2015

BUAD 691-1S-4S Global Strategic Thinking

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BUAD 691: Global Strategic Thinking

Revised: May 15, 2015

WILLIAMS MISSION STATEMENT

We educate students of business, enabling them to improve organizations and society, consistent with the Jesuit tradition.

COURSE GOALS

As one of the capstone options for the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree, the goals of the Global Strategic Thinking course are to not only provide students with analytical models for assessing the internal and external environment of firms, but also with tools for developing strategies to position organizations for success. These activities are largely the domain of the top management team of an organization. Essentially, we are trying to understand the answer to the question, “Why do some firms succeed while other firms fail?” Toward that end, both historical and current real-world case studies will be used to determine a firm’s current competitive environment and to identify strategic gaps relative to its competition. Lessons learned from the past, even in other industries, may sometimes help us to reflect on this question. Implementation plans for bridging those gaps will also be discussed. From a process perspective, the course will provide students with an opportunity to practice teaming, written communication, online collaboration, logic and analytical skills.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Critical Thinking** – Utilize the main concepts, methods and tools of strategy formulation and implementation, identify the business situations in which they can be applied most effectively, as well as understand the limitations of the various approaches.

- **Global Perspective** - Integrate economic, political, technological, cultural, and environmental issues into decision-making and show the competencies required to compete in the global economy.

- **Ethics and Social Responsibility** – Analyze complex, conflicting or ambiguous environments facing a firm and develop ethical solutions that contribute positively to society.

- **Synthesis** - Integrate knowledge acquired in Finance, Accounting, Marketing, Operation, MIS and other business disciplines to craft comprehensive and successful strategy.
• **Change Management** - Identify the dynamic challenges and opportunities facing an organization using appropriate analytical and quantitative techniques, generate and analyze alternatives, and formulate strategic solutions as well as develop implementation plans.

• **Effective Written and Oral Communication** – Clearly summarize case issues and formulate well-supported decisions in writing. Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills in an online/virtual team setting.

**COURSE TECHNIQUES AND ORGANIZATION**

To accomplish our objectives, we will use a variety of learning techniques: online discussion forums, readings, written reports, and collaborative team simulations.

**Course Materials**

**Business Strategy Game (BSG) Simulation:** Individual paid registration is required at the (BSG) website, you will find registration directions on the Canvas page. Your team assignment is also on Canvas, and within your team homepage you will find the registration code you need to register at BSG.

http://www bsg online.com/tour/students.html

**Custom Course Pack:** Digital eBook available for purchase through Harvard Business School Publishing. The text contains almost all required readings and cases for the course.

https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36915297

**Additional Reading:** Online Journal readings are also listed on the syllabus and may be accessed through *Business Source Complete* on the Xavier Library Website.

Any cases and readings not available through these sources will be posted on Canvas. *If you are having trouble accessing the readings, you will need to get in touch with a research librarian or me in plenty of time to complete the assignment for each week.*

**Case Analysis**

Strategic thinking and analysis are best learned through practice. The cases we will study are about real world business situations. A case is designed to provide you with data on real-life management problems, and case analysis is very useful as a simulation of actual managerial activity. The cases provide an opportunity to both apply the concepts in the readings as well as to further develop our ability to think about business strategy. How much you get out of the case depends on your preparation and active participation in online discussion forums.

Learning how to analyze a case is a matter of practice and pattern recognition. In this course, we will develop and master a number of analytical tools that will make assessing a firm’s strategic position, both externally and internally, more straightforward.
Instructor Availability

I will be checking in on Canvas frequently during the week, but I may not be on everyday. I will reply to emails within 24 hours, so plan to contact me well ahead of assignment deadlines or take advantage of the weekly student lounge discussion area to ask for clarification from your classmates. For virtual office hours please email me to set up an appointment and include your preferred method of contact (phone, online chat, Skype).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Weekly Online Discussion Contributions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>BSG Quiz 1 (2.5) &amp; Quiz 2 (7.5)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Case Analysis (Max 5 pages)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team</td>
<td>Business Strategy Game Simulation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Reflection on Christensen’s Article</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>ETS</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>100 Points</td>
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The final grade will be determined as follows: A (above 93 points) A- (89-92 points) B+ (85-88 points) B (82-84 points) B- (79-81 points) C etc.

(1) WEEKLY ONLINE DISCUSSION CONTRIBUTIONS

Each week we will have two new discussion forums with topics related to the weekly readings and case. All discussions are threaded. Please try to respect the threaded nature of the forum by clicking the correct reply button when participating in the discussion. It makes it much easier to follow the discussion. Note: The "weekly" topics will change each week.

You should make a minimum of four posts each week; at least two of these must be in direct response to another student’s posting. Discussion forums will open on Monday and you must make an original post to each of the two discussion forums by Thursday at Midnight (EST). Throughout the week you need to contribute two responses to classmates posts; you will have until Sunday at Midnight (EST) to submit these response posts.

High quality contributions are most valued; “me-too” comments or comments that don’t have anything to do with the material or reading could result in a loss of contribution points. To prepare, be sure to think about how past readings, cases and models apply to the current case. Analyze all numbers to see whether the key players in the case are providing descriptive accounts that are consistent with these numbers. Pay attention to the source of the numbers. You are not required to do any research beyond the information presented in the case and readings, although don’t forget to analyze the case figures and appendices,
which often contain some of the most valuable material. The point of the case study method is to get into the mindset of the executives and managers facing the strategic issue with the same information that they had at the time.

The quality of online class discussion will not only be affected by your preparation but also by your willingness to bring the lessons of each week’s class to bear on situations that you have experienced personally in your careers, as well as those cases and models you have mastered and discussed in other MBA courses. The capstone’s purpose is to integrate these experiences and apply them to the study of real-world cases, which are often ambiguous and messy, though never as much so as real-time, job-related challenges.

The below scoring guidelines are intended to provide a guide regarding scoring.

Maximum earning potential per week: 4 points. Total cumulative points will be capped at 20 points across all 6 weeks, meaning that you can earn a maximum of 20 points for the discussion threads.

Guidelines for point allocations are noted below; some or all of the criteria listed may result in the corresponding point score.

0: No posts were made.

1: All posts were not made in a timely manner. Drastically insufficient effort was made to address the discussion material. The posts failed to demonstrate respect to students, faculty, and individuals, in general.

2: Incomplete posts were made. Posts may not have been timely in completion. The posts were insufficient in exhibiting critical thought of the reading and application to course topics. It is unclear from the posts whether the student read the requested material. Posts show insufficient critical thought or application to course topics.

3: Posts are timely and adequate in detail. The student has addressed one or two of the noted questions. These posts may be adequate, but there remains room for enhanced critical thought and application. These posts often fail to facilitate ongoing discussion.

4: Posts are superior, thorough, and thought provoking. There is application of the topics to outside information and examples. These posts help facilitate ongoing conversation. They engage fellow students and help create an environment that highlights the excitement embodied in the topics we are discussing! These posts are truly superior.

(2) BSG QUIZ 1 AND QUIZ 2

The Business Strategy Game has two built in Quiz’s you will be required to complete for course credit. Quiz 1 must be completed by Noon (EST) on Sunday May 24th. This quiz will test your knowledge of The Business Strategy Game Player’s Guide you are assigned to read in the first week of the course.
Quiz 2 must be completed by **Midnight (EST) on Sunday June 7**th. BSG Quiz 2 is more comprehensive and tests (1) your understanding of the information presented in the industry report and competitive intelligence report that are provided after each decision round and (2) grasp of the various different strategic options available for improving company performance. Several of the questions also involve the financial ratios and credit rating measures used in The Business Strategy Game. The purpose of Quiz 2 is to provide you with a reliable measure of how well you know what to look at to diagnose the industry and competitive conditions, determine your company’s competitiveness vis-à-vis rivals, and make wise decisions to boost company performance.

Both Quiz’s are individual assignments, no outside help from team members is allowed; though students are allowed to use materials from the BSG website while completing the quiz assignments.

(3) INDIVIDUAL CASE ANALYSIS

Students will write a short brief on one assigned case during the semester-long course, each due by Sunday at Midnight of the week in which the case reading is assigned. The individual case analysis is worth 15 points towards your final score. **No late papers will be accepted, no exceptions.** You may choose to write any of the cases with the exception of The Economist and Esquel. You can choose these based on your interest in the company, industry or topic or by the timing of the case with the rest of your schedule.

Case write-ups should be no more than four double-spaced, one inch-margined, 12-point font typed pages, with no more than one page of supporting exhibits for a max total of five pages. They should be addressed to the decision maker in each case and written in narrative rather than outline form. They should follow the case grading criteria form (Rubric) that is available on Canvas. I will use this form to grade your individual written cases. Do not summarize basic facts from the case. Rather, assume that I (and the decision makers) are familiar with the facts of the case and then use them to support your analysis in the write-up. The first half page of the brief should identify the key strategic issue or issues needing to be addressed and should make a clear and specific strategic recommendation to the firm. Be sure not to confuse an implementation action such as “a reorganization” with strategy, your recommendation should be focused on how the firm should seek to create competitive advantage (as mentioned in the Ghemawat & Rivkin reading in the first week). The next two pages should provide the logic behind the recommendation, addressing both an internal and external analysis of the situation backed up by facts and analysis using information from the case, including both relevant numbers and specific supporting details. You should apply not only the models from class that are relevant, but also concepts learned in prior core courses, including marketing, accounting, finance and so forth. The last half page of the brief should be devoted to what could go wrong with implementing the recommendation. Up to one page of self-created supporting exhibits backing up the analysis are allowed. These exhibits could be financial analysis, organizational charts, branding suggestions, etc. Make sure that your exhibits are high value-added and that you refer to them in the body of the case write-up.

Please follow these format instructions exactly. It is helpful to indicate via sub-headings which sections you are addressing. Please note that the case writing assignment is individual and not a team project. No outside help in preparing these briefs is allowed per
the Xavier University honor code.

(4) BUSINESS STRATEGY GAME SIMULATIONS

In BSG, class members are divided into management teams of 3-4 persons and assigned to run an athletic footwear company in head-to-head competition against companies run by other class members. Companies compete in a global market arena, selling branded and private-label athletic footwear in four geographic regions — Europe-Africa, North America, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.

For grading purposes, team simulation performance will be determined using your team’s simulation scores (decision years 11-17) and your intragroup peer evaluations.

(5) REFLECTION ON CHRISTENSEN’S ARTICLE

In the final week of class you are assigned Clayton Christensen’s HBR article “How Will You Measure Your Life?” After reading the article, please reflect on your own strategy for your career and personal lives in a 2-3-page double spaced reflection, applying the principles and tools learned in this course and discussed in the reading. This is an exercise that Dr. Christensen, a professor at Harvard Business School, asks his students to undertake. His revelation upon attending his own HBS reunion was that while none of his classmates planned to be divorced, in prison and so forth, a number of them found that the choices made along the way led to these undesirable outcomes, which is why he now asks his students to develop a strategy for their careers and lives. As you ponder this reflection, please consider your values, dreams and passions and apply strategic models and principles to develop a strategy and create an implementation plan to help you reach your goals.

(6) ETS MAJOR FIELD TEST FOR MBAs

The Williams College of Business is an AACSB accredited school. To maintain our accreditation, the college is required to assess student learning as they are nearing the end of their program. The Major Field Test for MBAs (ETS) is one such way to assess student learning. More details will be forthcoming at the beginning of the semester about this test. This assignment is worth 7.5 points toward your final grade.

The ETS is administered on the main Xavier campus. The Office of the Dean will arrange the exam date which will more than likely be offered the week of June 22nd. Further information will be forthcoming.
COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: May 18-24
Creating Competitive Advantage

Reading:

1. BSG Player's Guide (Quiz 1 will cover the material in this guide)
2. Ghemawat & Rivkin, “Creating Competitive Advantage,” (9-798-062)

Case:

The Economist (710-441)

Assignments:

Due by Thursday 5/21 Midnight

1. Individual: Submit original posts to the two weekly discussion forums

Due by Sunday 5/24 Noon

1. Individual: Complete Quiz 1 at www.bsg-online.com
2. Team: Submit your team decisions for the practice run of your firm.

Due by Sunday 5/24 6:00 PM

1. Team: Review your team’s results on practice run

All company data will be reset at 6:00 PM, so be sure to print or save e-copies of your results from the practice run.

Due by Sunday 5/24 Midnight

1. Team: Submit your team decisions for Year 11 of your firm
2. Individual: Submit response posts to the two weekly discussion forums

Week 2: May 25-31
Analyzing the External Environment

Reading:


Case:

Cola Wars Continued: Coke and Pepsi in 2006
Assignments:

Due by Thursday 5/28 Midnight

1. *Individual:* Submit original posts to the two weekly discussion forums

Due by Sunday 5/31 Midnight

1. *Team:* Submit your team decisions for Year 12 of your firm
2. *Individual:* Submit response posts to the two weekly discussion forums
3. *Individual:* Cola Wars Case Analysis

Week 3: June 1-7
Analyzing the Internal Environment

Reading:


Case:

Wal-Mart Stores in 2003 (704-430)

Assignments:

Due by Thursday 6/4 Midnight

1. *Individual:* Submit original posts to the two weekly discussion forums

Due by Sunday 6/7 Midnight

1. *Team:* Submit your team decisions for Year 13 of your firm
2. *Individual:* Complete Quiz 2 individually at [www.bsg-online.com](http://www.bsg-online.com)
3. *Individual:* Submit response posts to the two weekly discussion forums
4. *Individual:* Wal-Mart Stores Case Analysis

Week 4: June 8-14
Disruptive Innovation

Reading:


Case:
Tesla Motors (714413)

Assignments:

Due by Thursday 6/11 Midnight

1. Individual: Submit original posts to the two weekly discussion forums

Due by Sunday 6/14 Noon

1. Team: Submit your team decisions for Year 14 of your firm

Due by Sunday 6/14 Midnight

1. Team: Submit your team decisions for Year 15 of your firm
2. Individual: Submit response posts to the two weekly discussion forums
3. Individual: Tesla Motors Case Analysis

Week 5: June 15-21
Global Strategy

Reading:

2. Optional: http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html to learn about dimensions of country culture.

Case:

Brasil Foods (512013)

Assignments:

Due by Thursday 6/18 Midnight

1. Individual: Submit original posts to the two weekly discussion forums

Due by Sunday 6/21 Noon

1. Team: Submit your team decisions for Year 16 of your firm

Due by Sunday 6/21 Midnight

1. Team: Submit your team decisions for Year 17 of your firm
2. Individual: Submit response posts to the two weekly discussion forums
3. Individual: Brasil Foods Case Analysis
Week 6: June 22-28
Sustainability

Reading:


Case:

Esquel (9-307-076)

Assignments:

Due by Thursday 6/25 Midnight

1. Individual: Submit original posts to the two weekly discussion forums

Due by Sunday 6/28 Midnight

1. Individual: Reflection Write-up – How will you measure your life?
2. Individual: Submit response posts to the two weekly discussion forums
3. Individual: Complete peer evaluation of team member performance on BSG

COURSE CALENDAR

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session/Title</th>
<th>HBS Case</th>
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<tr>
<td>5/18 – 5/24</td>
<td>1. CREATING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE</td>
<td>The Economist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/25 – 5/31</td>
<td>2. THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>Cola Wars</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/1 – 6/7</td>
<td>3. THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT</td>
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<td>6/8 - 6/14</td>
<td>4. DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION</td>
<td>Tesla Motors</td>
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<td>6/15 - 6/21</td>
<td>5. GLOBAL STRATEGY</td>
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<td>6/22 – 6/28</td>
<td>6. SUSTAINABILITY</td>
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