



Course Information

Course	BPS4305.0U2.15U Strategic Management
Professor	Congying (Joyce) Wang
Term	Summer 2015
Meetings	Tuesday & Thursday: 3:00 pm-5:15 pm
Location	JSOM 2.103

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location	JSOM 14.321
Email Address	cxw141430@utdallas.edu
Office Hours	By appointment (Please send me an email to schedule a meeting)
Other Information	The quickest and easiest way to contact me is through email (via utdallas or eLearning email). If you would like to schedule a phone conversation, we can do so via email. Please check eLearning periodically; Check eLearning for slides.

General Course Information

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites	(BCOM 3310 or BCOM 3311), FIN 3320, MIS 3300, OPRE 3310, OBHR 3310, MKT 3300 and (STAT 3360 or OPRE 3360). (3-0) S
Course Description	<p>This is a capstone-level course requiring integration of all fields of business. Students will draw on their broadened awareness of various environmental influences (social and political) to solve business problems. Management alternatives will be examined with an ethical perspective relating policy trends to strategic planning methodologies.</p> <p>The Strategic Management course has been designated a capstone course in business at the University of Texas at Dallas. The purpose of a capstone course is to integrate the learning achieved in individual business courses taken to earn a business degree. The knowledge acquired in finance, accounting, operations, MIS, marketing, and organizational behavior classes will be utilized to study the strategic management of the firm as well as the responsibilities of the general manager.</p> <p>The approach of the class is practical and problem oriented. The major part of the course will involve applying concepts, analytic frameworks, and intuition to the strategic issues that real world companies face. These issues will be presented in case studies. For the class to work well – and for you to benefit from it – attendance and preparation for each class meeting is essential. This is an extremely intense course, which requires a substantial time commitment.</p>
Learning Outcomes	<p>By the end of this course, students must be able to do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To complete an external analysis of a firm, including a detailed analysis of the competitive environment of the firm. 2) To complete an internal analysis of a firm, including the identification of the (sustainable) competitive advantages of the firm and the resources and capabilities that lead to these advantages. 3) To complete an assessment of the firm's current strategy, including the ability to identify the strategic problems of a firm and to develop solutions to a firm's strategic issues. 4) To integrate skills acquired in finance, accounting, marketing, and MIS courses to create a successful generic strategy to a firm.
Course Requirements	<p>This course requires extensive readings, active discussions, and diligent attention to the exercises. Each student will be expected to spend at least 8-10 hours a week on this course in addition to class time. This is particularly true during the first weeks of the class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a student cannot commit this amount of time and effort on this course, he or she must realize that it may be very difficult to earn a good grade. • Failure to fully prepare for class is also a detriment to one's fellow students. It is the student's responsibility to

	thoroughly read the syllabus, fully understand all the requirements, and keep track of all important dates in order to be successful.
Required Texts & Materials	The required text for this course is: Gregory G. Dess, G.T. Lumpkin, Alan B. Eisner, & Gerry McNamara: Strategic Management: Text and Cases (7 th edition). McGraw-Hill Irwin. ISBN-13: 978-0077862527

Course Policies

Grading Criteria	<p>The following aspects of the course determine your grade:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Component</th> <th>Weighting</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Individual Company Analysis Project</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exam I</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exam II</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group Presentation</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Individual Case Discussion</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Class Participation</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The following grading criteria apply:</p> <table> <tr> <td>A+ >=97</td> <td>A 94 – < 97</td> <td>A- 90 – < 94</td> <td>F 0 – < 60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B+ 87 – < 90</td> <td>B 84 – < 87</td> <td>B- 80 – < 84</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>C+ 77 – < 80</td> <td>C 74 – < 77</td> <td>C- 70 – < 74</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>D+ 67 – < 70</td> <td>D 64 – < 67</td> <td>D- 60 – < 64</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Component	Weighting	Individual Company Analysis Project	20%	Exam I	20%	Exam II	20%	Group Presentation	20%	Individual Case Discussion	10%	Class Participation	10%	Total	100%	A+ >=97	A 94 – < 97	A- 90 – < 94	F 0 – < 60	B+ 87 – < 90	B 84 – < 87	B- 80 – < 84		C+ 77 – < 80	C 74 – < 77	C- 70 – < 74		D+ 67 – < 70	D 64 – < 67	D- 60 – < 64	
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<p>Individual Company Analysis Project (20%)</p> <p>DUE DATE: August 4th, 2015</p>	<p>A strategic analysis of a company is a major component of this course. It is where you will apply what you have learned to analyze a selected company. Your position is that of a business consultant to the chief executive officer of the company. You have been hired to do a strategic analysis of the company. The goal is to determine what direction the company should take and make specific recommendations about what the company should do next and why.</p> <p>You will individually write a thorough company analysis, which includes five parts: Optional: Executive summary Part 1: A financial analysis to assess the company’s health Part 2: An external analysis of the firm Part 3: An internal analysis of the firm Part 4: The identification of the firm’s strategy as well as the strategies of its competitors Part 5: Recommendations</p> <p>Detailed requirements and expectations for each part will be discussed in class and can be found in Appendix A. This project accounts for 20% of your total grade.</p> <p>Format guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double spaced, font size 12, 1-inch standard margin on four sides of the paper. • Sub-titles are required. • Exhibits should be labeled sequentially and in the order they are discussed in the text. You need to explain each exhibit you add in the text. • Include a title page with your names and an abstract (max 100 words). • For each part, there should be about 2 pages excluding the title page and any attachments, such as figures, tables, references and appendix. • Properly document your sources with a reference list attached at the end of your paper. Please follow the APA style for the citation format (see here: http://www2.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citation.htm) <p>Your paper will be graded based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of concepts learned in class • Reasonableness of analysis • Appropriateness of recommendations/conclusions 																																

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storyline and professionalism of manuscript <p>In general, the <i>best</i> papers will show evidence of some investigative efforts—digging for more information, interviews/phone calls/emails with managers—and of synthesis and careful editing. They will also be insightful, going beyond the most obvious lessons to draw out the story behind the story.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="321 310 1393 781"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="321 310 786 344">Strengthening aspects in your papers:</th> <th data-bbox="786 310 1393 344">Detrimental aspects in your papers:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="321 344 786 781"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of thorough company study. • Judgments supported by evidence from the sources. • Clear articulation of the issues you are addressing. • Use of professional tools and concepts from the text and lectures. • Justification for the recommendation that is consistent with company strategy and its resources. </td> <td data-bbox="786 344 1393 781"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to ANALYZE. Don't just give facts, do ANALYSIS! • Failure to support opinions by evidence or logical explanation. • Lack of adequate outside research, such as relying on Google or Wikipedia for information versus the library's databases. • Poorly edited or organized or presented clearly (i.e. Failure to proofread ANY written material and correct obvious misspellings, errors, and sloppy grammar) • Exhibits that are extraneous to the analysis. The reader or viewer is left to draw his/her own conclusions and wonder why the exhibit is there. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Other requirements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I take plagiarism very seriously. If you plagiarize others' work in any way, you will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs immediately and receive a zero for your paper. Use the website http://www.umuc.edu/ewc/tutorial/start.shtml to complete your plagiarism tutorial and quiz. Review the tutorial and retake the quiz as many times as is necessary to earn a grade of 100% correct on the quiz. Understanding this is potentially vital to your success. • You must submit your paper to the Turn-it-in link in eLearning. I will not grade your paper if it is not uploaded to Turn-it-in. • Extensive library research is required. If your paper has only internet sources, such as Wikipedia, but without library sources, you will not receive points for references. • The final project should include at least six references. • Late submissions will not be accepted. 	Strengthening aspects in your papers:	Detrimental aspects in your papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of thorough company study. • Judgments supported by evidence from the sources. • Clear articulation of the issues you are addressing. • Use of professional tools and concepts from the text and lectures. • Justification for the recommendation that is consistent with company strategy and its resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to ANALYZE. Don't just give facts, do ANALYSIS! • Failure to support opinions by evidence or logical explanation. • Lack of adequate outside research, such as relying on Google or Wikipedia for information versus the library's databases. • Poorly edited or organized or presented clearly (i.e. Failure to proofread ANY written material and correct obvious misspellings, errors, and sloppy grammar) • Exhibits that are extraneous to the analysis. The reader or viewer is left to draw his/her own conclusions and wonder why the exhibit is there.
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<p>Exams I&II (20% each; 40% total)</p>	<p>There will be two non-cumulative exams. The course material builds and integrates on previous topics, thus certain questions may be answered from many angles. Exams will be based on assigned readings (textbook and other articles) as well as all other materials covered in class (videos, cases, guest lectures). The exam format may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and/or short essay questions.</p> <p>Preparing for an exam is an important part of the learning process – it takes weeks of preparations, not days or hours. Keeping up with readings, attending classes and working hard on the assignments are the best preparation for the exams.</p> <p><i>PLEASE NOTE:</i> I will be highlighting information from the text as well as explaining some information that may need clarification or elaboration. I will NOT repeat everything in all chapters. HOWEVER, test questions can come from information in the text that we did not cover in class. If you do not understand something in your textbook, please ask questions about it so I can clarify for you.</p> <p><i>Policy regarding make-up exams:</i> Request for rescheduling an exam will be considered only with timely notification to the instructor and with appropriate documentation such as a written medical excuse or a note from the academic dean. It is your responsibility to inform the instructor in advance of the exam. If you wait to talk to me after the exam has taken place, you will not be able to make up the exam. If you do not show up at the scheduled time of your make-up exam, you will receive 0 points. Approval for rescheduling is at the discretion of the instructor.</p>				
<p>Group Presentation (20%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be assigned to groups of 4-5 people (Assignment on elearning). • Each group will be responsible for one oral presentation of a case in the textbook. The presenting group will play a leading role in class discussion by outlining what they think are the central issues confronting the company/ industry, analyzing these issues, and presenting the results of their analysis to the class. 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presentation cases chosen should NOT be those covered in class. • It is the responsibility of the presenting group to lead a further discussion of the case involving the rest of the class. Each group will generate additional discussion issues for the class and conduct further to-date research on the cases. • There is no group paper required for this presentation; but please make sure that you thoroughly document your sources at the end of your presentation. • A soft copy of the presentation slides should be emailed to me by 6PM the night before your presentation. • Each team will have about 30 minutes to complete their presentations, therefore use your time wisely. • It is important that each group member participates equally during the case presentation. In order for your team to do well, each member must be actively involved in the research, discussion, and preparation of the case presentation. Failure to participate hurts both you and other team members. It is primarily your responsibility to eliminate free riding and ensure that team members participate. • A peer evaluation at the end of the course will adjust for individual members' group contributions.
<p>Individual Case Discussion (10%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will discuss a number of cases in class throughout the semester. You are expected to lead a case discussion as well as write a brief (around 1 page) case analysis for one case other than the case you are scheduled to present in class. These written case analyses will help you prepare for the class discussions. • You have to submit a hard copy in class before the class begins. No emailed case discussions will be accepted! • You will be presenting one case that you are assigned to in class as individual presentation.
<p>Class Participation/ Attendance (10%)</p>	<p>There will be a sign-in sheet for each class period. Although you will not be graded on your class attendance, you cannot participate in class discussions if you do not attend class. <i>Those who are absent three or more times will get THREE credits deduction in the final grade.</i> Since your class participation is worth 10% of your course grade, I strongly encourage you to take class attendance seriously.</p> <p>Quality of class contributions will be weighted more heavily than quantity. Frequent and valuable participants are those who attend all of the lectures, and participate regularly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent class participation is characterized by a student consistently attending class, making an insightful contribution to discussions and exercises, being well-prepared by having notes and demonstrating a superior understanding of the material. • Good class participation is characterized by students consistently attending class and contributing to discussions and exercises as well as being reasonably prepared with notes from the reading, while only occasionally demonstrating a good understanding of the material. • Poor class participation is characterized by a student inconsistently attending class, rarely contributing to class discussion and exercise, and having no notes prepared for the readings.
<p>Extra Credit</p>	<p>No extra credit.</p>
<p>Late Work</p>	<p>Late assignments are not accepted.</p>
<p>E-Learning and Communication</p>	<p>Class notes, the syllabus, weekly information on upcoming cases, and other relevant course-related materials will be posted on eLearning. In addition, you are advised to check eLearning frequently, and prior to each class session. This will be the main way of disseminating any messages or instructions relating to the course.</p>
<p>Policies and Procedures for Students (Please refer to these websites)</p>	<p>The University of Texas at Dallas provides a number of policies and procedures designed to provide students with a safe and supportive learning environment. Brief summaries of the policies and procedures are provided for you at http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies You may also seek further information at these websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm • http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html • http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm • http://www.utdallas.edu/disability/documentation/index.html

Assignments & Academic Calendar (* changes to the schedule may be made as necessary at the discretion of the Professor)

The following course schedule provides a detailed checklist of topics and assignments by week. All changes will be announced in class. You are responsible for all information given in class. This includes any changes to the syllabus, content and format of exams, and details given regarding assignments. To get the most out of the class, you need to read related chapters and be well prepared **before coming to class**. If you have to miss a class, it is **your responsibility** to acquire missed lectures notes, etc. from a classmate.

#	Date	Readings	Topic for Lecture and Discussion	Weekly Case Discussion	Assignments / Important Events
1	5/28		Syllabus & Course Overview		Form groups
2	6/2	Chapter 1 & Case 1	What is Strategic Management?	Case1: Robin Hood	
	6/4	Chapter 2 & Case 17	External Environment of the Firm	Case 17: Dippin' Dots	Individual Case Discussion
3	6/9	Chapter 3 &4	Internal Environment of the Firm & Intellectual Asset		
	6/11	Chapter 3 &4 & Case 8	Internal Environment of the Firm & Intellectual Asset	Case 8: Jamba Juice	Individual Case Discussion
4	6/16	Chapter 5 & 6	Business- & Corporate- Level Strategy		
	6/18	Chapter 5 & 6 & Case 21	Business- & Corporate- Level Strategy	Case21: Southwest Airlines	Individual Case Discussion
5	6/23		Group Project & Exam Preparation Day		No class
	6/25		Midterm Exam (Chapters 1-6)		
6	6/30	Chapter 7	International Strategy		
	7/2	Chapter 7 & Case 13	International Strategy	Case 13: Ebay	Individual Case Discussion
7	7/7	Chapter 8	Entrepreneurial Strategy		
	7/9	Chapter 8 & Case 34	Entrepreneurial Strategy	Case 34: Keurig	Individual Case Discussion
8	7/14	Chapter 9 & 11	Strategic Control & Corporate Governance Strategic Leadership and Ethics		
	7/16	Chapter 9 & 11 & Case 3	Strategic Control & Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership and Ethics	Case 3: AIG Bonus Fiasco	Individual Case Discussion
9	7/21	Chapter 10 & 12	Organizational Designs & Corporate Entrepreneurship		
	7/23	Chapter 10 & 12 & Case 18	Organizational Designs & Corporate Entrepreneurship	Case 18: Johnson & Johnson	Individual Case Discussion
10	7/28		Exam Review		
	7/30		Group Presentations (I)		
11	8/4		Group Presentations (II)		Individual Company Analysis Due
	8/6		Final Exam (Chapters 7-12)		

NOTE: These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

SYLLABUS ADDENDUM

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations* of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System, *Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, *Rules on Student Services and Activities of the Course Syllabus Page 8, University's Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SSB 4.400, 972/883- 6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty and administration of the School of Management expect from our students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. We want to establish a reputation for the honorable behavior of our graduates, which extends throughout their careers. Both your individual reputation and the school's reputation matter to your success.

The Judicial Affairs website lists examples of academic dishonesty. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, facilitating academic dishonesty, fabrication, failure to contribute to a collaborative project and sabotage. Some of the ways students may engage in academic dishonesty are:

- Coughing and/or using visual or auditory signals in a test;
- Concealing notes on hands, caps, shoes, in pockets or the back of beverage bottle labels;
- Writing in blue books prior to an examination;
- Writing information on blackboards, desks, or keeping notes on the floor;
- Obtaining copies of an exam in advance;
- Passing information from an earlier class to a later class;
- Leaving information in the bathroom;
- Exchanging exams so that neighbors have identical test forms;
- Having a substitute take a test and providing falsified identification for the substitute;
- Fabricating data for lab assignments;
- Changing a graded paper and requesting that it be regraded;
- Failing to turn in a test or assignment and later suggesting the faculty member lost the item;
- Stealing another student's graded test and affixing one's own name on it;
- Recording two answers, one on the test form, one on the answer sheet;
- Marking an answer sheet to enable another to see the answer;
- Encircling two adjacent answers and claiming to have had the correct answer;
- Stealing an exam for someone in another section or for placement in a test file;
- Using an electronic device to store test information, or to send or receive answers for a test;
- Destroying or removing library materials to gain an academic advantage;
- Consulting assignment solutions posted on websites of previous course offerings;
- Transferring a computer file from one person's account to another;
- Transmitting posted answers for an exam to a student in a testing area via electronic device;
- Downloading text from the Internet or other sources without proper attribution;
- Citing to false references or findings in research or other academic exercises;
- Unauthorized collaborating with another person in preparing academic exercises.
- Submitting a substantial portion of the same academic work more than once without written authorization from the instructor.

<http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-Basicexamples.html>

Updated: August, 2011

Plagiarism on written assignments, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable. On written assignments, this course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for plagiarized content and is over 90% effective.

During tests and quizzes, students in this section are not allowed to have with them any food or drinks, scratch paper, course materials, textbooks, notes, invisible ink pens, or electronic devices, including iPads, iPhones, iPods, MP3 Players, earphones, radios, smart phones, cameras, calculators, multi-function timepieces, or computers. When possible, students should sit in alternating seats, face forward at all times, and remove any clothing which might conceal eye movements, reflect images of another's work, or hide course material for copying. Exam proctors will monitor any communication or signaling between students by talking, whispering, or making sounds, or by using your hands, feet, other body movements, the test paper itself or your writing implement.

Students in this course suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings, and if found responsible, the following minimum sanctions will be applied:

- 1. Homework – Zero for the Assignment**
- 2. Case Write-ups – Zero for the Assignment**
- 3. Quizzes – Zero for the Quiz**
- 4. Presentations – Zero for the Assignment**
- 5. Group Work – Zero for the Assignment for all group members**
- 6. Tests – F for the course**

These sanctions will be administered only after a student has been found officially responsible for academic dishonesty, either through waiving their right for a disciplinary hearing, or being declared responsible after a hearing administered by Judicial Affairs and the Dean of Student's Office .

In the event that the student receives a failing grade for the course for academic dishonesty, the student is not allowed to withdraw as a way of preventing the grade from being entered on their record. Where a student receives an F in a course and chooses to take the course over to improve their grade, the original grade of F remains on their transcript, but does not count towards calculation of their GPA.

The School of Management also reserves the right to review a student's disciplinary record, on file with the Dean of Students, as one of the criteria for determining a student's eligibility for a scholarship.

Judicial Affairs Procedures

Under authority delegated by the Dean of Students, a faculty member who has reason to suspect that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty may conduct a conference with the student in compliance with the following procedures:

- (i) the student will be informed that he/she is believed to have committed an act or acts of academic dishonesty in violation of University rules;
- (ii) the student will be presented with any information in the knowledge or possession of the instructor which tends to support the allegation(s) of academic dishonesty;
- (iii) the student will be given an opportunity to present information on his/her behalf;
- (iv) after meeting with the student, the faculty member may choose not to refer the allegation if he/she determines that the allegations are not supported by the evidence; or
- (v) after meeting with the student, the faculty member may refer the allegations to the dean of students along with a referral form and all supporting documentation of the alleged violation. Under separate cover, the faculty member should forward the appropriate grade to be assessed if a student is found to be responsible for academic dishonesty;
- (vi) the faculty member may consult with the dean of students in determining the recommended grade;
- (vii) the faculty member must not impose any independent sanctions upon the student in lieu of a referral to Judicial Affairs;
- (viii) the faculty member may not impose a sanction of suspension or expulsion, but may make this *recommendation* in the referral documentation

If the faculty member chooses not to meet with the student and instead forwards the appropriate documentation directly to the dean of students, they should attempt to inform the student of the allegation and notify the student that the information has been forwarded to the Office of Dean of Students for investigation.

The student, pending a hearing, remains responsible for all academic exercises and syllabus requirements. The student may remain in class if the student's presence in the class does not interfere with the professor's ability to teach the class or the ability of other class members to learn. (See Section 49.07, page V-49-4 for information regarding the removal of a student from class).

Upon receipt of the referral form, class syllabus, and the supporting material/documentation from the faculty member, the dean shall proceed under the guidelines in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures*, Chapter 49, Subchapter C. If the respondent disputes the facts upon which the allegations are based, a fair and impartial disciplinary committee comprised of UTD faculty and students, shall hold a hearing and determine the responsibility of the student. If they find the student in violation of the code of conduct, the dean will then affirm the minimum sanction as provided in the syllabus, and share this information with the student. The dean will review the student's prior disciplinary record and assess additional sanctions where appropriate to the circumstances. The dean will inform the student and the faculty member of their decision.

APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL COMPANY ANALYSIS PROJECT

You are asked to write a thorough company analysis. A complete analysis contains five main parts:

1. A financial analysis to assess the company’s health
2. An external analysis of the firm
3. An internal analysis of the firm
4. The identification of the firm's strategy as well as the strategies of its competitors
5. A set of strategic recommendations for the focal firm based on your analysis; a discussion about the potential implementation constraints and alternatives to address these constraints

Begin your final report with a short executive summary—about five sentences—that explains which firm you are analyzing, what you looked at, and (in one short paragraph or less) what you recommend. This will help your readers grasp what is happening without reading the entire case in order to set up the scenario. You should also use subtitles to help your reader follow your writing (e.g., (1) Financial Analysis, (2) External Analysis, etc.). If your reader cannot follow what you write, you will get zero points. The best time to write this summary is after you’ve completed the 5 main parts of the paper.

1. Financial Analysis

The financial analysis should demonstrate two things:

1. Is the firm itself financially healthy? Look at its performance over time, both in terms of being profitable or solvent, and how the market has rewarded it. In general, this portion of the assignment should be an in-depth analysis of the financial status of the firm(s) being considered.
2. How strong is it relative to its competition? Are its competitors more or less profitable over time? How has the market valued them?

You should include appropriate figures and ratios to illustrate your points. Whatever you find from outside research, put it into useful charts or tables and place it in the exhibits section. State your conclusions in the report itself, and reference the specific exhibits when you do. The key is to support your conclusions. Everything you include must lead to a point, otherwise do not include it. The tables below should serve as a template for your analysis.

Sample Tables for the Financial Analysis

Table 1. Change in Financials

Case Firm	Current Year	Prior Years	Average % Change
Income Statement			
...			
Balance Sheet			
...			

Table 2. Common Size Statements of Case firm and closest competitor

	Case Firm	%	Closest Competitor(s)	%
Income Statement				
Sales		100%		100%
...				
Balance Sheet				
Total Assets		100%		100%
...				

Table 3. Financial Ratios for Case firm and closest competitor

Ratio	Case Firm	Closest Competitor(s)
Current Ratio		
Quick Ratio		
Debt-to-equity Ratio		
Debt-to-total Assets Ratio		
Inventory Turnover		
Total Asset Turnover		
Gross Profit Margin		
Net Profit Margin		
Return on Assets		
Return on Equity		

2. External Analysis

The external analysis of the firm describes the context in which the firm must compete and infers the opportunities and threats the firm faces. Thorough external analyses will first address the general environment described in class. The external analysis should also look at the industry dynamics and competitive market (e.g. who is the firm selling to, what challenges does the firm face in profitably reaching their customers, who are the firm’s competitors—are they larger, smaller, more profitable, more flexible?) The 5-forces model is a good tool to organize your work when defining the competitive environment. While not perfect, it will ensure that you have covered the main points.

3. Internal Analysis (including the Value Chain Analysis)

The internal analysis sections should identify the resources and capabilities, which the firm can leverage within its marketplace in order to remain successful in the future. The internal analysis of the firm describes the strengths and weaknesses the firm brings to its competitive environment.

- What resources or capabilities can a firm leverage against its competitors and/or to tap new markets?
- What weaknesses we might see that will handicap the firm in the future?
- What are the key strategies the firm is pursuing?
- Explain whether the strategies are good or bad, and provide support for your arguments.

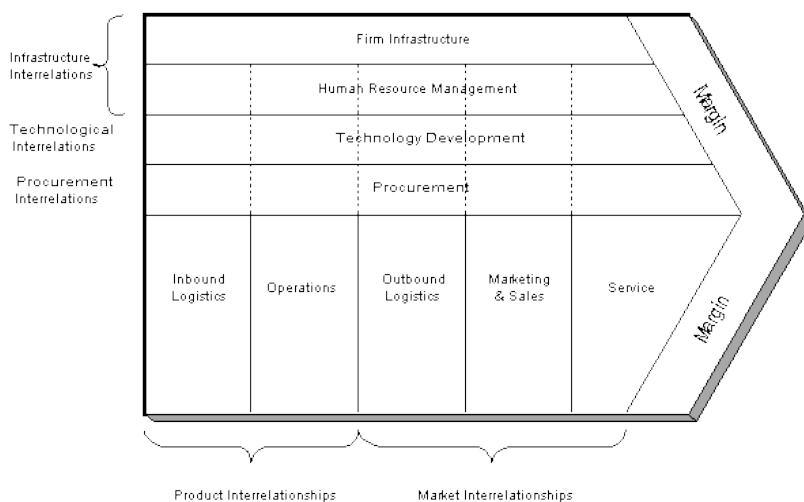
You should perform the internal analysis using the value chain approach that we will discuss in class. This approach consists of breaking the firm into the main activities in the value chain and then determining which activities may yield a competitive advantage for the firm. A good internal analysis will show the difference between core competencies and their results. As an example, cost leadership can be the result of engineering capabilities. While sometimes difficult to use, the VRIO analysis is another good analytical tool, which can help you to organize your thoughts and develop a supporting argument for why a resource or capability yields a competitive advantage.

A value chain analysis allows the firm to understand the parts of its operations that create value and those that do not. It is a template that firms use to: (1) understand their cost position, and (2) identify multiple means that might be used to facilitate implementation of a chosen business-level strategy.

A complete value chain analysis broadly contains two main parts:

1. Primary activities involved with: (1) a product’s physical creation, (2) a product’s sale and distribution to buyers, and (3) the product’s service after the sale;
2. Support activities that provide the support necessary for the primary activities to take place.

As illustrated below, the value chain shows how a product moves from raw-material stage to the final customer. To be a source of competitive advantage, a resource or capability must allow the firm: (1) to perform an activity in a manner that is superior to the way competitors perform it, or (2) to perform a value-creating activity that competitors cannot complete.



As simple illustrations, the value chain analysis should include some the following ideas:

(A) Primary Activities

- (1) Inbound Logistics. What activities are used to receive, store, and disseminate inputs to a product (materials handling, warehousing, inventory control, etc.) in your company
- (2) Operations. Describe the activities necessary to convert the inputs provided by inbound logistics into final product form (machining, packaging, assembly, etc.) What are the chief elements of your company’s production strategy? (e.g., making plant upgrades, use of TQM/Six Sigma programs, etc)?
- (3) Outbound Logistics. What activities are involved with collecting, storing, and physically distributing the product to your customers (e.g., finished goods warehousing, order processing, etc)?
- (4) Marketing & Sales. Analyze the chief elements of your company’s marketing strategy (e.g., pricing, advertising, promotions, distribution channels, deployment of all the other weapons of competitive rivalry).
- (5) Service. Describe the activities designed to enhance or maintain your product’s value (repair, training, adjustment, etc).

(B) Support Activities

- (6) Firm Infrastructure. Analyze the activities that support the work of the entire value chain (e.g., general management, planning, finance, accounting, legal, government relations, etc). For example, what are the chief elements of your company’s finance strategy (e.g., the use of debt, dividend payments, sales/purchases of stock, use of cash, etc)? What is your company’s strategy for exercising social responsibility and being a good corporate citizen?
- (7) Human Resource Management. How does your company recruit, hire, train, develop, and compensate its personnel (e.g., use of overtime, worker compensation)?
- (8) Technology Development. What activities are completed to improve your firm’s product and what processes are used to manufacture it (process equipment, basic research, product design, etc)?
- (9) Procurement. Describe the activities completed to purchase the inputs needed to produce your firm’s products (raw materials and supplies, machines, laboratory equipment, etc).

4. Identification of the firm's strategy and its competitors' strategies

This section is meant to accomplish two goals: First, you are asked to summarize the focal firm's strategy as well as its competitors' strategies, based upon your analysis of the internal and the external environments. Second, you should discuss why each firm has chosen its respective strategy, as well as the main advantages and disadvantages of each, based upon the firm's characteristics. Keep in mind that this does not mean you should replicate the same level of analysis that you have performed on the focal firm on every competitor. However, you should be familiar enough with each competitor to discuss its strategy at a high level. This task could be accomplished by means of a table, as follows:

Firm Name	Strategy Highlights	Rationale for Strategy	Pros and Cons
Focal firm	...		
Competitor 1	...		
Competitor 2	...		
...			

5. Recommendations

Having analyzed the firm and its competitors, you should have an idea of what strengths the firm should be leveraging on and you can look again at the external environment to see what opportunities it should pursue. In many of the cases, the firm in question is contemplating, or has implemented, several specific strategic actions (e.g., an acquisition). In this situation, the written case analysis should also include an evaluation of these specific strategic actions.

Where appropriate, recommendations should be made with a concern towards ethics and logically justified. The recommended strategy should occupy the last quarter to one-third of your paper. Ideally, you would give three alternatives, possibly listed in bulleted form, and then expanded upon in turn. One option could actually include “don’t change anything,” but very likely this will not be the best choice, especially in a competitive market. Select one of these alternatives as the preferred recommendation. While all three might be good, a firm may only be able to attack one at a time, and will want to know which one you think has the biggest return. Explain why you believe this is the best option for the firm. In addition, discuss constraints the firm may encounter while pursuing your recommendation. Discuss alternative recommendations to address such constraints.

The alternatives need to be specific action items—something that if it were developed into a plan, you could go to a bank and get financing. As an example, instead of saying “Firm Z should acquire other companies,” try to suggest possible candidates—and say why Firm Z would benefit. If you can’t find specific firms, you could say, “acquire firms in the range of \$XX revenue, or \$YY market capitalization,” or some other relevant factor. Instead of saying, “form an alliance,” you could recommend “form an R&D alliance with Q to leverage this firm’s superior product rollout capabilities against Q’s more advanced technology.” It may take some effort, but this will show that you understand a) what makes the firm strong or weak and b) how it can take advantage of those factors. You could even recommend a firm liquidate—be specific and say how management should sell it off.

Additional Requirements

Obviously to do a good strategic analysis of a firm, you will need to compile additional data. The university subscribes to many online journals, and much news is available from sources like AP or Reuters, or even Lexis-Nexis. Keep records of what you find. If you cite from press releases or articles, list them in a reference section. If you use numbers from an investing website, compile the information you use into some easy-to read tables or charts, and put all of this into your exhibit section. Try not to include things in the exhibits for the sake of taking up space—predigest the useful knowledge for your audience so that they can quickly spot what is important. Finally, you should be thinking critically about the firm in this analysis. I don't have to agree with your conclusions or recommendations, if you argue them convincingly. I am looking to see that you understand the process for completing this assignment. Once you understand the logical framework to follow, good answers come with practice.

Additional Written Evaluation Guidelines. Excellent analyses “tell a story” about a firm’s strategies and describe the fundamental economics of a firm’s strategy, how different parts of the strategy are related, and the longer-term objectives of a given strategy. It is important that each major point in the arguments to be justified with reference to critical facts in your research, and appropriate ideas and concepts from lectures and the readings be seamlessly incorporated into the discussion.

Mediocre analyses demonstrate few of these attributes. Instead of “telling a story” about a firm’s corporate strategies, these analyses simply repeat the facts and assertions contained in the materials you gather. Critical facts about the company are ignored, or not integrated into the paper. For example, a mediocre analysis will often include a summary and cursory discussion of a firm’s profit and loss statement and its balance sheet, but will fail to discuss the strategic implications of these analyses. The author(s) of these analyses often seem more interested in making sure that every theory or model mentioned by the professor or in the book is mentioned in the report than making sure that the report tells an integrated story about a firm’s strategy. Often, the different parts of these mediocre analyses are not linked--almost as if different people wrote different sections, but no one took the time to bring these sections together or to discuss the implications of each section for other sections. These analyses rarely generate any counter-intuitive or surprising analyses or recommendations. At the end of reading or listening to these analyses, the reader/listener is only convinced that, in fact, members of the group read the case. The reader is not convinced about the wisdom of any final recommendations.

Good writing is paramount to telling an excellent “story”. Give yourself enough time before your deadline to edit your writing to make it clear, concise, direct, cohesive, and correct in grammar, spelling and punctuation. A good guidebook on writing well is The Elements of Style by Strunk and White.

Grading Rubric

The following rubric contains 6 main sections under evaluation. Each section is worth either 15 or 25 points. They add up to a total of 100 points (20% of the final grade). The following objectives guide this rubric for the purpose of meeting the Capstone individual requirements for BPS 4305:

1. Complete an internal and external analysis of a firm.
2. Identify the strategic problems of a firm.
3. Integrate skills acquired in finance, accounting, marketing, production, and MIS courses to create a successful firm strategy.
4. Develop ethical solutions to strategic issues identified from the firm analysis.

Section	Points
Financial Analysis - The goal of the financial analysis is to assess the financial health of the firm and compare it with its competition. Components of the analysis includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of financial health • Analysis over time • Analysis compared with competition • Appropriateness of figures and supporting material 	12
External Analysis - The goal of the external analysis is to assess the environment in which the firm competes. Components of the analysis includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder analysis • A discussion about threats and opportunities using Porter’s 5-forces framework • General assessment of competitive environment 	18
Internal Analysis - The goal of the internal analysis is to identify firm strengths and weaknesses. Components of the analysis includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength and weakness analysis • A value chain analysis • A discussion about resources and capabilities using the VRIN framework 	18
Identification of firm’s strategy and competitors’ strategy - The goal is to summarize the focal firm’s strategy as well as its competitors’ strategies, based upon your analysis of the internal and the external environments. The summary will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the firm’s current strategy • Identify competitors’ strategy 	12

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss strategy rationale • Discuss main advantages and disadvantages 	
<p>Recommendation(s) - The goal of the recommendations is to translate your analysis into a firm strategy. This section should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend potential strategies • Commit to one of the recommended strategies • Outline a strategic implementation plan • Discuss constraints the firm may encounter while pursuing your recommendation. • Discuss alternative recommendations to address such constraints. 	25
<p>Overall Quality – Your work will also be evaluated on overall presentation. It is key that you present your analysis succinctly and communicate clearly as expected in the business environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Summary • Organization and clarity of writing • Tables, figures, and attachments other than financial tables • References 	15

APPENDIX B

Library Resources

The following library site provides data search engines that are very helpful in assisting you to write your papers:

<http://www.utdallas.edu/library/reference/business.html>

Just searching company website and/or citing free web information is not enough. Take advantage of the paid search engines provided by the library. Should you have further questions, contact the SOM liaison librarians in the library (Loreen Phillips, Loreen.Phillips@utdallas.edu).