



LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

BA 390 Business Strategy and Decision-Making COURSE SYLLABUS Spring 2024

Instructor: Prof. Themis D. Pantos, Ph.D.
Lecture Schedule: Tuesday, 3:30 – 6:15 PM
Credits: 3 units / 45 lecture hours
Level: Mastery 2 (M2)
Office Hours: Monday 10:30 AM – 1:30 PM
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Prerequisite: *BA 301, BA 304, BA 307, BA 320, BA 340 and at least two concentration courses*

Textbook: Exploring Strategy: Text and Cases, by Gerry Johnson, Richard Whittington, Kevan Scholes, Duncan Angwin and Patrick Ragner, 11th Edition, Pearson Education Limited, 2017, Harlow, United Kingdom.
ISBN 978-1-292-14516-7

Last Revision: January 15, 2024

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)

DETAILED COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Today's business firms develop, grow, and operate in an extremely complex and often fiercely competitive marketplace. Decisions that managers make must, therefore, be based on the most complete and current information available about their markets, products, technology, and resource availability. Such decisions require inputs from many sources and disciplines and must,

by virtue of their complexity, draw upon the skills, knowledge, and experience of the entire management team.

Successfully competing in a rapidly evolving global business environment depends upon management creating a strategic focus and coherent plan for growth, innovation, and superior financial performance. Ultimately, it is management's careful consideration and blending of information, opportunity and resources that form decisions that have strategic value in terms of the continuing successful development of the firm.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

This course will focus on the corporation and the set of strategic factors that underlie the basis for formulating and implementing management decisions. These strategic factors have both internal and external impact on the firm in terms of influencing both the organization of the business and its outreach to and interaction with the global marketplace. Cases will be used to illustrate how business firms develop strategic responses and management decisions to critical issues such as competitive threats, technology change, growth opportunities and financial performance.

Emphasis will be placed on the analytical techniques and tools for creating useful and valid business, market and financial information that becomes the foundation for the development of strategic management decision making. In addition to a mid-term and final exam, students will be required to participate in a Strategic Management decision process that involves the development and implementation of operating strategies and decisions that determine firm's financial performance, operating effectiveness, and growth.

A core learning experience in this course is involving students in the process and methodology used to analyze a complex business to determine and critique the company's strategies and decisions that best support and result in the successful operation and profitable growth of the company they are responsible to manage.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The combination of assignments discussed under Learning Objectives are designed to provide measurable student learning outcomes in the following business and management areas:

- 1) leadership skills.
- 2) collaboration and teamwork.
- 3) analytical skills.
- 4) financial management skills.
- 5) operations management skills.
- 6) marketing management skills.
- 7) human resource management skills.
- 8) strategic analysis and planning capabilities.
- 9) understanding of corporate social responsibility.

Course assignments given during this course will be explained in terms of these learning outcomes elements and how they are measured and calculated.

	Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Activities
1	Employ analytical techniques and tools to create valid information in support of decision-making	Case studies. Midterm/final examinations.
2	Formulate and implement strategic responses to changes in external and internal environment	Case studies. Midterm/final examinations.
3	Evaluate potential global business opportunities and risks	Case studies. Midterm/final examinations.
4	Define corporate development objectives that allow to achieve and sustain competitive advantage	Case studies.
5	Manage corporate social responsibility issues within a context of strategic development.	Case studies.

Learning Outcomes Matrix:

The University has developed a learning outcomes matrix that associates Institutional Learning Outcomes with Program and Course Level Outcomes. All elements of the teaching and instructional process used in this course is now associated with student learning outcomes that are specific to this course but are also supportive of the University's Program and Institutional learning outcomes objectives.

The following table of learning outcomes identifies the BA 390 course specific expectations and their relationship to supporting MBA program and institutional learning outcomes objectives. An appendix has been attached to this syllabus, which provides a detailed explanation of the University's Institutional and Program learning objectives.

All student performance on assignments made in BA 390 is now associated with the learning outcomes developed in the tables included in this syllabus. Most specifically, the results of the Glo-Bus simulation provide extensive and detailed student learning outcome results that are most helpful in guiding the continuing development of this course's use of educational technology, instructional methodologies, and content.

As a capstone course, students are expected to demonstrate the ability to integrate a broad base of business information, apply the appropriate tools for analyzing data developed and collected, and make considered and complex strategic business plans and decisions.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES¹

	CLOs	PLOs	ILOs	Assessment
1	Employ analytical techniques and tools to create valid information in support of decision-making	PLO 1	ILO 1b, ILO 2b	Case studies, Classroom exercises and Examinations.
2	Formulate and implement strategic responses to change in external and internal environment	PLO 2	ILO 1b, ILO 2b, ILO 4b	Case studies, Classroom exercises and Examinations.
3	Evaluate and effectively communicate potential global business opportunities and risks	PLO 3	ILO 2b, ILO 7b	Case studies, Classroom exercises and Examinations.
4	Be able to identify tools and technique needed to obtain competencies, capabilities, and resources required for the implementation of business strategy	PLO 4	ILO 4b, ILO 5b, ILO 6b	Case studies, Classroom exercises and Examinations.
5	Define corporate development objectives that allow to achieve and sustain competitive advantage	PLO 5	ILO 4b, ILO 5b	Case studies, Classroom exercises and Examinations.
6	Manage corporate social responsibilities issues within a context of strategic development	PLO 6	ILO 3b	Case studies, Classroom exercises and Examinations.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY:

This course emphasizes a realistic look at how moderate to very large size firms develop and make strategic decisions. The approach includes an appraisal of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities facing companies and uses real business cases as the basis for analyzing and evaluating company responses. Students are expected to have read the text and case assignments prior to class meetings. Class discussions will be based on an examination of the assigned text material and illustrative cases. The assigned textbook is to be considered a basic resource providing a presentation and explanation of strategic business concepts and the formative factors that guide and determine management decision-making. The assigned textbook readings parallel case assignments and class discussion topics. It is important that both the reading and case assignments are completed in preparation for productive class discussions.

¹ Detailed description of learning outcomes and information about the assessment procedure are available at the [Learning Outcomes Assessment](#) section of LU website.

In addition to the case assignments, students will be organized into teams and participate in the operation of a pilot project company. Student teams will be required to make repetitive decisions regarding key strategic elements of the company based on their interpretation of the firm's competitive environment, financial and operating ratios, the economic climate, and periodic problems that arise during the various phases of the business cycles.

READING AND PROBLEM ASSIGNMENTS:

Reading assignments from the text, *Exploring Strategy: Text and Case* provide background concepts and analytical tools useful in evaluating assigned cases. Case assignments are used primarily for purposes of providing practice in the development of useful information forming the basis of management strategies and decision-making.

Assignments and projects require students to actively use resources of the library. Detailed guide to business *resources of the library* as well as the description of Lincoln University approach to *information literacy* are available at the [LU Library](http://lincolnuca.libguides.com) website (lincolnuca.libguides.com).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Successful completion of this course requires:

(1.) an in-depth analysis of a Business Case including an analysis of the company's market position, strategic initiatives and focus, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, technology, competitive environment, resources, and financial condition and (2.) active participation in the Case discussion.

Teams will be formed for both requirements. Each team will have a different case assigned for their analysis. Teams will be judged on their success or failure relative to competing teams. At the beginning of this course instructions will be provided related to these assignments including the:

- (i.) development of the case analysis, assessment of the company's strategies, key decisions, financial condition and performance, evaluation of the company's successes and failures, formation of a set of recommendations and the submission of a completed team project report.
- (ii.) economic and financial validity of their results.

The final team case report requires an oral presentation that I will schedule and a written report due to me on the last day of the Spring Semester class.

COURSE STANDARDS:

A. Students are expected to attend each class meeting and be prepared to discuss the assigned text and case materials. Students who come to class late will not be admitted until the break period. Every member of the class is expected to participate in discussions surrounding the assigned chapter and case content.

B. Each student is required to purchase the course textbook and to be an active participant in the team case analysis.

BASIS FOR GRADING:

- A. The Comprehensive Case Analysis assignment requires student teams to select a case to work on from a list I will provide. Once the team has selected a case, they should begin to organize their effort and assign individual members of the team specific tasks and give me a list of the team’s members and their individual assignments as soon as it is complete. During the semester I will monitor each team’s progress. Grades for the completed project will be based on the quality and completeness of the case analysis, the effectiveness of the team’s oral presentation, and the organization and content of their written report including appropriate documentation and identification of sources and the correctness of spelling and grammatical usage of the English language.
- B. The Team evaluation exercise will be graded based on:
 - 1) the rationale behind the periodic decisions made by the team.
 - 2) the company performance in comparison to the achievements of competing teams.
 - 3) the demonstrated ability of the team to work together in determining their strategic decisions.
- C. Calculation of Course Grades

GRADING POLICY AND GRADE ASSESSMENT:

Your performance in this course will be evaluated under the following Grading Scale Model:

Team Case Oral Presentation:	25%
MS Written Case Project	25%
Final Examination:	50%
Total:	100%

GRADING SCALE:

The grade will be based on a curve, reflecting the standards of Lincoln University. The following table details the satisfactory cut points for the grade, and the corresponding grade.

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
Points	93-100	89-92	85-88	80-84	75-79	70-74	65-69	60-64	55-59	50-54	0-53

The final exam will include both types of theoretical and empirical questions and problems that are similar to the term case assignments. They are designed to test both theory and problem solving. There will be NO “make-up” or "extra- credit" work during and after the semester. The instructor reserves the right to modify the grading system based on class performance and notification to the students about any change during the semester. You are responsible for keeping apprised of any change in syllabus. If you plan to be sick on exam days, please do the exam a day earlier before getting sick.

The key to success in this course is communication and interaction. Thus, we will have to work as a team. First, we will create a positive learning environment where everyone can participate without fear. Second, relevant reading and problem assignments will be presented and discussed in class. When in doubt, ask.

Scholastic Dishonesty:

Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students who violate rules of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including failure in the course and/or other actions from the University.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Week/Time	Topic	Reading & Case Assignments
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Part I**Concepts and Techniques for Crafting and Executing Strategy****Section A: Introduction and Overview**

Week 1 3:30 – 6:15pm	What is Strategy and Why is it Important? Explanation of the Course Requirements	Text: Chapter 1
Week 2 3:30 – 6:15pm	Charting a Company's Long-Term Direction Team Development for Case Study	Text: Chapter 2

Section B: Core Concepts and Analytical Tools

Week 3 3:30 – 6:15pm	Evaluating a Company's External Environment	Text: Chapter 3
Week 4 3:30 – 6:15pm	Evaluating a Company's Resources and Ability to Compete Successfully	Text: Chapter 4

Section C: Crafting a Strategy

Week 5 3:30 – 6:15pm	The Five Generic Competitive Strategy Options Team Oral and Written Case Planning Meetings	Text: Chapter 5
Week 6 3:30 – 6:15pm	Supplementing the Chosen Competitive Strategy	Text: Chapter 6
Week 7 3:30 – 6:15pm	Strategies for Competing Internationally or Globally	Text: Chapter 7
Week 8 3:30 – 6:15pm	Review of Competitive Strategy Concepts	Instructor's Notes

Week 9 3:30 – 6:15pm	Discussion of Team Case Assignment Consultation with Teams on the Simulation	Guide to Case Analysis (Provided)
Week 10 3:30 – 6:15pm	Diversification Strategies	Text: Chapter 8
Week 11 3:30 – 6:15pm	Team Simulation and Case Study Discussion and Planning Session	Case: ALPHA INC
Week 12 3:30 – 6:15pm	Strategy, Ethics, and Social Responsibility	Text: Chapter 9 Case: Profit in Pain
Week 13 3:30 – 6:15pm	Building an Organization Capable of Good Strategy Execution Discussion of Strategic Financial Analytical Techniques	Text: Chapter 10
Week 14 3:30 – 6:15pm	Managing Internal Operations: Actions that Promote Good Strategy Execution Corporate Culture and Leadership-Keys to Good Strategy Execution	Text: Chap. 11 Text: Chap.12
Week 15 3:30 – 6:15pm	Student Team Case Analysis and Presentations	

Comprehensive Team Case Projects Due in hardcopy on the last day of the Spring Semester class.