



Dillard College of Business Administration
COURSE SYLLABUS: Graduate Seminar in Business Policy
MGMT 6883 Section X20
Spring 2020

Contact Information

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Course Materials

Packet of articles available through D2L and two cases available for purchase for \$8.50 from Harvard Business School Publishing website.

Business Strategy Game Simulation. Register online at [BSG Online](#) (costs \$45)

Course Description

Analytical study of business decision-making, the creation of business strategy, and the creation of sound business objectives and policies. Takes an integrated or interdisciplinary approach to the role of the organizational executive.

Course Prerequisite(s)

Consent of Graduate Coordinator. Should be taken in student's last semester.

Learning Goals

I. General Learning Goals:

- **Demonstrate a broad understanding of the functional areas of a business entity.** Strategy formulation and the BSG simulation require students to integrate the various functions into an effective firm operation.
- **Develop analytical and critical thinking skills beyond those exhibited for students at the bachelor's level.** Critical thinking is assessed during the case analyses and the BSG simulation.
- **Communicate effectively, through both written and oral means.** Students will practice their oral presentation skills through leading discussions and presentations. Writing assignments shall also be assessed for writing ability.
- **Demonstrate the capacity to adapt their knowledge to new and unfamiliar circumstances.** The BSG simulation is an outstanding opportunity to adapt students' knowledge into a high-fidelity and dynamic business scenario.
- **Use team building and collaboration to achieve group objectives.** Effective performance in the simulation depends on effective team building.

These general learning goals are those established by the Dillard College of Business Administration for MBA students. General learning goals represent the skills that graduates will carry with them into their careers. While assessing student performance in obtaining these general learning goals, the Dillard College is assessing its programs. The assessments will assist us as we improve our curriculum and curriculum delivery.

- II. Course Specific Learning Goals: After completing this course, students should be able to:
- Recognize the interrelated roles that accounting, finance, marketing, management, and information systems play in business success.
 - Understand and apply models related to business performance.
 - Understand the decisions and trade-offs that top managers are faced with when running and setting the future directions for the firm.
 - Develop the ability to think strategically

Course Policies

Attendance Policy: There are no required in-class sessions for this course. You are expected to log into D2L several times each week to check for announcements and updates via postings and email. See the university catalog for the University Class Attendance Policy.

Contact Procedures: I check email daily so email is the easiest asynchronous method of contacting me. I will respond to your emails within 48 hours (usually much faster). You are also welcome to stop by or call my office (it would be best to email for an appointment if you want to be sure I'm available).

Course Time: Deadlines indicated in the syllabus/D2L are for Central Standard/Daylight Time (as appropriate). If you are completing coursework in another time zone, please note the time difference and plan accordingly.

Grading and Evaluation

Student performance will be assessed using the following assignments:

Case Analyses (2): Throughout the semester, students will be required to thoroughly analyze and submit written assessments and recommendations for two cases. The written case analyses are individual assignments. The tools and frameworks learned from the readings and discussion will be used in analyzing real companies presented in the case studies. The case method has proven particularly useful for training professionals in the art of diagnosing complex problems. The case studies used in this course include some essential information for analysis, but just as in the real world, not all the information students may want. Students must make the best judgments and interpretations they can with the information provided, and are urged to supplement the case with outside readings and information sources. Each case will have its own discussion board. The case discussions will rely heavily on each person's participation. Students will be expected to present and defend their points of view, as well as respectfully develop or critique the points others have made. The discussion questions provided with each case are only meant as a starting point. It is very important that all students go beyond the questions and develop insights based on their own unique and valuable background, knowledge, and reasoning.

Projects: Strategy is a very hands-on subject and my intent is to make this course as applied as possible. Below are brief introductions to these hands-on projects. More detail is available on D2L.

Discussion Lead: Each module will have its own discussion board for the topics and readings included in that module. A small group of two or three students will be responsible for presenting an overview of the module's readings and leading the class discussion of the readings. Students will sign up for the discussion they want to lead during the first few days of the course. Readings presentations are expected to go beyond simply summarizing the information presented in the articles/cases to thoughtfully analyzing the topics and, where appropriate, synthesizing the readings with each other and other information presented in class. Student groups should prepare "talking points" and discussion questions and plan to initiate and sustain class discussion. Student groups (really, all students) are also encouraged to draw upon their own work experiences to supplement the discussion preparation with scenarios or mini case studies.

Discussion Participation: Each student is expected to participate in the discussion for each module by engaging with topics and classmates. Students should offer meaningful comments and insights that advance the discussion for each module. Comments such as "good post" or "I agree" are not considered meaningful and will not count toward grades. Also, repeating information previously provided does not count toward grades.

It is very important that each student participate in class discussions as a way to share ideas and learn from each other. Ideally, the discussions will be a free-flowing exchange of information and ideas, so everybody in the class is strongly encouraged to visit the discussion boards several times each week to respond to others' comments and questions.

Each discussion board is worth up to 15 points. Students are evaluated on both the frequency and quality of their comments. Comments should build upon or respectfully debate the comments posted by other students. To get the full benefit of the course (and earn maximum possible points), students will want to enter the discussion boards early and return often.

Business Strategy Game Simulation (BSG): BSG is a business simulation where you are the top management team of an athletic footwear manufacturing firm. The purpose of the simulation is to learn implementation skills for the strategies being developed in the class. This requires you to draw on all of your former business courses (management, marketing, accounting, and finance) as you run the corporation. A key point is that the simulation is "live play" in that your fellow classmates are the competition. This means the simulation is dynamic, interactive, and a lot of fun. The simulation is also a major time commitment and, accordingly, a major part of your grade. Specific graded components include: two multiple choice quizzes (20 points); your firm's actual performance in the simulation (125 points); and a board of directors presentation where you discuss your firm's performance (125 points). Students will work in teams of three or four for the simulation.

Points are allocated to each assignment as follows.

Assignment	Points
Case analysis I	150
Case analysis II	150
Discussion lead	100
Discussion participation	120
BSG quizzes	20
BSG performance	130
BSG company presentation	130
Total Points:	800

Grades will be assigned based on percentage of total points earned, as follows:

Letter grade	Percentage of total points earned
A	Greater than 90.0%
B	80.0-89.9%
C	70.0-79.9%
D	60.0-69.9%
F	Less than 60%

Semester grades are reported through normal University channels with no exceptions.

Major Field Test (MFT):

We schedule the Major Field Test (MFT) as part of this course. It is a standardized test that helps assess our MBA program quality. Note that the MFT lasts 3 hours so please plan accordingly. As an incentive to do your best, students that score in the top 10% of all test-takers worldwide receive 10 bonus points in the course. If you are unable to take the MFT during the scheduled time at MSU you'll need make arrangements at a testing center to complete it. The computer requirements to access the MFT are considerable—if you can't take the exam during the face-to-face option at MSU I encourage you to investigate ASAP whether a testing center near you can administer the MFT.

Academic Integrity:

With regard to academic honesty, students are referred to the "Student Honor Creed" in the university catalog. Academic dishonesty (cheating, collusion, and plagiarism) is taken seriously. Cutting and pasting text from the internet without citing the source and setting off the pasted text in a form that identifies it appropriately constitutes plagiarism. Please know that integrity is very important to me.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Syllabus Change Policy:

This syllabus is a guide for the course—not a contract—and is subject to change. Syllabus changes are communicated via D2L. I'll provide at least 48 hours' notice before the relevant change takes place if possible.

Additional Information:

Written Assignments: ALL assignments are to be typed, single-spaced, with one-inch margins, and use an 11 or 12-point font (specific font must present a business appearance and be similar in size to Times New Roman or Arial). Please proofread carefully! Grammatical and spelling errors make papers look sloppy and detract from the effectiveness of the analysis (and grades!). Be clear and concise. Writing style has an important impact on how well ideas are communicated. High quality verbal presentations are also expected.

Timeliness of Work: Professionals are not late with their work. Any late submission shall be graded accordingly. NOTE: There is no grace period for the simulation decisions—the computer automatically processes the decisions at 11:59pm on the scheduled date!

Words of Wisdom / General Policies: Perhaps the most important thing you can understand about me is I am deeply interested in your success. I believe the course material can contribute greatly to your future success. Therefore, I invest a lot of effort in this course. If you put in the effort, I'm confident you'll learn a lot and earn a good grade. Just as in the "real world," I try to run my course in a supportive yet professional and business-like manner. Here are some key points for professional behavior:

- Always show respect for others, especially as they make comments during discussions.
- The assignments you hand in should reflect your professionalism.
- Crude or offensive language is unprofessional.
- Be on-time with your assignments.

Tentative schedule (See attached.) Please keep this syllabus as a reference. Students are responsible for all information contained in the syllabus and for any changes to the syllabus, which are announced via D2L.

Key Dates for BSG Simulation

Date	BSG Decision Round	Due date or time
2/24	BSG Practice Round 1	BSG Quiz 1 and Practice Round 1 due by 11:59 PM
3/2	BSG Practice Round 2	Due 11:59 PM
3/9	BSG Round 1 (Year 11)	Due 11:59 PM
3/23	BSG Round 2 (Year 12)	Due 11:59 PM
3/30	BSG Round 3 (Year 13)	Rd 3 & BSG Quiz 2 Due 11:59 PM
4/6	BSG Round 4 (Year 14)	Three-year strategic plan & Rd 4 Due 11:59 PM
4/13	BSG Round 5 (Year 15)	Rd 5 Due 11:59 PM
4/20	BSG Round 6 (Year 16)	Rd 6 Due 11:59 PM
4/27	BSG Round 7 (Year 17)	Rd 7 Due 11:59 PM
5/4	BSG Round 8 (Year 18)	Rd 8 Due 11:59 PM
5/11	BSG company presentations	Video uploaded by 11:59 PM

Tentative Course Schedule

Date*	Module	Topic	Readings
1/20	1	Strategic Thinking	Preface (Costin, 1998)
1/27	1	Strategic Leadership	What is Strategy? (Porter, 1996) Fall & Rise of Strategic Planning (Mintzberg, 1994) The Mind of the Strategist (Ohmae, 1982)
2/3	2	External Environment	Scenario Planning: Tool for Strategic Thinking (Schoemaker, 1995) Cognitive Biases & Impact on Strategic Planning (Barnes, 1984)
2/10	2	Internal Organization	Time—The Next Source of Competitive Advantage (Stalk, Jr., 1988)
2/17	3	Organizational Structure	Strategy as Stretch & Leverage (Hamel & Prahalad, 1993) Strategic Outsourcing (Quinn & Hilmer, 1994) Outsourcing Innovation (Engardio & Einhorn, 2005) The Future of Outsourcing (Engardio, 2006) BSG: Introduction
2/24	3	Business Level Strategy	The Wal-Mart You Don't Know (Fishman, 2003) The Only Company Wal-Mart Fears (Helyar, 1994) Assorted newspaper articles re: Wal-Mart CASE: Walmart Inc. takes on Amazon.com
3/2	4	Competitive Rivalry & Dynamics	End-Game Strategies for Declining Industries (Harrigan & Porter, 1993) Market Driven Strategy: Managing in Turbulent Markets (Day, 1990) Written in the Stars (Breen, 2005)
3/9	4	Corporate Strategy	From Competitive Advantage to Corporate Strategy (Porter, 1987) CASE: Stick to the Strategy or Make the Sale?
3/16		Spring Break	No class – enjoy!
3/23	5	Acquisition & Restructuring Strategies	M&A: Value Creating or Destroying Strategy? (Hitt et al., 2001)
3/30	5	Cooperative Strategy	Alliance Management as a Source of Competitive Advantage (Ireland et al., 2002) More Than Friendship is Required: An Empirical Test of Cooperative Firm Strategies (Pesamaa & Hair, Jr., 2007)
4/6	6	International Strategy	International Business Strategies & Multinational Corporations (Becker, 1998) Competing Across Locations: Enhancing Competitive Advantage through a Global Strategy (Porter, 1998) Winning in Global Markets (Kanter, 1995)

Date*	Module	Topic	Readings
4/13	7	Corporate Governance	Good Governance & Misleading Myths of Bad Metrics (Sonnenfeld, 2004) Board Governance: A Social Systems Perspective (Cascio, 2004)
4/20	7	Corporate Ethics	The Many Faces of Integrity (Audi & Murphy, 2006) Business Ethics: The Law of Rules (Michael, 2006) Is Business Bluffing Ethical? (Carr, 1968) Second Thoughts About Bluffing (Carson, 1993)
4/27	8	Strategic Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship in the Large Corporation (Ahuja & Lampert, 2001) Entrepreneurial Strategies for Wealth Creation (Hitt et al., 2001)
5/4			BSG company presentation video uploaded by 11:59PM on May 11

* A week in this course runs from Monday through Sunday. The date shown in the schedule is the Monday at the beginning of the week.