

MANAGEMENT 495: COMPETITIVE STRATEGY
University of Illinois at Chicago, Spring 2011

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| Office Hours: | |
| Mondays, as arranged, prior to 14044 class at 6PM | |
| Wednesdays, 11AM to 1PM, classes begin at 2PM | |

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is driven by one question: “how do you succeed over those competing for the same goal?” Strategic thinking is an important component not only in the corporate world, but also in your career. Strategy *scales*; its tools can be applied to multiple, unique situations. In this class you identify the best known strategic templates and apply them in team analysis of industry and/or business situations described in the course text.

You will also run an athletic footwear company in head-to-head competition against companies run by other class members and students on 525 campuses/colleges around the world. The class simulation has you compete in global markets, selling products in four geographic regions: Europe-Africa, Asia-Pacific, North America and Latin America. The data and operations presented in BSG (the Business Strategy Game) simulate those of actual companies like Nike, Adidas-Reebok and New Balance.

Texts, lectures, guests, cases and online simulation provide the perspective of mid- to senior- level managers in global context. Student teams integrate tools from classes, professors and prior work experience to apply lessons learned in entrepreneurship, accounting; finance; marketing; management; information and decision sciences majors. Students have wanted to be graded on “just *my papers* and *quizzes*.” But that’s *not* the real world.

It’s the rise and fall of organizations and people that define the quality, e.g., the grade of your life. Think of the scandalous CEO (Bernard Madoff) or failed corporations (Enron, Bear Sterns) whose activity threatened our economic systems, put

millions of people out of work and on the street and the mighty in prison. March of 2009 changed the life of most every global citizen with a near catastrophic failure of Corporate America. 495 isn't for the weak of heart, it's for those who must succeed.

The challenge for a company's management team is to craft and execute a competitive strategy that results in a respected brand image, keeps their company in contention for global leadership, and produces good financial performance as measured by EPS, earnings per share, ROE, return on equity investment, stock appreciation, and credit rating. Public companies like an Enron had those goals; Madoff bought shares in companies achieving such goals; the global athletic footwear company your student-led teams manage seeks those goals with wide strategic latitude.

There is no built-in bias favoring any one strategy, no secret to being the industry leader, no "magic bullet" to win over rivals. Riva(s) is the key word. Strategies that deliver the performance needed to be successful in any industry hinge on the interplay and competitiveness of rival companies. Though case studies, the pedagogy in top business schools, one examines how some companies succeed while other companies fail. Our goal is the mastery by CBA students of sustainable, successful, effective and ethical strategic thinking and application.

CAPSTONE OBJECTIVES

To analyze competitive situations facing individuals, firms and nation-states, isolating potential sources of advantage.

To understand the relevance of vision, mission and ethical underpinnings in strategy development and policy formulation.

To view the "self" or the opposition as a whole, appreciating problems, potential and power accruing to those who lead.

To integrate analytical techniques and "lessons learned" from prior courses, professors and life experience in order to make the transition from academic majors to career applications.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

You will learn from failure in a safe, academic environment.

You will advance your competencies in accounting, marketing, management and organizational leadership, finance, economics, information and decision sciences, even as an entrepreneur.

You will come face to face with the dysfunctions of a team, and learn to build trust; overcome fear of conflict; gain a consensus; be accountable for your actions and focused on results. In the BSG simulation, results of team performance are available to you, and your professor, within 20 minutes of your decisions.

You will see the struggle between those who see an enterprise largely through the lens of its numbers – sales figures, costs, budgets – and those who will focus primarily on people, their energies, ambitions and limitations.

MEANS OF ASSESSMENT

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| Textual Knowledge | 20% |
| SurveyMonkey and BSG Quizzes | 20% |
| Presentation Assignments | 20% |
| Simulation Scores | 40% |
| There will be no mid-term or final exam | |

“There will come a time when you believe everything is finished.
That will be the beginning.” — Louis L’Amour

GRADING STANDARDS

You won’t get a grade, you will earn it.

Points accumulated depend on rival-based activities in the simulation and SurveyMonkey quizzes, and on goal-based activities in textual knowledge and written assignments.

There is one exception: you will lose 20 points from your final grade if you miss class when a speaker joins us. Don't panic at the number 20; prior total points earned by CBA students for a final grade have ranged from 300 to 700.

Cultural background will be taken into consideration given class discussions, and other means of knowledge assessment will be created to encourage student participation.

MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION

REQUIRED

Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner. *Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages*, 5th edition, McGraw-Hill, 2010

The Business Strategy Game. McGraw-Hill. Copyright 2010 by GLO-BUS Software, Inc. Requires online registration of \$38.95.

RECOMMENDED

Kiechel, W. *The Lords of Strategy: The secret intellectual history of the new corporate world*. Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2010

Covert, J. and Sattersten, T. *The 100 Best Business Books of All Time: What They Say, Why They Matter, and How They Can Help You*. London: Penguin Books, 2009 (see <http://www.100bestbiz.com>)

IMPORTANCE OF BLACKBOARD

You are the Millennial generation, accustomed to technology. Assignments will be viewable on BlackBoard as will information related to cases, guests, BSG simulation and reading materials.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY -- on BB, under Course Documents