



Lincoln University

BA 380 – Business Strategy and Decision Making

COURSE SYLLABUS Fall, 2015

Credit: 3 units (45 lecture hours)
Instructor: Dr. Alexander Anokhin
Office Hours: By arrangement
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Required textbook: Strategic Management: Concepts, F. Rothaermel, McGraw-Hill/Irwin; 2 edition, ISBN-10: 0077645065, ISBN-13: 978-0077645069

Previous edition is OK.

Revised: August 8, 2015

Catalog description

Students are expected to develop a better understanding of business strategy approaches and techniques, and to acquire skills and knowledge relating to the decision-making process. Emphasis is on decision-making while still recognizing the importance of the specialized functions of an organization. Readings and case materials are reinforced with participation through written tests, papers, and oral presentations. This is the MBA program capstone course. (3 units)

Prerequisites: BA 301, BA 304, BA 307, BA 320, BA 340, and at least two concentration courses

Course Objectives

This course is meant to integrate all previous knowledge gained in the MBA program and provide an opportunity for its practical application. We will attempt to examine business strategies in a complex environment of modern global marketplace, fiercely competitive and constantly evolving. We will develop a framework for strategic decision making, discuss tools and techniques used by successful companies, while

acquiring an in-depth understanding of the nature of decision making in the uncertain environment of the modern business world.

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and select possible strategic responses to the changes in business environment
- 2) Understand major competitive business strategies
- 3) Perform internal and external analysis of the organization and identify required modifications to address business problems and opportunities
- 4) Discuss and compare rationales and limitations for various business models, corporate strategies, and stakeholder relationship approaches.

Procedures and methodology

Lecture method is combined with in-class discussions, case studies and assignments of various kinds. Participation in in-class activities is an essential part of the course and will be graded.

Class Rules

1. **Class attendance** is required. Attendance will be taken each class at a time chosen by the instructor.
2. Students are required to **arrive to class on time**. Showing up late disturbs the natural flow of the lecture and affects everyone's experience. Usually, up to 10 minutes of "grace period" is allowed. However, if students choose to show up 10 minutes into class on a regular basis, this rule will be reviewed and no one will be allowed after the start of the class.
3. Note, that the only email that students are allowed to use is the one provided by the Lincoln University. Once you receive an invitation to the course website, make sure to **set up your profile** in such a way that it would be possible for the instructor to identify you - use your name (as it is in the Lincoln University records) as your primary ID and your Lincoln University email as your secondary ID as well as a profile photo.
4. Submissions of home assignments will be conducted via the course website only (Canvas Instructure). **Absolutely no hard copy or email submissions will be accepted!** The acceptable format for assignment submission is .txt, .doc, .docx, and .pdf.
5. All quizzes, exams, assignments and projects must be completed and handed in on time. **Late submissions will result in lower grade** (each day of delay costs 2% points). Since all assignments are available on the website and outlined in the present syllabus with due dates clearly visible, the fact that you haven't been in class when the assignment was given cannot be used as an excuse to submit it later.
6. All quizzes, exams, and class assignments **cannot** be made up.
7. **No cheating and no plagiarism, please!** Detected cheating/plagiarism will result in "F" for the assignment. (This rule is very strictly enforced, no exceptions!).

8. All grades will be made available to students through the **course website**.

Exams

The exams will consist of questions based on lectures, assigned chapters and supplementary reading.

Group Project

Every student must work on a research project for an in-class presentation as a part of a group. The broad topic of the group project is “Business strategy of a selected company”. Even though this work is done in groups each student is expected to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the whole project. Specific format of a research project will be presented in class. Research projects must comply with the Lincoln University guidelines.

Team Simulation Exercise.

As a part of department wide initiative, students are required to take part in an interactive simulation exercise. During this simulation, students divided in teams will compete against other teams from Lincoln University, acting as managers of a digital camera manufacturing company. Teams will make strategic decisions (decision timeline will be provided on the course website). Periodic updates on simulation outcomes will be given in class. The performance of the teams will be graded based on their success relative to other participants as well as on the logic behind strategic choices.

Assessment Criteria

All assignments, quizzes, projects and exams are evaluated using the indicated system:

| | | | |
|--------|----|-------|----|
| 94-100 | A | 73-76 | C |
| 90-93 | A- | 70-72 | C- |
| 87-89 | B+ | 67-69 | D+ |
| 83-86 | B | 60-66 | D |
| 80-82 | B- | 0-59 | F |
| 77-79 | C+ | | |

Tentative Weights

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| Participation (case studies, in-class discussions) | 15% |
| Group Project Presentation | 20% |
| Team Simulation Exercise | 15% |
| Midterm 1 | 15% |
| Midterm 2 | 15% |
| Final Exam | 20% |

Course Outline

| Topic | Text | Assignment Due |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| 1. a) Introduction. What is strategy? b) Strategic Leadership | Ch. 1-2 | |
| 2. External Analysis: The Business Environment | Ch.3 | |
| 3. Internal Analysis: The Firm | Ch. 4 | Case Study 1. Better World Books |
| 4. Competitive Advantage and Firm Performance | Ch. 5 | Case Study 2. The Movie Exhibition Industry |
| 5. a) Midterm 1. Strategy Analysis b) Differentiation, Cost Leadership, and Integration | Ch. 3 - 5 (quiz) Ch. 6 | |
| 6. Innovation and Entrepreneurship | Ch. 7 | Case Study 3. RIM |
| 7. Vertical Integration and Diversification | Ch. 8 | Case Study 4. Tesla Motors (A) |
| 8. Mergers and Acquisitions, Strategic Alliances | Ch. 9 | Case Study 5. Amazon.com |
| 9. Global Strategy | Ch. 10 | Case Study 6. Siemens Energy |
| 10. Midterm 2. Strategy Formulation | Ch. 6 - 10 | |
| 11. Organizational Design | Ch. 11 | Case Study 7. Genetech |
| 12. Issues in Business Ethics | Ch. 12 | Case Study 8. Bank of America |
| 13. Team Simulation Competition Results | | |
| 14. Course Project Presentations | | |
| 15. Final Exam | Ch. 1 - 12 | |