used as study aids.

Student Preparation for Class and Class Participation: Expectations

In my view, the role of a professor is to **add value** beyond the reading materials. It follows that the most effective use of classroom time is expanding upon (reinforcing or clarifying) what the student has tried to learn on an individual basis before entering the classroom. **For this reason, I will assume each student has carefully read and made every effort to understand the assigned material prior to class.**

Preparation. Students are expected to complete the assigned reading before each class, be prepared to describe key concepts and tools, and apply these concepts by actively participating in class discussions. The Prep. questions in the “Class-by-Class Syllabus” on p. 5 identify concepts that students should be prepared to discuss in class.

The lecture portion of each class will highlight aspects of the reading that require significant interpretation or further clarification, but will not cover all of the material for which students are responsible. There is simply not enough class time available to repeat everything the readings tell us about these concepts and tools. Classes would be also be pretty boring if they focused on repeating what the book “says.” Instead, classes will focus on providing **value add** by highlighting a) aspects of concepts and tools that are difficult to understand and prone to misinterpretation, and b) the application of concepts and tools through the discussion of cases. **This is why completing the readings ahead of time is so important.**

Class Participation (actual). Participation is important in this course, because one cannot learn how to be an effective manager by simply reading a book or listening to others talk about it. Learning by “doing” is the best way to learn management. Short of actually stepping into the job of a CEO, talking through what you would do and your assessment of the situation is the best way to learn strategic management.

When students **actively contribute** a variety of views and perspectives, class discussion is more productive for everyone. Learning in a strategic management course depends on class participation, particularly during the discussion of cases. Participation reinforces learning from the readings and helps students develop analytic skills. It helps them apply what we know about strategic management to the complex situations firms face today.

Students may be called upon to contribute to the discussion at any time. If a student feels he or she cannot participate in a specific class, they should let me know ahead of time. Both the **quality of the contribution** and **frequency** of participation affect participation grades. Students are not expected to “get the right answer” when they contribute to class discussion. However, **everyone is expected to make a proactive effort to contribute to the learning process through participation.**

Not participating in class discussions will affect your final grade, even if the rest of your performance is exceptional. Not surprisingly, **frequent absence from class will significantly affect your participation grade.** Simply attending the portion of the class where the quiz is given and skipping the rest of the class will likewise affect your final grade. A student that does not attend class does not have the opportunity to participate.

Finally, all students are expected to contribute to a positive learning environment. While disagreement on the merits of an argument and differences in interpretation are a good thing in this class—because differences provide learning opportunities for everyone—every student is expected to refrain from making disagreements personal. Intellectual discussion of differences is good. Calling someone an “idiot” is not.

Each student will be asked to evaluate their own participation at the end of the term. Self-evaluations will be considered valuable input but will not determine participation grades.

Class Participation (preparation). Quizzes will test your preparation for case discussion, and therefore your ability to make an informed contribution. They will take place at the beginning of every class where a case is assigned reading (except when an assignment is due). These quizzes will be multiple-choice. The majority of questions will focus on facts that should be easy to recollect if the case has been thoroughly read rather than skimmed. One or two questions (out of five or six) will refer to concepts in the readings that you have been asked to prepare for class (see Prep. questions in the Class-by-Class Syllabus on p. 5).

This portion of your final grade rewards students who read all **required reading** as a matter of course. However, these quizzes should also motivate those tempted to skip or skim required readings. They ensure the class as a whole is prepared to discuss the case, which makes classes more interesting.

Late students forfeit their right to take the quiz. However, one quiz will be “forgiven” meaning it will not count toward your final grade. This should ease the minds of students who must miss a class for reasons beyond their control.

Students must NOT use cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices during class for any activity that is not related to the class.

There is no point attending class if one cannot pay attention to lectures and discussion. Your ability to participate in an informed manner will also be negatively impacted. **Therefore, repeated use of devices such as cell phones will negatively affect your participation grade.**

Exceptions will be made if there is a pressing reason you need to check your device and you let me know ahead of time.

Class-by-Class Syllabus

This course consists of three modules: I) Strategic Analysis, II) Strategy Formulation, and III) Strategy Implementation. The following list of topics and readings indicates the material to be read, reviewed and/or prepared for each class. The assigned case(es) is always first in the list of readings. Dates for the assignments, group project, and exam are also provided.

Note that if any changes to this schedule become necessary, notifications will be posted on Canvas. If a change needs to be announced between classes, notification will be sent to your Schulich e-mail account. **Please monitor your Schulich e-mail account on a regular basis.**

Module I: Strategic Analysis

Sept. 10 Introduction to Strategic Management
(1)

Prep:

- Identify some firms that you think are “good performers.” Why? Based on what?
- Which metrics do we focus on in strategic management? Why?
- What type of metric indicates whether a firm has a competitive advantage? Do you think the firms you identified have a competitive advantage?

Read:

1. **This syllabus!**
2. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 1, “Creating Competitive Advantages”
3. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 3, “Evaluating Firm performance” subsection, **pp. 90-93 only** (focus on Financial Ratio Analysis subsection)
4. Berman, K., Knight, J. & Case, J. 2005. Profitability Ratios: The Higher the Better (Mostly) (HBS)
5. Magretta, J. 2011. Competitive Advantage: The Value Chain and your P&L, **pp. 4-6 only** (the concepts about profit ratios are important!) (HBS)

Optional but highly recommended:

- Schachter, H. 2014. When Management Theories Come Home to Roost (HBS)

- Hammond, J.S. 2002. Learning by the Case Method (HBS)
- Cialdini, R.B. 2007. How to Get the Best Solutions from Your Team (HBS)

The above reading is due before the second class.

Optional Videos:

- How to improve your class participation: Part 1 <https://youtu.be/rxR47dUIKM0>
- How to improve your class participation: Part 2 <https://youtu.be/t-WsJ7E4MoE>

Sept. 17 Strategic Analysis—External Environment
(2)

Prep:

- How do we define an industry in strategic management?
- Why do we care which industry a firm competes in?
- How do segments of the general environment affect specific industries? Examples?
- Describe each of the five forces. How does each force affect the attractiveness of an industry?
- Why is competition the central concept in this model?

Case study questions:

- In which industry does Loblaws compete? Define this industry.
- How would you determine whether Loblaws has a competitive advantage in this industry?
- Evaluate the threat of each of the five forces in this industry. In your opinion, which are the most relevant criteria you can use to evaluate each of these threats?
- How would you evaluate the attractiveness of this industry?

Read:

1. **Loblaw in Canada's Stagnant Grocery Market (quiz on this case)**
2. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 2. "Analyzing the External Environment of the Firm" (focus on the general environment & five forces; refer to p. 179 if you need clarification re the concept of vertical integration)
***** Exhibit 2.5 should be very helpful when doing Assignment #1.**
3. Magretta, J. 2011. The Five Forces: Competing for Profits (HBS)
4. Porter, M.E. 1998. Chapter 2: "The Competitive Advantage of Firms in Global Industries" in *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*, pp. 72-74 only

Alternative case:

- **Sandlands Vineyards** (HBS 9-718-438)

Optional but highly recommended—terms referred to throughout the course:

- Magretta, J. 2011. A Porter Glossary: Key concepts
Review these terms: *Activities, competition, competitive advantage, corporate strategy, differentiation, frameworks, generic strategies, return on invested capital, strategy, value chain, value proposition.*

Sept. 24 Strategic Analysis—Internal Environment
(3)

Prep:

- Think of a firm that provides a product or service you frequently buy. What are the resources or capabilities in the firm that you think create value for you?
- Which characteristics cause resources (and capabilities) to be sources of competitive advantage? Of sustainable competitive advantage?
- Describe each activity in Porter’s value chain. Think through how each activity affects value creation in one specific business.

Case study questions:

- What are the different types of activities Starbucks performs in its value chain?
- How have these activities helped Starbucks compete in the retail coffee-house industry? How have they contributed to the success of its strategy?
- Which of Starbucks’ activities create value in your opinion? Which destroy value?
- Does Starbucks have resources or capabilities that are sources of sustainable competitive advantage?

Read:

1. **Starbucks (case assignment due – so no quiz)**
2. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 3: “Assessing the Internal Environment of the Firm”
3. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 4: “The Central Role of Knowledge” subsection, pp. 104-106 only (focus on role of tacit vs. codified knowledge)
4. Barney, J.B. 1995. Looking inside for competitive advantage, *The Academy of Management Executive*. pp. 49-61 (focus on the O in VRIO)

Optional:

- Collis, D.J. & Montgomery, C.A. 2008, Competing on Resources, *Harvard Business Review*. July/Aug. pp. 1-13

Assignment # 1 Due

Groups Formed in Class

List of Group Members and Spokesperson Due after Class

Module II: Strategy Formulation

Oct. 1 Strategy Formulation—Business Level
(4)

Prep:

- What is a cost leadership strategy? Examples?
- What is a differentiation strategy? Examples?
- How do you know whether a cost leadership or differentiation strategy has been successful—or just attempted?

Case study questions:

- Which generic strategy (or strategies) did Wal-Mart use to compete in the discount store industry? Defend your answer—what are the most distinguishing characteristics

of each generic strategy? Do you see evidence in the case that supports one or both strategies?

- Does Wal-Mart have a competitive advantage? Does this case include evidence of competitive advantage?
- If so, what are the sources of competitive advantage? Which activities form the basis of this competitive advantage?
- Does Wal-Mart have a sustainable competitive advantage? Why or why not?

Read:

1. **Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.** pp. 1-10 only, until Diversification ([quiz on this case](#))
2. **Flash Forward Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.**
3. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 5: “Business-Level Strategy”
4. Magretta, J. 2011. Competitive Advantage: The Value Chain and your P&L, pp. 1-13 & 28 only (other pages optional) (HBS)
5. Porter, M.E. 1998. Chapter 2: “The Competitive Advantage of Firms in Global Industries” in *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*, pp. 74-79 only

Optional:

- Porter, M.E. 1996. What is Strategy, *Harvard Business Review*, Nov/Dec. pp. 61-78

Alternative case:

Ingvar Kamprad and IKEA (HBS 9-390-132)

Oct. 8
(5)

Strategy Formulation—Corporate Level

Prep:

- What is the difference between a business strategy and a corporate strategy?
- What are the two most viable bases for product diversification? Why?
- How are core competencies defined? Prepare an example of a core competence in a diversified firm.
- What are some examples of shared activities in diversified firms?
- What do we mean by economies of scope? What role do synergies play in corporate strategy?

Case study questions:

- How have **the businesses within** Louis Vuitton (LVMH) been performing? How does its performance compare to its competitors?
- Which generic strategy has LVMH attempted in its leather and fashion goods business? Has it realized competitive advantage?
- Which of its activities created value in this business? Which of its resources and capabilities created value?
- What are LVMH’s core competencies?
- Describe how the firm has or has not transferred core competencies across its businesses. Has LVMH shared activities across its businesses? Resources? Has the firm realized economies of scope?
- How should LVMH leverage its core competencies? Which new businesses should the firm enter and why?

Read:

1. **Louis Vuitton (case assignment due — so no quiz)**
2. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 6: “Corporate-Level Strategy”

Optional:

- Prahalad, C.K., & Hamel, G. 2001. The Core Competence of the Corporation, *Harvard Business Review*. April/May pp. 1-15.
- Markides, C., 1997. To diversify or not to diversify, *Harvard Business Review*. Nov/Dec. pp. 93-99.

Assignment # 2 Due

Oct. 15 (6) Strategy Formulation—International Level

Prep:

- What is a global strategy? Prepare an example of a firm pursuing a global strategy across national markets.
- Prepare an example of a firm pursuing a multidomestic strategy across national markets. Now prepare an example across provincial markets.
- Can you think of a firm that competes through a transnational strategy, i.e. one that attempts global integration and local responsiveness simultaneously?

Case study questions:

- How did Four Season’s enter the French (Parisian) market? What was Four Season’s strategy in this market?
- Describe the challenges that were unique to operating in the French market— compared to other geographies in which Four Seasons operated?
- How did this firm choose to deal with those challenges?
- What did its new French operation have in common with its operations in other countries? How do these commonalities relate to its business-level strategy? To synergies across its global operations?
- What was Four Seasons’ international strategy? Global, multidomestic, or transnational? Evidence?

Read:

1. **Four Seasons Goes to Paris (quiz on this case)**
2. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 6: “International-Level Strategy”

Optional:

- Ghemawat, P. 2001. Distance still matters: The hard reality of global expansion, *Harvard Business Review*. Sept. pp. 1-11

Group Project Topic Proposals Due

<p>No Classes October 22 — Reading Week</p>
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Module III: Strategy ImplementationOct. 29 Strategy Implementation—Structure and Strategy
(7)

Prep:

- Describe the most important features of the four basic types (or “forms”) of organizational structures.
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these types? Why would a firm pick one type over another?
- If a firm has extensive product diversification, what type of organizational structure provides the best fit?
- Evaluate the dimensions of the structure of a firm you have worked for. Do you think these dimensions were conducive to the attainment of the firm’s goals?
- Which dimensions of organizational structure are a “good fit” with a differentiation strategy? With a cost leadership strategy?
- When does a decentralized structure help a firm realize its strategy? When is a centralized structure a better fit?

Case study questions:

- What can we deduce about the **dimensions** of structure in the Micro-Electronic Products Division (MEPD)?
- Who has the authority to make decisions in this Division? Are changes needed in that regard?
- What **type** of structure does SMA have? MEPD?
- Is this Division well served by this type of structure? Is it a good fit with its strategy? Compare the benefits and drawbacks of a functional structure with those of divisional and matrix structures as you consider these questions.
- Ultimately, which **type** of structure would you recommend for MEPD? Why?

Read:

1. **SMA: Micro-Electronic Products Division (A) (quiz on this case)**
2. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 10: “Creating Effective Organizational Designs”
3. From Strategy to Implementation: Seeking Alignment (HBS Press)

Alternative cases:

- **P&G Japan: The SK-II Globalization Project** (HBS 9-303-003)
- **United Cereal: Lora Brill’s Eurobrand Challenge** (HBS Brief Case 4269)

Nov. 5 Strategy Implementation—Culture, Control Mechanisms, & Leadership
(8)

Prep:

- Evaluate the behavioral control mechanisms of a firm you have worked for. Which of the three types of control (or “levers”) were predominant in this firm?
- Define organizational culture. Now describe the organizational culture of a firm you have worked for.
- What are the three interdependent activities that are vital to effective strategic leadership
- What are the three primary activities associated with transformational leadership?

Case study questions:

- Which behavioral control mechanisms do you see employed in Southwest Airlines? Describe how each mechanism helped each firm implement its strategy.
- Describe the values and beliefs that were widely shared by the employees of Southwest Airlines.
- What impact have these values and beliefs had on Southwest Airlines' performance? Describe how they helped Southwest Airlines implement its strategy.
- Evaluate Herb Kelleher as a leader. Was he an effective leader? Why or why not? Was he a transformational leader? Why or why not?
- How important was Herb Kelleher to the performance of Southwest Airlines? Will he be easy to replace or does that matter?

Read:

1. **Southwest Airlines (A) (quiz on this case)**
2. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 9: "Strategic Control and Governance"
3. Simons, R. 1995. Control in an age of empowerment, *Harvard Business Review*. March/April pp. 80-88.

Group Project Outlines Due

Nov. 12 Strategy Implementation—Strategic Leadership
(9)

Prep:

- We will use clips from the classic movie 12 O'Clock High as a video case. Come to class prepared to discuss the criteria for effective strategic leadership and transformational leadership. We will review situational leadership in class, then evaluate General Savage's leadership using all three of these models.
- Review the three interdependent activities that are vital to effective strategic leadership? Evaluate the leadership of a firm in which you have worked.
- Review the three primary activities associated with transformational leadership? Evaluate the CEO of a firm that has undergone extensive change using these criteria.

Case study questions:

- How difficult a challenge did General Savage (Gregory Peck) face when he accepted his new job as squadron commander? What would the consequences of poor leadership include?
 - How did General Savage attempt to turn around this squadron's performance? What strategies and tactics did he employ to obtain "desired" behaviors from the men in the squadron? Were these strategies and tactics effective in your opinion? Why or why not?
 - Are the goals of these men and their leaders aligned? At all levels? What are the implications of unaligned goals?
 - Ultimately, what is your evaluation of General Savage's approach to management? How would you evaluate him as a leader? How important was he to the outcomes the squadron achieved? Will he be easy to replace or does that matter?
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Read:

1. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 11: “Strategic Leadership: Creating a Learning Organization and an Ethical Organization”

Optional:

- Schoemaker, P., Krupp, S., & Howland, S. 2013. Strategic Leadership: The essential skills, *Harvard Business Review*. Jan/Feb. pp. 1-5
- Hershey et al. 2010. “Situational Leadership” in *Management of Organizational Behavior*, pp. 113-132 only (until Determining Appropriate Style subsection)

Video Case:

- **12 O’Clock High**

Alternative case:

Wells Fargo: Setting the Stagecoach Thundering Again (HBS NA0467)

Nov. 19 **Comprehensive Exam**
(10)

Nov. 26 Technological Innovation and Strategy
(11)

Prep:

- We will use a video interview of Bill Gates on the work of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Africa as a case to illustrate some key points about innovation. We will discuss types of innovation, its impact on national economies and business performance, and approaches to corporate entrepreneurship.
- What do we mean by a continuum of radical and incremental innovations?
- Describe the difficulties and challenges of innovation. How do these differ when innovation is more radical than incremental?
- Describe the different approaches to corporate entrepreneurship.

Case study questions:

- List the innovations Bill Gates describes. What types of innovation is he referring to?
- What are the “jobs” that Bill Gates is referring to? What is it that these “new products” are (really) trying to do?
- What are the risks involved with the innovation Bill Gates describes? Potential returns?
- How would you recommend firms pursue these opportunities? Which types of entrepreneurship do you think would be most effective?
- How would firms endeavor to capture returns from these innovations?
- Would a first mover be more able to profit from these innovations? Or a second mover or follower?

Reading:

1. Dess et al. 2019. Chapter 12: “Managing Innovation and Fostering Corporate Entrepreneurship”
2. Christensen, C. M., Anthony, S.D., Berstell, G., & Nitterhouse, D. 2007. Finding the right job for your product. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 48(3): 38-47.

Video Case:

- **Fareed Zakaria Interview with Bill Gates**

Optional:

- Christensen, C.M., Raynor, M.E., & McDonald, R. 2015. What is disruptive innovation? *Harvard Business Review*. Dec. pp. 44-53.
- Eismann, T. 2007. Winner-take-all in networked markets (HBS 806131)

Alternative case:

- **Tesla** (HBS MH0049)

Group Presentations and Q&A Periods (overflow group project presentations)

Dec. 3 Integration and Wrap-Up—Group Presentations
(12)

Group Presentations and Q&A Periods

Group Project Reports Due

No Late Reports Accepted

Written Assignments, Project and Exam: Descriptions

There are two written assignments, a group project, and comprehensive exam in this course. The specifications for these items are described below. The criteria by which they will be evaluated are listed in the following section.

The assignments and project report must be written in (the equivalent of Times New Roman) **12-point font, double-spaced—not 1.5 or 1.8, with 1 inch page margins, and strictly adhere to the page maxima** described below. Exceptions will not be made for additional figures or tables. Not meeting these requirements will result in a lower grade since you will have more space to complete the assignment than other students—which is not fair to them.

Cover pages are also required with enough white space for comments.

These deliverables must also be submitted to TURNITIN, a tool that identifies many different types of plagiarism with a high degree of accuracy. This tool identifies plagiarism within the class as well as external sources such as the Internet. **Where credible evidence of academic dishonesty is found, students will be submitted to the disciplinary process of the university.**

Note that assignments are tailored to specific versions of cases as well as what I teach in class, therefore assignments that other students have done in other classes will not help you. They will lead you astray.

Due Date

Sept. 24 Assignment 1 (Five Forces)

Students are required to write a five forces analysis, which is due at the beginning of class. Bullet formats are encouraged when you refer to criteria if they help you present your analysis with greater clarity. More detail on this assignment will be provided during class.

Max length: 2 double-spaced pages

Value: 10%

Oct. 8 Assignment 2 (Generic Strategies)

Students are required to write a short case analysis, which is due at the beginning of class. Your analysis must be an essay; bullet formats may not be used. This essay must address the assignment questions which will be distributed in class.

Students must apply strategic management theory. All assertions must be supported by logic, evidence in the case, and thoughtful analysis. Students should not simply recite facts from the case. Instead, they should carefully select facts to support their arguments. Space constraints should help you do this.

Max length: 2 double-spaced pages

Value: 15%

Nov. 26 through Dec. 3 Group Project

Each group will perform an in-depth analysis of a single **business** in a **public** firm. In order to be able to gather sufficient information for analysis, **groups must choose a business which has been written about extensively in the press.** However, no interviews may be taken—all information gathered must be publicly available. An in-depth on-line search of the business press must be performed through **ABI/INFORM** global (Proquest).

Each group must present its analysis in class, take questions from the class, and hand in a written report. This analysis must describe and assess the internal and external situation facing the business, the content of its strategy, the implementation of that strategy, and well-considered recommendations. All parts of the analysis must be supported by facts, evidence, and strategic management theory. Recommendations that are excellent show some creativity but can still be implemented. They should also follow from the prior analysis. More information on this project will be provided during class.

To ensure groups do not put off thinking about their projects until late in the term, each group must complete the following tasks by the following dates. **Failure to do so may negatively affect the project grade.**

a) Groups formed by Session 3 (Sept. 25)

Students need to form groups of five or six (exact sizes TBD in class) and choose a spokesperson by this date. The spokesperson's job is to make sure I receive the list of group members, the group's topic, and the project outline when they are due. However, each member of the group is equally responsible for each aspect of the group project.

I will give everyone a few minutes at the beginning of class to form groups, after which I will arbitrarily assign those who have not joined a group to those that still need (or have room for) members. Each group's spokesperson must e-mail me a list of group members by the end of the next day, while **copying the other group members.**

b) Topic selection due Session 6 (Oct. 16)

Each group must identify the **business** they would like to analyze by this class and the relevant industry. **Be careful not to select a firm that is diversified**, i.e. a set of businesses. When selecting their topic, **each group also needs to ensure it will be able to retrieve the information it will need to complete the project**, including business-level financial statements.

In one paragraph, each group should specify why they think the firm meets these criteria and why this business will be interesting to analyze. I will then either approve the proposal or meet with the group to make suggestions or recommend alternatives. The spokesperson of each group needs to e-mail me this proposal, while **copying the other group members**.

c) Report outline due Session 8 (Nov. 6)

Each group must submit a **one-page single-spaced** outline of the group report by this class. Bullet formats are encouraged. The outline must include all **major headings and subheadings** as well as some **preliminary conclusions regarding content**. Groups that submit incomplete or vague outlines will be asked to submit new outlines within a week. The spokesperson of each group must e-mail this outline to me, **copying the other group members**.

*Max length: 10 double-spaced pages plus 5 (additional) pages of exhibits**

Value: 20% for the report; 5% for the presentation

*** Tables or figures in the exhibits must not be crammed so full of text that they violate the spirit of the page restrictions.**

Nov. 20 Comprehensive Exam

This exam will ask for essay-type and short answers to questions about a case that will be provided during the exam. It will be held in class during Session 10 and cover all the readings, lectures, and class discussions prior to that session. This will be a closed-book exam. More information about what may or may not be on the exam will be communicated in the week or two preceding the exam.

Value: 25%

Evaluation of Written Assignments, Project, and Exam

Late assignments will not be accepted. Assignments are often discussed in class the day they are due, so there will be absolutely no exceptions. I will accept any assignment early, however, through e-mail.

Grades. As the Graduate Academic Handbook specifies, core courses are expected to have a mean grade between 4.7 and 6.1 grade points. **Achieving an A or A- for any assignment signifies that the student has substantially exceeded the requirements of the assignment.**

All group members will receive the same grade for their project, unless a majority evaluates another member's contribution very negatively. In that case, a negative adjustment may be made to that individual's grade.

Each member of the group is equally responsible for each aspect of the group project. At the end of the term, each group member will evaluate each other's contributions to the project as well as their own. I will consult these evaluations when I grade the group project to see whether a majority of members evaluated another member's contribution very negatively.

Criteria. Evaluations of case analyses are always partially subjective. Unfortunately, subjectivity cannot be completely avoided. However, each analysis will be graded as objectively as possible with consistent and fair criteria.

Clarity, precision, and accuracy when describing, referring to, or applying key concepts are particularly important in this class—all of these things lead to **conceptual clarity**. There are no case analyses that are clearly 100% correct or incorrect, but application of the theoretical concepts and tools described in the readings and lectures is often clearly correct or incorrect.

The quality of **logic** used when applying concepts and tools is also critical, and a major component of the persuasiveness of your analysis. Students should try to make a compelling argument, as if they were lawyers. Good lawyers bring a wealth of **evidence** to bear, and the quality of the information they use is high. They **use the facts of the case** accurately. They also analyze the meaning of those facts with **insight and perceptiveness**.

In addition, the **quantity and quality of references provided in the group reports** will be evaluated as an indicator of the extent of research done by the group. High quality group projects require a great deal of research on the firm and industry selected. **Individual assignments do not require research or references.**

In summary, students should pull high-quality data from the case to use as evidence and apply the concepts and tools discussed in class with a great deal of logic to make a persuasive analysis and compelling argument. Of course, such an argument cannot be made unless the **presentation is accessible to the reader**—meaning your written work is **easy to read and understand**. No one should have to read a phrase or sentence more than once to understand what you are trying to say.

Students whose first language is not English are encouraged to proof-read their assignments carefully. Student Services can advise you of programs that can help you write with clarity.

Note that some of the conceptual clarity for which students are responsible will be discussed in class and will not be found in the assigned readings. For this reason, students who miss class should get notes from students who have been to class and check the slides posted on Canvas after class.

Finally, **all students are advised not to discuss their individual assignments with others.** See the Academic Honesty section below. In the past, students who have discussed an assignment (perhaps with no dishonest intentions) have made the same idiosyncratic errors throughout their assignments. **In that case I cannot give either assignment any credit.**

As a general guideline, feel free to discuss general coursework issues and problems understanding concepts before you read the case for the assignment. Once you start reading the assignment and case, all work needs to be your own—therefore you need to cease these kinds of discussions.

The following rubric is a guide regarding the criteria I will use to assess written work:

CATEGORY/ CRITERIA	EXCELLENT (A)	GOOD (B)	FAIR (C)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
<p>AREA OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT & TOPIC OF ASSIGNMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas and arguments reflect sophisticated knowledge of relevant facts and concepts Ideas and arguments reflect sophisticated understanding about how concepts are related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas and arguments reflect solid knowledge of relevant facts and concepts Ideas and arguments reflect solid understanding about how concepts are related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas and arguments reflect some knowledge of relevant facts and concepts Ideas and arguments reflect some understanding about how concepts are related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas and arguments reflect limited knowledge of relevant facts and concepts Ideas and arguments reflect limited understanding about how concepts are related
<p>KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis reflects sophisticated understanding of key concepts and their components Key concepts and components are thoroughly described with no conceptual errors Information reflects a high degree of clarity, conciseness, and accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis reflects solid interpretation of key concepts and their components Key concepts and components are described with minimal or minor conceptual errors Information is clear, concise, and accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis reflects some interpretation of key concepts and their components Key concepts and components are partially described with several conceptual errors Information is somewhat clear, concise, and accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis reflects limited interpretation of key concepts and their components Key concepts and components are not described or described with major conceptual errors Information is limited in terms of clarity, conciseness, and accuracy
<p>THINKING & INQUIRY</p> <p>Includes clarity of writing and organization throughout</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is presented logically and insightfully Overall organization is sophisticated Use of language conventions (such as spelling, grammar and sentence structure) is accurate, effective and virtually error free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is presented in a logical sequence Overall organization is effective Use of language conventions (such as spelling, grammar and sentence structure) is accurate and effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is presented with some lapses in logic Overall organization is inconsistent Use of language conventions (such as spelling, grammar and sentence structure) is inconsistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is presented with significant lapses in logic Overall organization is limited Use of language conventions (such as spelling, grammar and sentence structure) is limited
<p>USE OF SOURCES</p> <p>ONLY APPLICABLE TO GROUP PROJECT REPORT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-text citation and reference list contains no errors Has an excellent number of valid sources (20+) and excellent variety of sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-text citation and reference list contains few errors Has a good number of valid sources (10-19) and good variety of sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-text citation and reference list contains some errors Lacking some valid sources and/or some variety of sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-text citation and reference list contains many errors Lacking many valid sources and/or variety of sources

Ultimately, I am looking for evidence that students **clearly understand the material covered in the texts and class, are able to communicate that understanding, and have developed the capability to apply that understanding.**

In each deliverable, the objective (and expectation) is that students will demonstrate a) their **understanding of specific concepts** (e.g. generic strategies) and b) their ability to **make compelling and logical arguments** based on evidence in the case and their understanding of those concepts.

Calculation of Course Grade

To calculate students' final grades for this course, letter grades earned on assignments during the term will be converted to Schulich index values (e.g., A=8) which will then be multiplied by the weight of the assignment. The resulting numeric grades will be converted to letter grades according to the following scale: 7.50 to 8.49 = A, 6.50 to 7.49 = A-, etc.

For each quiz testing preparation for class participation, each incorrect answer decreases the letter grade. So a perfect score is an A, one incorrect answer is a B, two incorrect answers is a C, etc.

General Academic Policies: Grading, Academic Honesty, Accommodations and Exams

Grades at Schulich are based on a 9-value index system. The top grade is A+ (9) and the minimum passing grade is C- (1). To keep final grades comparable across courses, sections of core courses are normally expected to have a mean grade between 4.7 and 6.1.

The Schulich School does not use a percentage scale or prescribe a standard conversion formula from percentages to letter grades. Conversions within a course are at the discretion of the instructor.

For more details on the index, grading policy, and grade point average (GPA) requirements, consult your Student Handbook.

Academic honesty is fundamental to the integrity of university education and degree programs, and applies in every course offered at Schulich. Students should familiarize themselves with York University's policy on academic honesty, which may be found in the Student Handbook and on the Schulich website:

<http://schulich.yorku.ca/current-students/academic-honesty/>

Accommodations. For accommodations sought due to exam conflicts, religious reasons, unavoidable absences or disabilities, please refer to the Student Handbook or contact Student Services. For counseling & disability services, contact Student Services or see <http://cds.info.yorku.ca/>

Note Selling. Several commercial services approach students to obtain notes, Power Point slides, and other study materials. Selling, posting, or reproducing any of the PowerPoint slides or instructor-provided material in this class is not permitted. Violations will be reported to the office of Associate Dean Academic which will impose sanctions. Because this is an illegal act consequences are quite serious.

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