

THE WOMEN'S COLLEGE OF THE UNIVERISTY OF DENVER
BUSINESS POLICY AND STRATEGY
MGMT 3805
Spring 2008

Friday Evenings 6:00-10:00 p.m.
March 28, April 4, 18, 25, May 9, 16, 30
Room TBA
Office hours: By Appointment

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Course Overview

Business Policy and Strategy builds from previous courses to address how a corporation achieves and sustains a strategic advantage. Students will examine such issues as the goals of a corporation, how to analyze the industry and competitive environment in which the corporation competes, how to build a competitive advantage and develop a corporate strategy, and how to implement this strategy. In doing this, the course integrates insights from accounting, finance, general management, information technology, legal studies, and marketing.

In addressing these issues, the course applies strategic tools to real world examples. The introduction of the strategic tools will come from the book for the course and from lecture. The real world examples and applications of the tools will come from cases and from material brought in by students and the professor. Because of the relatively small class size, the course will be conducted in an open discussion, workshop-style format.

The integrative and interactive nature of the course necessitates students and professor committing time outside of the classroom to be prepared for in-class discussions. It is estimated that each will have to commit approximately 2-3 hours in preparation for each hour in the classroom. This commitment is necessary to achieve the desired level of learning. The course demands are spread throughout the quarter and are designed to maintain a fairly regular commitment, although it will likely increase towards the end of the quarter as the students finish their group projects.

Students will have an opportunity to meet with the professor during the quarter to discuss their progress and to provide mid-course feedback.

Materials

Thompson, Strickland and Gamble. (TS&G) 2007. *Crafting and Executing Strategy: The Quest for Competitive Advantage: Concepts and Cases*, 15/e McGraw-Hill/Irwin. New York, New York.

Grading

Evaluation will be based upon a student's ability to apply, integrate and explain corporate/business strategy. As such, evaluation will emphasize the critical thinking skills of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. This can be seen in the following table that maps the primary activities of the course against Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives.

	Readings	Class Discussion	Case Write-ups	Group Project	Quizzes
Knowledge	X	X		X	X
Comprehension	X	X		X	X
Application		X	X	X	X
Analysis		X	X	X	X
Synthesis		X	X	X	X
Evaluation		X	X	X	X

Grades will be based upon how well the student demonstrates the learning based on these components:

1. Class participation 25%
2. Case write-ups 15%
3. Group Project 30%
4. Quizzes 30%

Class participation. Each student is expected to come to each class prepared to discuss the readings for that day. During the discussion, outstanding performance does not mean a student dominates the conversation. Rather, being engaged in the conversation and making a few high quality comments will more than satisfy the requirements. Grading will occur on the following scale:

- 3 – outstanding contribution
- 2 – contributed
- 1 – attended and listened but did not contribute

- 0 – did not attend
- 1 – attended but was a distraction

Case write-ups. During the quarter each student will write two of five possible case analyses. Details about the write-ups will be provided in class.

Group Project. Students will apply the tools of strategic analysis to an existing company. Because of the breadth and the depth of the project, it will be conducted in groups of 4-5 individuals. The project will involve considerable outside research – both web-based, library-based and perhaps interviews – to provide timely, accurate and thorough analyses. (More information about the project will be provided in class.) Each group will present its findings in a class presentation and in a final report.

Quizzes. Throughout the quarter, there will be 4 quizzes. Each will focus on one or two of the course modules and will occur in the last session for the particular module(s). There will be no quiz for module 6.

Course Modules

The course is separated into 6 course modules.

1. We begin with a discussion of the starting points for a strategy: business values and goals. This module addresses what a company would like to achieve.
2. This is followed by a discussion of the environment. We examine the industry environment and the forces that make up an industry's structure.
3. We then focus on the core competencies of the company. This module addresses how the company will achieve and sustain its effort to achieve the goals.
4. The fourth module integrates the previous modules by examining how a company positions itself against competitors to build a competitive advantage.
5. The fifth module focuses on the corporate level activities of globalization and diversification. This module addresses how a company with more than one business can achieve its goals.
6. The final module addresses strategic implementation as it applies to your case project.

Schedule:

Module 1 -- Introduction to Strategic Planning

Session 1 March 28th -- Introduction & Goals, Values and Performance

Readings

- TS&G– Chapters 1 and 2, and Skim Chapter 10

Module 2 – Industry Analysis

Session 2 April 4th – Analyzing the Industry Environment

Readings

- TS&G – Chapter 3

Case

- TS&G – The Competition in the MP3 Player Industry (Case #6)

Write-up due at the beginning of class

Module 3 – Company Resources and Capabilities

Session 3 April 18th – Resources and Capability

QUIZ #1

Readings

- TS&G – Chapter 4

Case

- TS&G – Whole Foods. (Case #1)

Write-up due at the beginning of class

Mid-course Feedback

Module 4 – Fitting Strategy and Environment

Session 4 April 25th – Developing Competitive Advantage and Strategic Positioning

QUIZ #2

Readings

- TS&G – Chapters 5 & 6

Case

- TS&G -- Netflix vs. Blockbuster vs. Video-on-Demand (Case #8)

Write-up due at the beginning of class

Session 5 May 9th – Strategic Alliances

Readings

- TS&G – Chapter 8 and others to be determined

Case

TS&G – Dell Computer in 2006 (Case #5)

Write-up due at the beginning of class

Module 5 – Corporate Strategy: Vertical integration, Globalization and Diversification

Session 6 May 16th – Global Strategies, the Multinational Corporation and Diversification

QUIZ #3

Readings

- TS&G – Chapter 7 & 9

Case

- TS&G – Adidas (Case #21)

Write-up due at the beginning of class

Module 6 – Strategy Implementation in Your Projects

Session 7 May 30th -- Implementing Strategy

QUIZ #4

Readings

- TS&G – Skim Chapters 11-13

Group Project Presentations