

BUS 497A – Course Syllabus
Department of Management, California State University, Northridge
(January 13, 2009 Version)

- Course:** BUS 497A: Strategic Management Seminar – Spring 2009
- Session:** • 12488 11:00am – 12:15pm TR JH 1208
• 12501 12:30pm – 01:45pm TR JH 1208
- Professor:** Mingfang Li, Ph.D.
- Office:** JH 4219
- Phone:** (818) 677-2421 (Office) or (818) 677-2457 (Dept)
- email:** mli@csun.edu: **Add 497 to the subject line please!**
- Office Hours:** • 10:00am-11:00am; & 2:00pm-3:30pm R, 9:50pm-10:20pm T, and by appointment
- Textbooks:** • Pearce, John A. & Richard B. Robinson. 2009. *Strategic management: Formulation, implementation, and control*. 11th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
• *Wall Street Journal, Business Week* or *Fortune Magazine*.
- Web Site:** <http://www.csun.edu/~mli/>
- Prerequisites:** Senior standing, BUS 301 or BUS 302+BUS 302L, FIN 303, MGT 360, MKT 304, and passing score on the Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam.

Course Description

Strategic Management is the “capstone” course, in the business curriculum, that examines the business enterprise in total as an integrated system from a top management perspective. Consequently, the emphasis in the course will be on developing an *integrative and general management perspective* of the organization and its environment, and on sharpening the *analytical and decision-making skills* necessary for strategy formulation, implementation and control at both the corporate and business levels.

Achieving these objectives requires students’ grasp of subject contents, as well as conceptual, analytical and communications skills. Conceptual skills enable one to understand dynamic and complex phenomena. Analytical skills help one to apply related theoretical models effectively. Communication skills allow one to disseminate key ideas to others. To achieve these objectives, the components of strategic management will be covered systematically throughout the course. Cases will be employed along with the theory lectures to expose students to particular strategic management theories and concepts. The Strategy-in-Action examples, Discussion Cases at the end of each chapter, and current events relevant to each set of concepts will be used, at the same time, to illustrate their applications, and to provide a bridge between theory and practice. To fully digest the course materials, the students will, both collectively and individually, conduct strategic analyses of various firms and industries.

Course Work

The evaluation and grading will be based on the following course work. The components described below are designed, both independently and collectively, to achieve the outlined course objectives. Each component is important both by itself and as a key part of the overall learning experience (*so any major omission will lead to an F for the course*).

(20%) *Participation:*

Students are required to participate actively in class discussions. *Participation is important for enhancing your understanding of the subject content, analytical skills, and communications skills.* The grade here will be based on both the quantity and quality of participation with *a strong emphasis on the latter.* The instructor will keep a record of students' participation during various discussions. Students who have to miss such discussions for **unavoidable** reasons (*note that having to prepare for another class is not an acceptable reason for missing this class*) should contact the instructor regarding makeup as soon as possible. Makeup exercises will not be accepted after the last official instruction class (**Thursday 5/7/2009**).

There are probably three types of class discussion. They are (1) case and (2) lecture topic discussions, and (3) current events and informal discussions during the lecture. Please read necessary cases and/or class materials, and take notes to prepare for discussion. Get involved during the discussions with your inputs as well as questions. To get everyone's input, the instructor will also cold-call students. It's also a good idea to take notes of the important issues raised during these discussions. In fact, to summarize the key issues, the instructor will ask your input at the end of a discussion session. In addition to these discussions, we will also have current events and informal discussions during the lecture. You are encouraged to raise questions, provide input and ask for clarification during these discussions and lecture. Feel free to disagree with me. Of course, if you know examples that will support the lecture, I am sure everybody would love to hear from you too. To get involved fully in such informal discussions, you must preview lecture materials in advance. (See the attachment for more information on participation grades.)

B. (20%) Group Project:

Students will form groups of five members. Each group will conduct an in-depth analysis of an industry (preferably a different one for each group). You are to research the writings related to this industry, and apply the models described in the class to analyze this industry. The aspects to be covered should include (1) the basics of the industry (including a basic description of the industry, the basic technology and process, customer bases, suppliers and other significant stakeholders as the group members see appropriate), (2) the general environment, (3) the industry environment (the five forces model and other relevant industry analysis models when applicable), (4) the interplays among the major competitors in this industry (e.g., competitive approaches and strategic groups; **see the text page 116 for examples**), and (5) the strategic recommendations based on your analyses to the competing firms in this industry. The outcome of this paper should be a better understanding of the industry in particular and the ability to understand broad issues relevant to strategic management in general. *The group project aims to enhance your understanding of the subject content, conceptual skills, analytical skills, as well as team and communications skills.*

The group will then make a formal presentation of the analyses and recommendations, with each member of the group getting an opportunity to handle a section of the presentation. The total time allotted for each group will be 25 minutes. Please practice prior to the presentation so that you will be able to finish the report within the given time limit. The presentation of each group will be evaluated by the instructor using pre-specified criteria that include presentation quality (introduction, style, structure, preparation, and visual aids) and substances specified above. One half of the project grade will be a weighted average of the above evaluations. Each group will also submit a formal written report for the instructor to evaluate. The completed report must be turned in electronically on the day the group makes its presentation. All

references must be specified on a separate page. We will utilize an electronic submission system for the project report. Detailed instructions will be provided in time.

The industry to be analyzed will be determined with students' input, and dates fixed in advance for the presentations. The data used for the analysis and presentation should be up-to-date and could be from primary (e.g., interviews) or published data sources, and all the analyses will be conducted in the context of the course and its syllabus. Information about the reference materials is available in the textbook and from the library personnel. (A set of guidelines has been developed to ensure a successful group effort. Please refer to the attachment.)

C. (30%) Individual Project:

Extending from the industry analysis group project, each student will submit an individual written company strategic analysis and recommendation (a different one for each person unless approved in advance) from the industry his or her group examined. The strategic analysis and recommendation will follow the framework (Strategic Management Model) used in the textbook. Within this framework, you are free to select the format and length, the general principle is to present a comprehensive paper in a *concise* fashion. In addition to the paper, you also need to prepare a one-page single spaced Executive Summary highlighting the major points of your paper. *This project aims to enhance your ability to apply the course content, develop analytical and conceptual skills, and integrate your knowledge from other business courses to appreciate strategy implementation challenges.*

Note that the paper should be an individual effort and anyone attempting to share analyses and ideas will be severely penalized. Sloppy work in terms of analysis, content, style, neatness, grammar, syntax, and spelling will be penalized and points deducted. The written paper will be due on [before 10pm Friday May 8, 2009](#). (We will utilize WebCT for this purpose). Late submissions will be penalized (there will be a five point deduction for **each calendar day** when the paper is turned in late).

D. (15% x 2) Middle Term Tests:

There will be two middle term tests. They will consist of a combination of multiple choice questions, true/false statements, and short essays on topics related to course materials. *These exams are useful to assess your understanding of the subject content.*

Grading

The final letter grade assigned to each student will be based on the scheme below. The total achievable points are 100. The instructor does not make any adjustment.

		94-100	A	90-94	A-
87-90	B+	84-87	B	80-84	B-
77-80	C+	74-77	C	70-74	C-
67-70	D+	64-67	D	60-64	D-
				Below 60	F

Attendance

Attendance is required since it is essential for understanding the course materials, conducting discussions, and completing projects. **Students with six or more unexcused absences will receive an F for the course. This policy will be strictly enforced.** Tardiness will also negatively affect your participation grades. And any serious tardiness will count as an absence. Furthermore, all requests for excused absences and the related makeup exercise must reach the instructor as soon as possible but no later than the first session the student attends after the absence(s). Otherwise such absences will be automatically converted to unexcused absences.

Note-taking

Good note-taking facilitates effective learning. I require that you take complete notes when previewing course materials, preparing for discussions and attending classes. I will randomly check student notes from time to time. Such notes may be hard copy based or electronic. I highly recommend the Cornell note-taking system (see the following site for further information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornell_Notes).

Other Issues

1. The College of Business and Economics at California State University, Northridge prepares students to be ethical decision makers. The college maintains high standards of ethical conduct that students are expected to maintain throughout their academic and professional careers. Students in the College of Business and Economics have identified the values of respect, honesty, integrity, commitment, and responsibility as their guiding principles. Please visit <http://www.csun.edu/busecon/students.html> for a detailed description of these core values.
2. This syllabus is the basic guideline for various activities related to this class. Please read it carefully, and refer to it as we proceed.
3. Please talk to me **as soon as possible** if you have any suggestions, questions, problems and concerns. All communications must remain professional.
4. Time management is critical when dealing with many, and often conflicting demands. Such demands could be from your studies, your work, and/or personal obligations. To deal with them effectively, you must set up your priorities straight and work accordingly. (When in this class, you are required to engage fully in activities in this class.)
5. Kindly turn mobile phones into the silent mode during class. Furthermore, please refrain from sending text messages or playing with your mobile devices. It is important to focus. Those who use notebook computers to take notes should also be using the notebook for that purpose.
6. All work will be judged purely on its own merit/limitations. I will not consider other reasons such as busy work schedules.
7. All instances of academic dishonesty will be dealt with strictly according to the University policies and guidelines.
8. All students are required to use the CSUN email facility to send and receive email communications. You may wish to forward your CSUN email to your private ISP but I will only receive and respond to your CSUN account to ensure trouble-free email communications.
9. I plan to utilize WebCT for a variety of course exchange activities. Please formalize yourself with the system.

Guidelines to Group Effort

A. Group Activities

Members of each group will work together with little instructor supervision, and work out potential conflicts within the team. Furthermore, you will have discussions at official meetings, members will in turn keep meeting minutes, the completed set of typed meeting minutes should be turned in with the group project report.

The instructor will inspect the minutes to decide group project grade for each student.

To ensure cooperation among members in completing the industry project, each group may initiate disciplinary measures against non-contributing members as the majority sees fit.

B. Meeting Minutes (must be prepared at the end of each meeting)

1. Decide a name for the group and include it with each meeting minutes.
2. Produce a separate set of minutes for each meeting.
3. Record the date, time, and location of each meeting.
4. Keep careful and accurate records of member participation. Ask everyone to sign the minute.
5. Read and correct previous minutes to ensure accuracy.
6. Record task assignments and progress, and problems.
7. Record adjournment time and date for next meeting (if any).

Participation

Class participation helps enable interaction and mutual learning among peers, and develop students' communication skills. Participation is graded on a scale from 0 (lowest) through 10 (highest), using the criteria below. The criteria focus on what you demonstrate and do not presume to guess what you know but do not demonstrate. This is because what you offer to the class is what you and others learn from.

Grade	Criteria		
	Preparation	Contribution	Involvement
0	Absent		
5	Present	Tries to respond when called on but doesn't offer much	Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion
7	Adequate preparation: knows basic facts but doesn't show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them.	Offers straightforward information without elaboration.	Doesn't offer to contribute but contributes to a moderate degree when called on, demonstrates sporadic involvement .
8.5	Good preparation: knows facts well, and has thoughts about their implications	Offers interpretation and analysis of materials, contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive manner, and offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion.	Demonstrates consistent on-going involvement .
10	Excellent preparation: has analyzed materials well, and related them to other course materials and earlier discussions.	Offers synthesis, analysis, and evaluation of discussion materials, contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussions: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze discussion approaches.	Demonstrate on-going active involvement .

In addition, students are encouraged to share their ideas and thoughts with the instructor (e.g., during office hours, and via email). These exchanges will be taken into consideration in assessing your participation grades.

Finally students may also submit to the instructor a brief email message periodically to provide an evaluation of your own levels of participation. This message does not need to be formal but it should follow along the evaluation aspects identified here – that is you should discuss your preparation, contribution and involvement. Furthermore, you are expected to provide a clear indication of your own assessment of your level of participation. **Please just send a plain email message – not as an attachment.**

Spring 2009 Timetable¹

The week of	Topics, Tasks and Reading
(1) 1/20; 1/22	Chapter 0: Course Introduction; and Strategy Options (Chapters 1, 7-9, 14) Assignments – Name tag, discussion, reading and WebCT
(2) 1/27; 1/29	Chapter 1: Strategic Management <i>Case Session 1: Case Analysis Methodology</i> (page 458-466)
(3) 2/3; 2/5	Chapter 2: Mission; Chapter 3: CSR and Business Ethics <i>Case Session 2: Saving Starbucks' Soul</i> (Business Week Case 2-1)
(4) 2/10; 2/12	Chapter 4: The External Environment <i>Case Session 3: Fortune Magazine</i> (Comprehensive Case 34)
(5) 2/17; 2/19	Chapter 5: Global Environment (mainly the modes of entry and global strategy) <i>Case Session 4: Microsoft in Europe</i> (Business Week Case 8-1)
(6) 2/24; 2/26	Chapter 6: Internal Resources <i>Case Session 5: Morgan Stanley</i> (Comprehensive Case 39)
	Middle Term I
(7) 3/3; 3/5	<i>Case Session 6: Proctor & Gamble</i> (Comprehensive Case 40-1)
	Presentation
(8) 3/10; 3/12	Presentation
(9) 3/17; 3/19	Chapter 7: Long Term Goals and Strategies
(10) 3/24; 3/26	Chapters 8-9, 14: Strategic Analysis and Choice
	3/31 Cesar Chavez Holiday
(11) 4/2;	Chapter 10: Actions
	4/6-4/11 Spring Recess
(12) 4/14; 4/16	<i>Case Session 7: Tiffany & Co.</i> (Comprehensive Case 46-1)
	Middle Term II
(13) 4/21; 4/23	<i>Case Session 8: Whole Foods Market 2007</i> (Comprehensive Case 50-1)
(14) 4/28; 4/30	Chapter 11-12: Design: Structure, Leadership and Culture <i>Case Session 10: Ruth's Chris</i> (Comprehensive Case 43-1)
(15) 5/5; 5/7	Chapter 13: Strategic Control and Change Individual Project Q&A Session Course Recap
5/8/2009	Individual Project Due (Submit to WebCT) before 10pm on May 8, 2009

¹ The timetable is subject to change.