

Course Syllabus

Course Information

BPS 4305-001 Strategic Management

Spring 2025 Monday/Wednesday 4:00-5:15pm JSOM 2.804

Professor Contact Information

Professor: Dr. Nicole West

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Course Description

The field of strategy, and this course, attempts to address the central issue in business: why do some firms outperform other firms? Empirically, there are significant differences in profitability both between industries and between firms in the same industry. Strategy is about recognizing problems and opportunities and deciding how the firm will take action. This may sound simple, but it is quite complex and challenging in reality. Recognizing and diagnosing the problem or opportunity may be difficult, and even if this has been accomplished, deciding on an appropriate course of action involves considering many different options, all of which involve tradeoffs; rarely is there a perfect course of action.

This course will introduce you to a new way of thinking – one where you will systematically identify, analyze, and recommend strategies for addressing real-world problems and opportunities. These are the higher-level skills that are increasingly required as you move up within a company or start your own business. You will also find that this course depends on your ability to think critically, apply concepts and tools, form logical and persuasive arguments, and make specific recommendations. I will strive to help you develop these skills through in-class discussions, team projects, and assignments.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Strategic management focuses on how a firm can develop a sustained competitive advantage. We will study the formulation and implementation of firm strategies targeted

at specific classes of problems and opportunities. This course is intended to provide students with the foundations for successful general management. All general managers are concerned with acquiring needed resources, ensuring market fit for the firm's products, and properly responding to competitors' actions.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Analyze the external environment and understand the attractiveness of a particular industry/market
- Analyze the quality of the firm's internal resources and capabilities and whether they match the opportunities/threats in the external environment
- Evaluate the firm's business-level strategy; that is, how the firm develops a sustainable competitive advantage for a single business line
- Evaluate how business-level strategy can be applied to multiple international markets
- Evaluate the firm's corporate-level strategy; that is, how the firm creates synergies between multiple business lines to improve competitive advantage
- Understand strategy implementation and the role of corporate governance
- Understand the importance of managing stakeholders
- Identify and assess the firm's current strategy
- Identify and assess problems facing the firm and alternative strategies for addressing the problem

Required Textbooks and Materials

Required materials for this course consist of an electronic textbook and associated activities through the Connect platform. You will need to purchase access to the eBook and Connect either directly via McGraw Hill or the UTD bookstore. You will access all Connect activities through eLearning, but you must still purchase Connect. Instructions for purchasing the eBook and Connect are below.

McGraw Hill Connect for Dess, Strategic Management: Text and Cases 11e.

This product has a discounted price exclusively for University of Texas at Dallas students. This access code is available in the bookstore or directly through McGraw Hill. It is good for 180 days. Please purchase course materials through the UTD bookstore or by clicking on the first Connect assignment to receive the discounted price. With McGraw Hill, you are allowed 2-week free access if you need extra time to get your finances in order.

If you have trouble accessing or completing the Connect assignments on eLearning, please reach out to McGraw Hill's tech support team directly.

McGraw Hill has a student support self-service website you should bookmark. Their coined phrase, "Support at Every Step", is easy to put in an internet search to find their support page and phone number.

<https://www.mheducation.com/highered/support/student/connect.html>

McGraw Hill Tech Support Representatives

Visit the [Tech Online Support Center](#) or contact us below:

Hours of Operation:

Sunday: 12:00 PM to 12:00 AM EST

Monday-Thursday: 24 hours

Friday: 12:00 AM to 9:00 PM EST

Saturday: 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM EST

Phone: [\(800\) 331-5094](tel:8003315094)

Online: [Submit a Support Request](#)

Chat: [Chat with a Representative](#)

Suggested Course Materials

Any optional readings or materials can be found on eLearning. These may include relevant news articles or videos.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Class	Date	Topic	Pre-Class Reading	Actions
1	Jan. 22	Overview of the course		
2	Jan. 27	What is strategy?		
3	Jan. 29	External Analysis: SWOT, PESTLE, & Porter's 5 Forces	Ch. 2	Complete Smartbook Ch. 2 Assignment by 11:59 pm Jan. 28
4	Feb. 3	External Analysis: SWOT, PESTLE, & Porter's 5 Forces	Ch. 2	
5	Feb. 5	The 6 th Force: Network Effects		
6	Feb. 10	Internal Analysis: VRIO & Value Chains	Ch. 3	Complete Smartbook Ch. 3 Assignment by 11:59 pm Feb. 9
7	Feb. 10	Pixar Case		Read Pixar Case prior to the start of class

8	Feb. 12	Business-level Strategies: Strategy Formulation & Generic Strategies	Ch. 5	Complete Smartbook Ch. 5 Assignment by 11:59 pm Feb. 11
9	Feb. 17	Business-level Strategies: Blue Ocean/Value Innovation & Industry Life-Cycle	Ch. 5	
10	Feb. 19	Lime Bike Case	Textbook Case 14 Lime: Is Bike Sharing the Next Uber?	Read “Case 14 Lime: Is Bike Sharing the Next Uber?” and complete short answer quiz by 11:59 pm Feb. 18
11	Feb. 24	Midterm Review		Optional: Smartbook Midterm 1 Review Assignment Sharpen practice exams
12	Feb. 26	Midterm 1		
13	Mar. 3	Corporate-level Strategies: Related Diversification	Ch. 6	Complete Smartbook Ch. 6 Assignment by 11:59 pm Mar. 2
14	Mar. 5	Corporate-level Strategies: Unrelated Diversification	Ch. 6	
15	Mar. 10	How to Analyze Cases	Ch. 13	
16	Mar. 12	Walt Disney Company Case	Textbook Case 38 Walt Disney Company	Read “Case 38 Walt Disney Company” and complete the short answer quiz by 11:59 pm Mar. 11
	Mar. 17-21	Spring Break		
17	Mar. 24	International Strategies	Ch. 7	Complete Smartbook Ch. 7 Assignment by 11:59 pm Mar. 23
18	Mar. 26	Tata Starbucks Case	Textbook Case 18 Tata Starbucks: A Brew for India?	Read “Case 18 Tata Starbucks: A Brew for India?” and complete short answer quiz by 11:59 pm Mar. 25

19	Mar. 31	HARIBO and the Gummy Bear Business Case	Textbook Case 6: HARIBO	Mini Case Write-up due at 11:59 pm on Mar. 31
20	Apr. 2	Strategic Control	Ch. 9	Complete Smartbook Ch. 9 Assignment by 11:59 pm Apr. 1
21	Apr. 7	Corporate Governance	Ch. 9	
22	Apr. 9	Midterm Review		Optional: Smartbook Midterm 2 Review Assignment Sharpen practice exams
23	Apr. 14	Midterm 2		
24	Apr. 16	Stakeholder Management	Selected sections from Ch. 1 & 4	Complete Smartbook Ch. 1 & 4 Assignments by 11:59 pm Apr. 15
25	Apr. 21	Creating an Ethical Organization	Ch. 11	Complete Smartbook Ch. 11 Assignment by 11:59 pm Apr. 20
26	Apr. 23	H&M Case	Textbook Case 4 Dirty Laundry in the Fast Fashion Industry: H&M's Dilemma	Read "Case 4 Dirty Laundry in the Fast Fashion Industry: H&M's Dilemma" and complete short answer quiz by 11:59pm Apr. 22
27	Apr. 28	Final presentations		All teams' final papers and presentations due at 11:59 pm Apr. 27
28	Apr. 30	Final presentations		
29	May 5	Final presentations		
30	May 7	Final presentations		
	Finals	No final and no class during finals week ☺		

Grading Policy

Course Deliverables

Item	Weight
Participation: In-class	15%
Participation: Smartbook Assignments & Quizzes	10%
Mini Case Write-up	15%
Midterm 1	15%
Midterm 2	15%
Final Presentation	10%
Final Paper	20%

Approximate Grading Scale

Grade	Range
A+	98-100%
A	94-97%
A-	90-93%
B+	86-89%
B	82-85%
B-	78-81%
C+	74-77%
C	70-73%
C-	66-69%
D	50-65%
F	0-49%

Participation: In-Class (Individual, 15%)

Your in-class participation grade is based on your attendance and contribution to both small group and whole class discussions. Discussing concepts and grappling with cases is an important part of the learning process. To facilitate your ability to apply abstract concepts from the textbook to real-life situations, we will practice using the frameworks and analyzing cases in class. We will do this in a combination of small group discussions and together as a class.

Participation: Smartbook Assignments & Quizzes (Individual, 10%)

These assignments can be considered as a form of participation in that they will prepare you to participate in our class discussions. The first type of assignment is completing the Smartbook reading. Smartbook assignments cover the assigned reading for a given class, but do so in a way that is more interactive and helps to improve reading retention. These assignments are not only important for preparing you to participate in class discussions and group activities, but are also crucial in preparing you for the Midterm exams. The second type of assignment is comprised of quizzes that must be completed before each Case Discussion class. The purpose of these quizzes is to encourage you to read the case and think about the questions that we will discuss prior to class. Both types of assignments are graded for completion.

Mini Case Write-up (Individual, 15%)

You are expected to complete one written case analysis on a company of your choice. This is a mini case that should serve as a practice for your final presentation and paper. You are responsible for identifying a specific strategic issue that the company faces, collecting information from various sources, analyzing this information using tools covered in class, and writing up your conclusions and recommendations to address the issue. This mini case should be less than 3 pages long, double-spaced, with 12 point font and 1 inch margins.

Midterm Exams (Individual, 2 x 15% = 30%)

The exams will consist of multiple choice questions. The exams will take place online, during class time on the specified date on this syllabus. The exam will be timed and you will have 60 minutes to complete the exam.

Make-up exams will only be approved in exceptional circumstances, based on university-approved reasons with documentation. Any approved make-up exam will be completely essay-based and will be scheduled at the convenience of the Professor.

Final Presentation and Paper (Group, 10% + 20% = 30%)

You will be assigned to a team of 4 to 6 members. As a team, you will identify a company of interest and a current strategic issue that it faces based on conducting research and analysis. You will then identify 2 potential strategic alternatives for addressing the issue. Using various concepts, frameworks, and tools we have covered throughout the course, you will analyze these 2 alternatives and recommend the best strategic solution. Consider structuring your presentation and written report as if you were presenting to upper management at the company you have chosen.

Each team of students will prepare a 15 minute PowerPoint presentation of their analysis. ALL team members are expected to participate in the presentation (i.e. you cannot designate one or two group members as presenters). All of the other class members will have an opportunity to ask questions during a 5-minute Q&A session following each presentation. ALL teams are expected to attend and participate in class each day of presentations – EVEN if your team is not presenting on that day.

The written report should be less than 15 double-spaced pages, and should include the following information:

- **Executive summary** – This should cover all of the key elements and sections of your whole report.
- **Industry-level Analysis** – Conduct research on the firm's industry. Apply PESTLE and Porter's 5 Forces.
- **Firm-level Analysis** – Identify key sources of the firm's competitive advantage. Consider what makes it unique, what trade-offs it makes, and how its key resources and activities fit together. Consider what the firm's value proposition is and which economic logic it uses. Consider corporate and international strategies if appropriate. Understand its corporate governance structure and key stakeholders. Relevant frameworks include Value Chain Analysis and VRIO.
- **Issue statement** – Draw on external and internal analysis to identify where there is misalignment between a firm and its environment. Use this analysis to identify

and justify the strategic issue. The issue should be sufficiently specific that you can identify a set of directly related alternatives. If you choose too broad of a strategic issue you will have difficulty with the rest of the analysis.

- **Root causes** – Provide at least 3 causes of the issue. These may relate to the firm’s external environment or prior choices it has made. You might use PESTLE and trade-offs to help you identify causes. You may also use a 5Whys or Fishbone diagram.
- **Strategic Alternatives** – Identify 2 strategic alternatives for addressing the issue. These should be related, but not different versions of the same thing. They should directly address your strategic issue and be strategic rather than operational or tactical. In this case, “do nothing” is not an appropriate alternative as it is not actually addressing the issue. Recommendations that are critical and realistic yet unique and creative will receive high marks.
- **Evaluation of Alternatives** – Evaluate both of your proposed alternatives using the concepts and tools learned in class and explain your logic. Focus on how each alternative will affect sources of the firm’s competitive advantage. Pay particular attention to how each alternative will affect what makes the firm unique, the trade-offs it makes, and how its key resources and activities fit together. Consider using an evaluation matrix to comprehensively show all criteria used and explain how each criteria was applied.
- **Recommendation** – Recommend 1 alternative based on your analysis. Summarize why your chosen alternative is preferable to the other. Propose a brief implementation plan for your recommended alternative.

Course & Instructor Policies

Class Attendance and Participation

Regular class attendance and participation is expected. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. While Connect Assignments are considered a form of “participation” in that they will help you to prepare for participating in class discussions, physically attending class and participating will help to solidify your understanding of concepts and how to apply them to ambiguous situations. In the past, many students have mentioned that they often learn the best through activities and small group discussions with their peers. We will have a combination of lectures, small group activities, and large group discussions in class to meet the needs of a range of learning styles.

Laptop and Smartphone Policy

Students are encouraged to bring their laptops to class as we will often do activities in class that require use of a laptop. However, use of laptops and smartphones in class is limited to taking notes and participating in class activities. Laptops and smartphones should not be used to surf the internet, chat with friends, or engage in other distractions.

Submitting Assignments

Instructions for submitting assignments are included with the assignment descriptions within the eLearning course site. Due dates for all graded work are included in the syllabus, and within the eLearning course.

Late Assignments

Connect Assignments that are submitted late will receive a score of 0 as the purpose of these assignments is to help prepare students for participating in class discussions and can also be considered a form of participation.

All other late assignments will receive a 10% deduction based on the graded total (not the total points possible) for every day the assignment is late. For example, if an assignment is graded at 89%, the 10% deduction would result in a score of 79% if submitted a day late. Exceptions for late assignments will only be made if the student has contacted the Professor beforehand with a valid reason for needing to submit the assignment late.

Case Analysis and Final Paper Grading Procedures

Written assignments in this course are graded using a three-round process. In the first round, all assignments are read without grading. The purpose of this first round is to understand the central claims in the analysis, so that the bigger picture is not lost in assessment of individual points.

In the second round, all assignments are read once more in more detail to assess quality. An assignment is assessed based on its recognition of key points, use of appropriate supporting evidence, and validity of its inference and reasoning.

In the third round, all assignments are read once more in even more detail for the purpose of identifying opportunities for upward point adjustment. In this round, additional credit is awarded for category exemplars, i.e. exceptional analysis of particular points, claims not explicitly made but implied by other aspects of the analysis, and points overlooked in the previous grading. In this round, all possible benefit of the doubt is given.

Final Presentation

Teams will give their Final Presentations in class as well as load a copy of their PowerPoint slides to eLearning prior to the first day all class presentations commence. Teams will not be permitted to make changes to slides after presentations have begun. This is to prevent teams from presenting on the second or third day from having more time to prepare than teams presenting on the first day.

Note regarding team performance evaluation on all group assignments: Your individual grade on team projects will be calculated based on your team grade. To help mitigate uneven work issues by team members (either people who provide much more valuable work or others that are free-riding), students will have the opportunity to provide the Professor with peer evaluations of overall team member performance at the end of the quarter.

Peer evaluations will be submitted on eLearning and will ask you to assess each team member in terms of:

1. Contribution Effort: Includes meeting attendance, preparation for meetings, communication, and willingness to do fair share of the necessary work or to go above and beyond

2. Quality of Work & Performance: Includes quality of contributions and consideration of other members' contributions

Weak peer evaluations may result in point deductions from your final grade.

Grade Questions and Formal Appeals Process

If you have questions related to the feedback on your assignment, please see the Professor during office hours. Discussing feedback in person allows the Professor to better understand the student's questions and to clarify comments and concepts.

If you would like to initiate a **formal grade appeal**, please follow the steps below.

1. Before initiating a formal grade appeal, be sure to carefully read the individualized feedback on your analysis. Consider whether your concern is addressed by the comments provided on eLearning. Also refer to the grading process to be sure your concern is not likely to have been addressed in the upward point adjustment portion of the grading.
2. If, after having done so, you notice a genuine oversight in the grading process, please do the following:
 - a. If you would like your grade on a specific assignment to be reconsidered, compose a memo that explains the reason for requesting further consideration of your work.
 - i. All memos must be submitted within 1 week (7 days) of the original grade being distributed
 - ii. The memo must be no more than 1 page (12-pt font, single-spaced, 1" margins)
 - iii. The memo must be emailed to the Professor
 - iv. The memo must point to the specific lines and passages where statements addressing the expectations of the assignment were overlooked in the grading process
 - v. An explanation for how assignment expectations were met by each line or passage should be provided
3. The assignment will be re-considered in its entirety; grades may be adjusted upward or downward, or remain unaltered.
4. All grade appeals must be written; none will be considered during office hours or class time.
5. Note that you are more likely to be successful in professional settings if you can persuade others logically—rather than emotionally—in a concise and specific manner. Consequently, logically-motivated appeals are most likely to result in more positive evaluations upon further review. Bear in mind that the grade appeal process is designed to provide a corrective mechanism. The process should not be abused, i.e. treated as a lottery ticket.

Class Materials

The Professor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course; however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared

with those not in class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Class Recordings

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the AccessAbility Resource Center has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Classroom Citizenship

You are professionals; treat your classmates and me as respected, valued colleagues. Robust disagreement is encouraged as long as discussions are carried out in a professional manner and focused on concepts – not personal attacks. A lack of professionalism will affect your grades as much as a lack of participation. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University’s academic support resources for all students.

Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please review the catalog sections regarding the [credit/no credit](#) or [pass/fail](#) grading option and withdrawal from class.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.