

BUS 410

Business Strategy

Semester: Fall 2015
Days: Directed Study
Room:

Number of credits: 3

Prerequisites:
BUS 220, BUS 250 and BUS 280

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Office Hours: By appointment

The business strategy course is intended to be a challenging advanced management course for the undergraduate business student. Students will be exposed to theories, concepts, tools and skills that are used in strategy formulation and implementation. It is expected that students will develop analytical thinking in defining core activities that a business focuses on, identifying clients/customers that a business serves and creating value in what a business offers. Students will be challenged to integrate knowledge they have gained from other business core courses and apply their accumulated knowledge to business case studies.

The knowledge and skills gained from this course will be useful for solving organizational problems by looking at the bigger picture, both internally within an organization and externally to the environments in which an organization operates. A holistic approach to identifying organizational problems and opportunities will be developed along with the ability to focus specifically on the functional and business levels in implementing the strategies.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Gain an understanding of the theories, principles, frameworks and concepts in business strategy.
- Develop critical and analytical thinking in forming, implementing and evaluating an organization's strategy in various industries.
- Deal with unstructured business problems and ambiguous situations that take place in the business settings.
- Integrate personal faith and Christian values in crafting and implementing strategy.
- Develop skills in case study analysis, writing reports and public speaking.

Course Completion: December 14, 2015

Final Exam: TBD

Textbook: Hill & Jones. (2013). [Strategic Management: An Integrated Approach, 10th ed.](#) Ohio: South-Western.

Course Objectives

Course description from the academic calendar – note that this is clarified and expanded on the front page of this syllabus. This course develops the theoretical and practical knowledge to set up and manage a business in Canada. Students are introduced to elements of successful entrepreneurship which include opportunity identification and assessment, economic development potential, alternative forms of work arrangements in the new economy, characteristics and forms of small business, time management, and government and legal considerations. Students will be engaged in simulated management decision-making through case studies and by developing a hypothetical business plan.

Evaluation:

Case analysis and class discussions will be the primary techniques used to develop an understanding of course content. Students will also be expected to keep current on developments in the business world by regularly reading a major daily newspaper such as the Globe and Mail or the National Post and selectively reading business periodicals such as The Economist, TIME or Business Week.

The following is a summary of all evaluation methods and relative weights for the course:

Evaluation Method	Weight
Current Event Presentation	5%
Case Study	15%
Strategic Management Project	30%
Course Contribution & Participation	10%
Midterm	15%
Final exam	25%

Course Requirements:

Note – the following assignments will be adapted for purposes of the individual directed study. Assignment instructions will be provided and the following is a summary only.

Case Studies – Students will be assigned to “strategy teams” of 4-5 students early in the term. Drawing from these strategy teams, 2-3 students will work together to complete two case study analyses throughout the term (groupings can be different for each case study but must be drawn from the strategy team). Each case study analysis will involve a written report and a presentation to the class. Students will sign up for case studies and presentation dates early in the term. A peer evaluation component will be applied to part of your grade here and/or to your course contribution & participation grade.

Strategic Management Project – This will be an on-going project throughout the term and will be done in the strategy teams. Each team will analyse a company they choose using questions provided at the end of each chapter of the text. Responses to these questions will need to be submitted at the end of most weeks and a final report will be due at the end of the term. Additional information will be provided for the final report. A peer evaluation component will be applied to part of your grade here and/or to your course contribution & participation grade.

Current Event Presentation – Each student will sign up to report on a current news article in response to the article file task found at the end of each chapter. The sign-up sheet will be in the form of a wiki on Moodle. Students will be evaluated based on content (2.5 marks) and presentation (2.5 marks). Slides or other visuals are not required but are recommended if you do not have some attention getters in your verbal presentation. Extensive research is not required but the student should obtain some additional information about the company or situation and clearly tie in the course concept referred to in the article file task. Add the link to your news article onto the assignment wiki document prior to presenting and be prepared to present at the start of the class that you have signed up for. Presentations should be approximately 5 minutes in length.

Course Contribution and Participation – A significant portion of the learning in business strategy will be through class discussion – both on the concepts being learned and the cases being analysed. Components of this grade will include active participation in class discussions, case review prior to class, attendance at and participation as applicable in peer presentations (including the current event presentation which will take place at the start of class) and individual contribution to the team projects.

Midterm & Final Exam – Both the midterm and final exams will consist of a mix of multiple choice/matching, short answer and longer answer type questions. It will be heavily concept based (i.e. with application to business situations but not involving full cases analysis). Sample questions and additional guidance will be provided prior to each exam.

Submission of Assignments:

Separate instructions for each assignment (other than the current event presentation which will have the wiki sign-up only) will be posted on Moodle. All written assignments are to be submitted on Moodle.

Attendance & Participation:

Each student is expected to regularly attend and actively participate in classroom discussions and any on-line discussion forums assigned. Group discussions and analysis of course topics will be a key component of learning throughout the term. Students are expected to attend all classes, having prepared for class by reading the assigned readings ahead of time and actively participate in group discussions. The skills needed to participate effectively in class and present your ideas are the same skills required to be effective in the business world. If external circumstances or illness prevent you from attending or adequately preparing for a class, please let the professor know. The instructor may reduce a student’s mark by a letter grade (i.e. B to B-) if a student’s participation is inadequate (in addition to the direct effect on the course contribution and participation portion of the grade).

Grade Summary:

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<i>% Grade</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Description</i>
95% to 100%	A+	Excellent
90% to 94%	A	
85% to 89%	A-	
80% to 84%	B+	Good
76% to 79%	B	
72% to 75%	B-	
68% to 71%	C+	Satisfactory
64% to 67%	C	
60% to 63%	C-	
55% to 59%	D+	Minimal Pass
50% to 54%	D	
0% to 49%	F	

To pass the course, students must achieve an overall grade of at least 50%. Failure to submit an assignment without legitimate reason (i.e. evidenced illness) or prior approval of the instructor may result in a failed grade for the course. In the case of legitimate or approved absence, and at the instructor's discretion, the assigned date may be rescheduled to a later date, or if this is not practically possible, the marks reallocated to other components of the course grade. Late assignments will typically receive a mark of 0.

Please note that final grades will be available on your student portal.

Strategic Management Project – Weekly Q&A

As a part of your strategic management project, you will be required to answer the questions at the end of each chapter in the text under "Strategic Management Project: Developing Your Portfolio." This work will ultimately form the basis of your final strategic management report.

Provide the responses for each chapter via email to the instructor as you progress through the chapters in the text. Responses must include relatively detailed answers to the questions. **These weekly submissions will form 10% of your overall course grade.** Submissions will be marked for completion vs. evaluation of content – i.e. full marks will be given for complete submissions that were done on a timely basis. Content will be evaluated in the final reports.

Strategic Management Project – Final Project

You will use the weekly entries on the company you have chosen to compile a case study and lead a discussion based on the case study. Case studies typically provide detailed content on a company from which other individuals are able to form an analysis and address key strategy issues concerning the company. See the many case studies in the second half of the text as examples.

Your case study will provide very detailed content, using the weekly chapter modules and responses as your subjects for the content being provided. Due to the nature of the questions in the chapter modules, your actual case study will provide some analysis as well. In addition, your case study will include: 1) an introduction that identifies key issues and the general structure of the case study and 2) three key questions at the end that an individual could respond to (which should tie into the key issues identified at the beginning). Your discussion will include both a presentation on the case study and a discussion on the key questions you have identified.

Case Study

- Your case study should be approximately 2,000 words (within 300 words), excluding the reference page.
 - The use of lists and tables is encouraged.
 - You can focus on any key issues as long as they relate to core class concepts. You do not have to cover all class concepts but there should be some breadth to the issues you are discussing.
 - No external academic references need to be used. Text references and any company, industry or environment related references should be cited. Use APA referencing.
 - Detail from each chapter module should be included but depending on the issues you have identified for your
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case study to focus on, you may or may not include a discussion of all of the questions in each module.

Class Presentation & Discussion

- You will have 20 minutes for your presentation and discussion. This should be fairly equally divided between presentation and discussion and all should be focused on the issues/questions identified in your case study and content leading to an informed discussion on these issues.
- You may use PPT, visual aids, hand-outs or any other aids that will help your audience (the instructor) quickly understand the information necessary to have an informed discussion. Keep the use of third party videos to a minimum – i.e. showing a 30-45 second clip of an interview or of something else to illustrate a point would be good but not an entire short video.
- Your presentation should include some basic information on the company in question – what it does, how it is structured, where it is located etc. but beyond that the content is up to you as you focus on your purpose of a discussion on the key issues you have identified. You do not have to cover all content included in your case study.
- The order in which you present/discuss is up to you – i.e. you can mix discussion with presentation.

Allocation

The 30% portion of the class allocated to the strategic management project will be divided as follows:

- Weekly submissions – 10%
- Case study – 15%
- Presentation & discussion – 5%

GRADING RUBRICS

Case Study

Requirement	Mark	Description
Purpose and Content	20	The written case study has a well-developed focus and develops the content necessary for an analysis of the key issues identified. The case study demonstrates excellent development of ideas and focuses on relevant details. Clearly explained examples support the claims and the topic is thoroughly researched (<i>minimum 5 academic sources and applicable sources re company/industry/environment information</i>).

Critical Thinking	20	The most important arguments and previous company actions are identified, as well as their pros and cons. The case study thoughtfully analyzes and evaluates major alternative points of view and provides the content necessary for different solutions to be considered.
Structure and Organization	10	The structure of the case study is very clear and easy to follow. Transitions maintain an overall flow throughout the case study. There is a good introduction, key questions are identified and the focus on these issues is aligned throughout the content of the case study. The case study is readable – tables and bullet points are used appropriately.
Mechanics	10	The case study demonstrates mastery over the basics in sentence completeness, structure, variety, word choice, and punctuation. Language is clear and precise. Sources are properly cited and references list is accurate.

Class Discussion & Presentation

Requirement	Mark	Description
Content	5	Appropriate elements of the case study are presented in a clear, concise and understandable manner.
Presentation	5	The presentation is interesting and well laid out. Presenter is well spoken. Visual aids are used effectively.
Discussion	5	An effective and engaging class discussion on the three key issues identified in the case study is led.

BUS 410 – Business Strategy – Directed Study

Case Study Analysis

Carry out a case analysis following the guidelines set out in the introduction to the case section of our text. Focus on all aspects of case analysis. In addition to the 8 steps identified in the text, your report should include an introduction that briefly sets out the structure of the report and identifies 2-3 key issues that will be addressed throughout your report. The steps should include the key elements discussed in the course and the text. Your discussion should not include a recitation of the facts of the case – assume the instructor has read the materials (i.e. step #1 will be brief and include highlights that you will be referring to later).

Specifications

- Your case report should be approximately 2000 words (within 200 words – using TNR, 11pt font, 1.5 spacing, this would be about 5 pages).
- The use of lists and tables is encouraged.
- At least 2 external references should be used (i.e. industry, company or environment related information – i.e. not theory). Use APA referencing.
- Information from the case and the text do not have to be referenced.

Rubric

Requirement	Mark	Description
Organization and Alignment	5	Develops ideas cogently and organizes them logically. Clear alignment among ideas and recommendations of case analysis evidenced. Clear and specific introduction which identifies 2-3 issues. Case analysis framework utilized. Two external sources are used and properly referenced.
Language, Spelling and Grammar	5	Develops concise standard English sentences. Balances a variety of sentence structures effectively. The writing is error-free in terms of spelling and grammar.
Identifies relevant historical, internal and external factors	10	Comprehensive analysis of pertinent elements of history, development and growth of company. Well- developed internal and external analyses that align with issues identified.
SWOT Analysis	10	Detailed SWOT analysis with key elements that align with the rest of the report. Discussion of functional level strategy and building blocks (efficiency...)
Business Strategy & Corporate Strategy	10	Detailed discussion of business level strategy and corporate level strategy – both existing and possible future strategies.
Makes recommendations, recognizing implementation issues and obvious alternatives.	10	Makes recommendations based on interrelated consequences that follow from all elements of the issues identified.

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Policies:

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (Cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, it is highly recommended that they forward all messages from the Ambrose account to the other account.

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may to enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty. These courses will not appear

on the student's transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a Request to Withdraw from a Course by the **Withdrawal Deadline**. Please consult the List of Important Dates. Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a **Revised Examination** Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to engage in electronically-enabled activities unrelated to the class during a class session. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Please do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a “**Course Extension**” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the deadline date. Please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control”.

Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.

Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.