**Course Description**

This is the capstone course for business majors. The course integrates the knowledge, skills, and concepts acquired in all business courses taken. Students are required to analyze various corporations, determine threats and opportunities posed by the external environment as well as the firm’s strengths and weaknesses, formulate strategic plans for firms, and determine how these plans should be implemented.

**Course Objectives**

To show how a well crafted and executed strategy benefits a company’s long-term performance, to integrate concepts from the core curriculum, and to apply strategic management in business settings. The course centers on the theme that a company achieves sustained success if and only if its leadership can implement proficiently an astute, time-strategic game plan for running the company.

General: In other words, the purpose of this course is to examine how organizations plan, program, and manage their diverse and multidimensional activities. The focus is on the top levels of the organization, with less emphasis given to the product, functional and divisional levels, topics that were discussed in previous courses.

Thus, you will expand your knowledge of concepts, practices and techniques of strategic management at the top organizational levels and exercise your knowledge of strategic planning in product and functional areas. You should draw upon knowledge you have gained from the various functional areas for strategies and techniques that will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of for-profit organizations, not-for-profit organizations, and government departments and agencies.

Three points to consider: First, functional, business, and product strategies must complement corporate strategies and contribute to the achievement of corporate goals to avoid sub-optimization and dysfunctional activities. Second, as used here, an organization's strategic posture addresses a set of considerations, or elements that describe how the organization has aligned its resources in response to its internal and external environments to accomplish its goals and objectives. Third, most leaders or leadership teams develop a guidance statement to focus the planning effort. This guidance may be very general, as in the case of a conglomerate, or very specific as in the case of an entrepreneurial venture. We will call this guidance the vision statement, although many writers refer to this initial guidance as the organization's mission. Elements of the typical vision statement are the business or businesses in which the organization expects to compete, the scope of its activities in terms of markets, products and geography, and, often, an indication of the firm's values and beliefs. Thus, the vision statement is preliminary to the development of a formal strategic plan. Formal goals and strategies operationalize this vision, breaking it down into tasks and activities that can be programmed and assigned to responsible individuals for implementation.

Organizational planners often develop another type of "mission" statement at the end of the planning process to communicate the results of the planning process to all stakeholders. This mission statement typically includes the vision, along with an abbreviated statement of the goals, philosophy and culture of the organization. You may find a copy of this mission statement in the annual report, posted in a prominent workplace location, or printed out on cards and distributed to all individuals in the organization.

The ongoing organization goes into the strategic planning process with a set of assets that are deployed to move it towards achieving its goals. This deployment of assets is designed to take advantage of the organization's strengths and opportunities, and neutralize its weaknesses and threats. The strategic posture may include the following:

- A set of goals and objectives (large organizations may use sub-goals in place of objectives);

- A statement of the philosophy and culture;

- The set of strategies that the organization has adopted to achieve its goals and objectives.

- A description of the structure management has selected for the organization.

Changes in the strategic posture of an organization often are a response to changes in the environment, either anticipated or unanticipated. Effective strategic planning must include constant environmental scanning, and must be flexible enough to adjust to changes in the environment. Effective strategic planning, properly implemented, should enable us to avoid or minimize the consequences of surprises, better manage crises, and take a proactive stance with respect to the environment and our competition.

Finally, while strategic planning begins with an analysis of the organization's current strategic posture, strategic planning must focus on the future. Strategic decisions define how the organization will align itself to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future. Strategic decisions are future oriented and based on thorough environmental analyses. Good decisions today lead to future success.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe the strategic-management process, including formulation, implementation, and evaluation.
2. Critically evaluate vision and mission statements, strategic objectives, and organization-level strategies.
3. Identify and justify company strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).
4. List and describe the major competitive challenges facing organizations today.
5. Apply industry competitive analysis and company situational analysis to a manufacturing or service industry case study scenario, correctly using appropriate matrices and models.
6. Integrate business marketing, finance, organizational behavior, and information systems into organizational problem solving, bridging the gap between theory and practice by articulating when and how to apply management concepts learned in earlier courses.

Quizzes

Before the current term begins, read Chapters 1 and 2 of the Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson text and be prepared for Quiz 1 (see Lesson Plan in Announcements). This course will be intensive, with most communication occurring via that medium, as well as, via the Troy e-mail system.

Case Analysis

Additionally, there is a case analysis requirement that is a portion of the final exam. Your weekly deliverables will prepare you for this assignment. Writing skills, following the APA format, will be emphasized. Depending on the number of students in this class and the 30 cases in the Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson text, a team approach to the case analysis requirement may be required. If necessary, each student will be asked to pair up with another student and select a case from the Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson text of interest to you both. In any case, you should e-mail the instructor with the case name and the team member names, if applicable, as soon as possible to get the case you select. A first-come-first-served approach is in effect for case selection and to ensure that each team has a unique case.

The case analysis is, of course, a strategic level analysis. Your analysis should include a proposed Case Background, Mission, Objectives, Problems, SWOT analysis, Competitor Analysis (Porter’s Five and Strategic Groups), Environmental Analysis and Ethical Implications. More information will be provided as the course progresses. You are expected to be proactive in this course.

Your final case analysis should be between 10-15 double-spaced pages in MS Word and in the .doc format, excluding charts, tables and diagrams, and should include the cover sheet at the end of this document. The cover sheet should be copied into the front of your final document and completed electronically.  See Lesson Plan for due dates.

Required Assessments:

Major Field Test (MFT)

The standardized ETS MFT exam is required in the BUS 4476 course. This exam should be taken in week 6 of the course. Students will need to get an approved proctor at a Troy site, Sylvan Learning Center, or the military education office. For more information go to www.ets.org.

Capstone Exam

The Capstone Exam is required in the BUS 4476 course. Students will need to get an approved proctor at a Troy site, Sylvan Learning Center, or the military education office.

CCSTC Exam

The CCSTC Exam is required in the BUS 4476 course. Students will need to get an approved proctor at a Troy site, Sylvan Learning Center, or the military education office. Please take the CCSTC immediately following the Capstone Exam

**Method of Evaluation**

Grading Percentages

Midterm                                              25%

Final                                                   25% (MC and Case Analysis)

Pre-MFT Assessments                        5%

Major Field Test (MFT)                      10%

Capstone Exam                                   5%

CCTST Exam                                     5%

Quizzes                                               10%

Discussion Boards                              15%

Total                                                    100