



GMGT 415  
*Management  
Policy*  
Fall 1996

## Course Syllabus

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Section 01 Meets: TR 11:30-12:45 PM Room 101  
Section 02 Meets: TR 2:30- 3:45 PM Room 101

*Note: You must attend the section you are registered for.*

**Prerequisites:** All required 300 level courses and Senior classification. Failure to meet these requirements will prevent you from receiving credit for this course.

**Required Text:** Hitt, Michael A., Ireland, R. Duane, and Hoskisson, Robert E., 1995, *Strategic Management: Competitiveness and Globalization*, St. Paul, MN: West Publishing. Available at the University Bookstore.

Other readings as assigned.

A regular reading of business periodicals (e.g., Wall Street Journal, Fortune, BusinessWeek, Forbes, Barron's) is strongly recommended. Student (reduced price) subscriptions can be obtained the first week of the semester.

## **Course Description:**

This course is designed to present strategic management from the point of view of the practicing general manager. It focuses on specific knowledge and skills that are required to understand strategy and the process by which it is developed in business organizations, and provides information on the situation and context in which strategy is formed and implemented.

The course will integrate knowledge and skills developed in earlier courses, but that is not its only goal. Specific new information about the activities and skills of general managers will be presented. Students are expected to combine knowledge from other courses with information presented here to develop sophisticated interpretations and analyses of actual business problems and opportunities.

The course contains a substantial writing component. Students will prepare business cases on an individual and group basis. The expected level of quality and professionalism of the content and presentation of these cases will be that used in actual business organizations.

Much managerial communication is verbal. Therefore, class discussion of lecture and case materials forms a large portion of the grade for this course.

The principal objective of the course is for students to learn important facts and procedures about the strategic management process, while developing an understanding that it (and the jobs of those who formulate and implement it) is a highly uncertain activity in which only careful thought, sensitivity to the managerial environment, and creativity will succeed in the long run.

## **Course Objectives:**

1. Development and reinforcement of a general management point of view—the capacity to view the firm from an overall perspective in the context of its environment.
2. Development of an understanding of fundamental concepts in strategic management: the role of the general manager; the levels and components of strategy; competitive analysis; organizational evolution.
3. Detailed analysis and discussion of important social and ethical issues faced by managers.
4. Synthesis of the knowledge gained in previous courses and understanding what part of that knowledge is useful to general managers.
5. Development of an awareness of the impact of external environmental forces on business and corporate strategy.
6. Practice in working out business strategies and implementation plans.
7. Development of habits for orderly, analytical thinking and skill in reporting conclusions effectively in both written and oral form.
8. Familiarity with some of the practical realities of running different types of businesses.

# Course Assignments and How They Are Evaluated

Performance evaluation will be based on student performance in four types of activities: class participation, individual case analysis, group case analysis and presentation, and final examination.

## Class Participation -- *30% of the grade*

Attendance (on time) is required and is a component of the participation grade. Because class participation is a substantial component of the final grade, attending only the section for which you are registered is also essential. ***You will not receive credit nor be allowed to participate if you attend a section for which you are not registered.***

In a typical class, one or more students will be asked to start the class by answering a specific question or discussing a specific issue. A thoughtful reading of the chapter or case assigned for that class meeting should be sufficient to handle these lead-off discussions. As a group, we will then discuss the day's assignment to develop a fuller understanding of the issues presented. Voluntary participation in discussion of lecture or case issues is an important part of this process and an important part of your class participation grade. Please raise your hand to obtain recognition before speaking.

Class participation grades are based on the instructor's assessment of the student's in-class contribution to the discussion. The bases for this assessment include the following:

1. Are the points made relevant to the discussion? Are they linked to the comments of others?
2. Do the comments add to our understanding of the lecture or case discussion?
3. Do the comments show careful reading and understanding of the text and/or case?
4. Does the participant distinguish among different kinds of data (that is facts, opinions, beliefs, concepts, etc?)
5. Is there a willingness to "take a chance" in the discussion, or are the comments "safe"?  
Examples of "safe" comments: (a) repetition of text or case facts without analysis; (b) repetition or seconding of a colleague's conclusions or comments.

## Individual Case Analysis -- *30% of the grade*

This paper consists of three parts. The first is an analysis of the business environment in which the firm operates. This portion of the analysis includes identification of opportunities and threats in that environment, and a discussion of the forces which impact on the decision faced by the managers in the case. The second part involves the identification of alternative courses of action which could be taken by the managers, in light of the environmental analysis in part 1. The third part is a *one-page* executive summary which succinctly summarizes your analyses and your recommendations (while you should prepare the executive summary last, it should be the first page after the cover page). You should write the executive summary as though it is the only part of the paper that will be read (in other words, every important item had better be in it). The paper should also contain at least one exhibit (but not more than three).

In general, two-thirds to three-fourths of the paper should focus on the environmental analysis, with the remainder dealing with the possible courses of action. This paper must be between 10 and 14 double-spaced pages (using a 12-point typeface), not including exhibits.

## Group Case Analysis -- 40% of the grade

The students will form 8 teams during the first week of class. Cases will be assigned by lottery to each of the eight teams. The teams will use concepts and techniques presented in the course to prepare (1) a case analysis (plus a maximum of 5 exhibits) and (2) a 20-minute oral presentation of the important points and conclusions derived from the case. The case paper must be between 12 and 20 pages. Written and verbal instructions about how to prepare and present case analyses, as well as in-class example presentations, will be provided at a later date.

### General Rules Regarding Written and Presented Work:

1.) *Use a spelling checker.*

2.) *Minimal grammatical errors.*

These rules are firm because they replicate the conditions the student should expect to find in any well-run business establishment. In general, professionally managed enterprises do not commit, nor accept, needless spelling or grammatical errors in written or presented materials. They diminish the quality of the company's reputation for accuracy and attention to detail, and take attention away from the content of the message presented.

3.) *Management Communications Center.* The Freeman School offers an excellent resource in the Management Communications Center. Take advantage of it. The MCC will be grading both written assignments for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and style, so it is to your advantage to utilize the facilities of the MCC when preparing your papers. Remember that the MCC is busy, so don't wait until the last minute to ask for their help.

4.) *Presentation Style.* Computer presentations using PowerPoint are strongly preferred. PowerPoint is available on the computer in the classroom (and in the MTC for preparation). Overhead transparencies are acceptable, and should be available as backup in any case should there be problems with the computer or projection system. Practice using both styles.

5.) *Professional attire.* On group case presentation days, all presenters should wear the type of clothing they would wear to a job interview at a major corporation.

6.) *General demeanor of the presentation.* The in-class presentations should be handled as if they were important assignments in a career-track job. Further, class members should be treated as if they were equal to or greater in rank than the presenters. The use of humor, analogy, and example are all acceptable methods of making points in presentations. Clowning or outlandish behavior is not acceptable, and will do fatal damage to the presenting group's grade.

## General Information

- 1) Grade ranges: 93–100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83–86 = B; 80-82 = B-; 77-79 = C+; 73–76 = C; 70-72 = C-; 67-69 = D+; 63–66 = D; 60-62 = D-; Below 60 = F. You will receive numerical grades on each of the three assignments. They will be weighted as specified above and summed to calculate your final grade.
- 2) I will be fully prepared for every class and expect you to be the same. I frequently call on students whose hands are not raised, and therefore request that you advise me before class if some emergency has made it impossible for you to prepare adequately for class discussion.
- 3) Class attendance is required at *every* class meeting. Unexcused absences will result in a deduction to the class participation grade of the student. Excused absences are so rare as to be unworthy of itemization here (and will require documentation). This is especially true of the four days of group case presentations. If a student does miss a class, it is his or her responsibility to find out from classmates what materials were covered, what additional assignments were made, and what items may have been distributed in class.
- 4) I will attempt to learn your names as quickly as possible. To aid me in this endeavor, please bring a picture of yourself to be attached to a name card that will be placed in front of you during each class session. I will distribute the cards at the beginning of each class session and collect them at the end of each session.
- 5) Class will begin **on time**. You are expected to be in your seat and ready to begin the lead-off discussion at that time.
- 6) Study groups are acceptable for all assignments except the individual case analysis. *The individual case analysis must be solely your own work and no discussion with other persons or collaboration of any kind is allowed on this assignment.*
- 7) Written work is due at the beginning of class on the day it is due. Late papers will be accepted only in the case of emergencies.
- 8) Please do not eat during class.
- 9) Hats and caps should not be worn in class.

## Schedule of Classes

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Other</b>
8/29	Thurs	Overview, distribution of syllabus, introductions.		
9/3	Tues	Strategic Management and Strategic Competitiveness.	HIH Ch. 1.	
9/5	Thurs	Analyzing and writing a case study	HIH Introduction to Part 4	
9/10	Tues	The External Environment	HIH Ch. 2.	
9/12	Thurs	The Internal Environment	HIH Ch. 3.	
9/17	Tues	Business-Level Strategy	HIH Ch. 4.	
9/19	Thurs	Case: <i>Blockbuster Entertainment</i>	HIH Case 2	<b>Teams 1 &amp; 2</b>
9/24	Tues	Competitive Dynamics	HIH Ch. 5.	
9/26	Thurs	Corporate-Level Strategy	HIH Ch. 6.	
10/1	Tues	The Real World: Ethics and Discrimination		<i>Carnival Cruise Lines (Individual Case) due.</i>
10/3	Thurs	Acquisition and Restructuring Strategies	HIH Ch. 7.	
10/8	Tues	Case: <i>Service Corporation International</i>	HIH Case 32	<b>Teams 3 &amp; 4</b>
10/10	Thurs	International Strategy	HIH Ch. 8.	
10/15	Tues	Corporate Governance	HIH Ch. 9.	
10/17	Thurs	Structure and Control	HIH Ch. 10.	
10/22	Tues	<i>Carnival Cruise Lines</i> Case Presentation. Case preparation overview.		
10/24	Thurs	Strategic Leadership & Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation	HIH Ch. 11 & HIH Ch. 12.	
10/29	Tues	Case: <i>Compaq Computer</i>	HIH Case 8	<b>Teams 5 &amp; 6</b>
10/31	Thurs	Case: <i>Phillip Morris.</i>	Handout	<b>Guest Professor Nixon</b>
11/5	Tues	Case: <i>Ryka, Inc.</i>	HIH Case 30	<b>Teams 7 &amp; 8</b>
11/7	Thurs	<i>Dell Computer</i> Case Presentation. Case presentation tips and techniques.	HIH Case 11	
11/12	Tues	The Real World: The Corporate Life		<b>Group paper due</b>
11/14	Thurs	<b>Group presentations 1 &amp; 2.</b>		
11/19	Tues	<b>Group presentations 3 &amp; 4.</b>		
11/21	Thurs	<b>Group presentations 5 &amp; 6.</b>		
11/26	Tues	<b>NO CLASS</b>		<b>Freeman Days</b>
11/28	Thurs	<b>NO CLASS</b>		<b>Thanksgiving</b>
12/3	Tues	<b>Group presentations 7 &amp; 8.</b>		
12/5	Thurs	Course Wrap-Up and Evaluations		