**May 25, 2018 – subject to revision**

**BUS 497 – Strategic Management Seminar**

* **Class # 10233 – Monday and Wednesday 9:00 am – 12:10 pm, Bookstein Hall 1103**

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**OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW**

Learning objectives for this course are:

1. Given a broad set of information—pieces of which may vary considerably in relevance—students can identify critical issues the organization is facing.
2. In identifying critical issues, students draw on and synthesize concepts from a variety of functional areas of business.
3. Given a broad set of information—pieces of which may vary considerably in relevance—students can make relevant, valuable, and reasonable strategic recommendations for the organization.
4. In making strategic recommendations, students draw on and synthesize concepts from a variety of functional areas of business.
5. In making strategic recommendations, students display significant understanding of the resulting implementation issues that managers need to deal with.
6. Students use appropriate strategic management concepts and language in effectively communicating about their analyses, including when identifying critical issues and making recommendations.

The focus of this course will be on “firm strategy,” which results from “strategic management.” Firm strategy is the persistent, difficult-to-change path that a business organization follows in the pursuit of superior economic returns. Theories that can be used in forming or analyzing firm strategy also can be used in searching for the keys to success, or in identifying the causes of failure. Usage of strategic management principles often requires knowledge you have gained in other business courses, such as accounting, marketing, management information systems, operations management, etc. Strategic management is an integrative view. Moreover, theories of firm strategy are often applicable to many situations that you personally encounter every day; if you truly understand the theories then you will be able to analyze such situations by using the theories we will study in this class.

**GRADING**

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| **Assignment** | **Value** |
| Written case analysis #1 (individual) | 30% |
| Written case analysis #2 (individual) | 30% |
| Business Strategy Game performance | 30% |
| Class participation and commitment | 10% |
| **TOTAL ------>** | **100%** |

Written case analyses  
  
Your written case analyses will be evaluated in much the same way as your performance in a debate would be evaluated. Do a full analysis and reach your conclusion. State your conclusions clearly, completely, and concisely, and back them up using models from the textbook, lectures, and material covered in class. See the “class schedule” portion of the syllabus for the approximate dates of the written case analyses; those dates may change and any such changes will be announced in class well in advance.

In the written case analyses, you will receive a set of questions to answer. In answering the questions for your essays, you should use models/theories that you will be learning about during the semester by reading chapters in the textbook and by paying attention during class discussions. Both written case analysis will be discussed in advance in class.

*Business Strategy Game (BSG)*  
  
Each group of around three or four students will be assigned in a non-democratic process, and will be the management team of one company in the global footwear industry. Your management team should thoroughly understand the way the industry works and the way a company in the industry works. Read and understand the BSG Player’s Manual, which is available on my www site right now; details will be discussed in class. You should thoroughly understand the components of each yearly decision and the interrelatedness and consequences of those decisions. The game will move fast, so it is best to invest your time and effort right away in order to give your company the best chance to succeed. In making your decisions, you will need to recall and integrate much of what you have learned during your education in business administration at CSUN, and much of what you can learn by learning the Player’s Manual up-front. Be especially alert in the first years: As in real-world competition, the company that digs itself into an early hole may still be paying the consequences many years later!   
  
Each group member will receive a grade that will be determined mainly by his/her company’s performance in the industry. *Your grade for the BSG also depends on your group members’ perceptions of each team member’s performance and contribution*, relayed to me in a confidential survey near the end of the semester; each student is required to fill out and turn in this survey. Your individual score may suffer substantially if you have not made a sufficient contribution to your group's effort toward managing your company.  **In the BSG, all forms of collusion are illegal, and members of one team may not communicate with members of other teams to discuss their respective companies’ strategies or decisions in any way.** When you log into the BSGonline.com www site (which you will not be able to due until the second class meeting), you should review the schedule of assignments that are due.  
  
Each team's decisions must be completed online by the appointed time each week; THE APPOINTED TIME IS THE DECISION SCHEDULE THAT YOU WILL SEE WHEN LOGGED INTO THE BSG; the BSG decision due dates in the “Class schedule” portion of this syllabus are only a guideline and expectation at this point. The industry will run through at least Year 14 and perhaps through Year 16; within those bounds, the final year will be identified by random chance only after that year has run. Note that this is not a lot of years, and there is little margin for error if your company gets off on the wrong foot. Thus, I very strongly recommend that you budget time early to become very familiar with the Player’s Manual well before the Practice Round starts, and that you budget plenty of time for Year 11 and Year 12 especially to be sure every team member is ready to contribute and to give your company the best chance to succeed. There will be a practice round, and everyone should use that practice round to understand how the BSG works and how your team works.

**MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES**

Any instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and I will deal with them under the guidelines stated in the University Catalog (<http://catalog.csun.edu/policies/academic-dishonesty/>).  All sources used in performing research for assignments in this course must be properly cited. The plus/minus system may be used when final grades are assigned.

The David Nazarian 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.  Please view the “core values” (<http://catalog.csun.edu/about/colleges/cobae/>)

**COURSE MATERIALS**

* Gregory Dess, G.T. Lumpkin, Marilyn Taylor (2016). Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages
  + Publisher: Irwin/McGraw-Hill
  + Language: English
  + the paperback volume without cases, if available (you can buy the one with cases if you wish, but we will not be using those cases)
  + **IMPORTANT MONEY-SAVING NOTE: If you can find another textbook for a favorable price, the textbook listed above as your fallback can work just fine. The previous edition of any one of the similar textbooks listed below can work just fine too, and you probably can find one of them online for under $10. No matter what textbook you use, the class schedule below should provide sufficient information to pinpoint the chapters for the topics listed.**
    - Below is a list of textbooks that can be used in this class in lieu of the one listed above. The reason I offer this alternative is to give students the ability to save substantial money. If you choose to use an alternate textbook, feel free to ask me if you have questions about which chapters in the alternate textbook relate to which topics are listed in the syllabus “class schedule” portion of this syllabus.
    - If you choose to purchase one of these textbooks, make sure the publication date is within the past five years or so.

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| **Title** | **Author(s)** |
| Strategic Management (earlier edition) | Dess, Lumpkin, Taylor |
| Strategic Management | Thompson & Strickland |
| Strategic Management : Formulation, Implementation & Control | Pearce & Robinson |
| Strategic Management: Competitiveness & Globalization | Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson |
| Strategic Management : An Integrated Approach | Hill & Jones |
| Contemporary Strategy Analysis | Grant |

* + **One of the textbooks listed above can usually be found for less than $20 at various www sites.**
* Packet of case studies (cases are listed below in the “class schedule” section of this syllabus); published by Harvard Business School Publishing. (approximately $45)
  + See link on my www site
* The Business Strategy Game: Competing in a Global Marketplace (approximately $40)
  + Player’s Program
  + Register online; registration details will be provided sometime at the second class meeting.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Note that in the “textbook readings” section below, I recognize that students will be using a number of different textbooks, and the titles of the chapters may vary somewhat. But by using the hints I’ve given below, you should be able to easily determine which chapter or chapters are the relevant ones for each assigned reading. While all strategy textbooks are arranged differently and use different chapter headings, they all contain the key chapter topics I have assigned below. If you have any questions about which chapter in your textbook is the best fit, please come talk with me and I will take a look at your textbook. It also is helpful to look at the index in the textbook for the key phrases I have listed below.

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| **Session** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Textbook readings** | **Assignment due** |
| 1 | Tuesday, May 28 | Sir Richard Branson game  Characteristics of strategic decisions  Introduction to class; overview of syllabus | In textbook: review a chapter that will be titled something like “The concept of strategy” (almost always chapter 1)  **Read BSG Player’s Manual (it is on my www site)** | Review BSG Player’s Manual (it is on my www site) |
| 2 | Thursday, May 30 | BSG overview; think about what kind of company you want to build  Form BSG teams; practice round begins |  |  |
| 3 | Tuesday, June 4 | Analyzing the general environment  Analyzing the industry environment | In the textbook, review the chapter that seems most focused on (according to the table of contents) the phrases “general environment” or “external environment” or “industry environment” | BSG practice round due midnight, Wednesday, June 5 |
| 4 | Thursday, June 6 | Review BSG practice round results  Case - Wal-Mart |  |  |
| 5 | Tuesday, June 11 | Case - Wal-Mart |  |  |
| 6 | Thursday, June 13 | Business/competitive strategy  Case – Apple  BSG Y11 due (midnight) | In the textbook, review the chapter that seems most focused on (according to the index or chapter titles) key words such as “competitive advantage” or “competitive strategy” or “business strategy” | BSG Y11 due midnight,  Thursday, June 13 |
| 7 | Tuesday, June 18 | Case – Apple  BSG team meeting time (time permitting)  BSG Y12 due (midnight) |  | BSG Y12 due midnight,  Tuessday, June 18 |
| 8 | Thursday, June 20 | Corporate strategy  Strategy implementation  Business ethics, corporate social responsibility  BSG team meeting time (time permitting)  BSG Y13 due (midnight) | In the textbook, there will be a chapter clearly titled “corporate strategy,” or something similar to that. Review that chapter. | BSG Y13 decisions due, midnight Thursday, June 20 |
| 9 | Tuesday, June 25 | Case- Coors  Written analysis #1 due  BSG Y14 due (midnight) |  | BSG Y14 decisions due, midnight Tuesday, June 26  **Written case analysis #1 due at the beginning of our class meeting Tuesday, June 25. The due date of this assignment is estimated and may be moved** |
| 10 | Thursday, June 27 | Case – Calyx & Corolla  Case – Banc One  BSG Y15 due (midnight) |  | BSG Y15 decisions due, midnight Thursday, June 27 |  |
| 11 | Tuesday, July 2 | Case – Knight the King  Case - Tesla |  | BSG Y16 decisions due, midnight Tuesday, July 2 |
| N/A | Thursday, July 4 |  | INDEPENDENCE DAY – NO CLASS |  |
| 12 | Tuesday, July 9 | Possible BSG team presentations  Written analysis #2  BSG Y16 due (midnight) |  | BSG Y17 decisions due, midnight Tuesday, July 9  **Written analysis #2 will be conducted in the classroom, and we will discuss it well in advance** |