

Strategic Management

General Information

Course #	423
Section #	001
Term	Fall
Year	2020
Restrictions	Open to U2, U3 students only
Course pre-requisite(s)	None
Course co-requisite(s)	None
Course schedule (day and time of class)	TH, 2:35pm-3:55pm EST
Number of credits	3

Instructor Information

Name and Title	Matthew Corritore (he/him/his), Assistant Professor of Strategy & Organization
E-mail	matthew.corritore@mcgill.ca
Virtual office hours	Fridays, 10-11am, 3-5pm EST
Communication plan*	I will be available at the Zoom link above during office hours. Otherwise, please email me and we will find another time for a Zoom meeting.

I strongly encourage you to post any questions you have about course logistics and content to the myCourses discussion forums, so that other students can see the answer. However, please email me with any sensitive questions and concerns. Please allow 12 hours for me to respond during the week, and 24 hours on weekends. I strive to be especially responsive prior to deadlines and assessments.

Course Overview

This class is about *strategic management*: an organization's set of commitments and actions intended to create superior value. The main objectives of this course are to improve:

- 1) your knowledge of the *core concepts* of strategic management;
- 2) your capacity to *apply* these concepts to actual business situations;
- 3) your ability to *communicate* your analyses both verbally and in writing.

Strategy takes a “big picture” approach to organizations that goes beyond their functional, product, or geographic aspects. This class will thus allow you to integrate concepts you have learned in other classes as well as the new material you will encounter in this class, from the perspective of top management.

We will spend a great deal of time in this class discussing real organizations and the current issues that they face. After taking this class, you should be able to de-construct a complex business situation, identify the key issues and problems facing the organization in question, propose alternative courses of action, recognize the tradeoffs involved in these alternatives, and make concrete recommendations backed by solid reasoning. You will understand how to analyze why certain companies have succeeded (or failed) in the past, and be able to chart a course that will maximize their chances of success in the future.

Remote Delivery

This class will be delivered remotely, with a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning. Remote learning presents many challenges, especially for student engagement. I am committed to learning about the challenges that you face in engaging with the class, and will do my best to provide a supportive and accommodating learning environment. With some patience, we will make the most of a difficult situation. Please see the “Course Information” section on myCourses for remote learning guidelines and resources.

Learning Outcomes

This class is about how to analyze and improve the competitive position of organizations. To do this, we will discuss various tools for studying both the internal characteristics of organizations and their external environments. When looking inside organizations, we will examine their strategic mission and vision, corporate governance, resources and capabilities, core competencies, structure and control systems, leadership, among other areas. In external analysis, we will explore the social, economic, and institutional context, industry structure, the market, and competitive dynamics, among other factors.

Improving competitive position, however, involves more than just internal and external analysis – firms must also devise and implement strategies that follow from this analysis. Accordingly, we will discuss how organizations can build capabilities, achieve differentiation, pursue diversification, make acquisitions, and form cooperative alliances. Finally, we will explore how organizations transform themselves in the face of environmental change.

Instructional Method

The instructional methods include lecture, readings, case discussion, both asynchronous and synchronous discussion, and small group work.

The class requires extensive use of Zoom and myCourses. You will need a webcam and microphone to participate in discussions, meet with your group project teammates, etc. Please see the Course Information section under Content on myCourses for a useful collection of remote learning resources.

The typical week will include both asynchronous and synchronous learning. I will post one recorded lecture to myCourses each Tuesday by our regularly scheduled class time. We will then have a live, synchronous class session via Zoom during our Thursday class time. We will discuss Tuesday's lecture, as well as any assigned readings and cases.

Some of you may have difficulty regularly attending our live Thursday discussion due to extreme time zone differences or technological limitations. Please contact me to discuss accommodations. I will do my best to ensure that any problems created by remote learning do not critically impact your learning or my ability to fairly evaluate your performance. Discussion attendance can be excused in extreme circumstances, a recording of each discussion will be posted to myCourses, and you will have plenty of opportunities for class participation outside of our synchronous sessions.

Expectations for Student Participation

Student participation is essential in this class, and your participation will be evaluated based on the quality of your contributions. A stronger contribution helps clarify a course concept, see an issue from a new and useful perspective, compares/contrasts two or more readings or cases, etc. A weaker, but still useful, contribution recalls a simple fact about a reading or concept. While I expect you to contribute regularly, I place more emphasis in my evaluations on quality rather than quantity.

One way that you can contribute is during our synchronous discussion classes on Thursdays. You should be ready to engage with the class via video, audio, and chat on Zoom. I expect you to have your webcam on, and be ready to speak into the microphone when appropriate. Please contact me as soon as possible with any questions or concerns.

Preparation is essential for learning and participation. Most of our Thursday classes will involve some discussion of assigned readings and/or HBS cases. Importantly, I expect you to do more than just read the assignments – you should come to class prepared to engage critically with each reading. For example, do you have a persuasive argument that you would like to make about a particular reading? Which arguments in the reading are persuasive, which are lacking, and why? It is especially important to prepare in this way for our discussion of the HBS cases, which will be driven by student interaction.

You will also have ample opportunity to participate asynchronously via engagement with the myCourses discussion forums. The “Course Content” forum includes separate topics for each course topic. This is where you will create new threads and respond to existing threads about a particular issue related to that course topic.

My goal is to foster a culture of *interaction* in the forums, especially student-to-student interaction. While I as the instructor will monitor all discussions and occasionally interject, the primary purpose of the forums is to encourage students to respond to one another. Part of what makes this culture of interaction work is that you need to be willing to take risks with your comments and make mistakes, just as you would in an in-person class. If you have a question or concern about something that is unclear, it’s likely that other students have it as well, and you’ll be rewarded for surfacing it.

Importantly, the discussion forums provide you an opportunity to engage with issues that are germane to strategic management but not explicitly covered in class. For example, you might discover that a current event sheds some light on a course concept, or vice-versa, and make that connection in the forums.

I expect you to check your email and myCourses regularly in order to stay abreast of and participate in the evolving class discussion on the forums.

Recording of sessions

All asynchronous lectures will be recorded and posted to myCourses. All synchronous sessions, namely our Thursday discussions, will also be recorded and posted to myCourses.

Please read the Guidelines on Remote Teaching and Learning [<https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/strategies/guidelines-remote>] and the course outline for this course in myCourses. Class sessions may be recorded, and your image, voice and name may be disclosed to classmates. Note that by remaining in sessions that are being recorded, you are agreeing to the recording.

Required Course Materials

- Textbook: Michael A. Hitt, R. Duane Ireland and Robert E. Hoskisson. Strategic Management: Competitiveness and Globalization (Concepts), **12th Edition**. South-Western. E-book available from the bookstore.
- Harvard Business Coursepack, which can be purchased at this link:
 - <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/745512>
- Required readings: Available for download on myCourses under ‘Content’

Please see the Course Content section of this outline for detailed information about the assigned readings.

You will need a webcam and microphone to participate in discussions, meet with your group project teammates, etc.

Course Content

Date	Description	Readings and Assignments Due
TH: September 3 rd Zoom Discussion	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory Note on the Case Method • How to Structure What You Write • How to Write A Memo or a Report
T: September 8 th Recorded Lecture TH: September 10 th Zoom Discussion	Strategic Management and Competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Ch. 1 • Of Strategies, Deliberate and Emergent • How to Improve Strategic Planning • CASE: Marvel
T: September 15 th Recorded Lecture TH: September 17 th Zoom Discussion	External Environment and Internal Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Ch. 2 • Text Ch. 3 • CASE: Amazon.com: Evolving Into Offline Retail
T: September 22 nd Recorded Lecture TH: September 24 th Zoom Discussion POSITION PAPER DUE PROJECT TEAMS ASSIGNED	Business-Level Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Ch. 4 • How Businesses Have Successfully Pivoted During the Pandemic • CASE: Lego
T: September 29 th Recorded Lecture TH: October 1 st Zoom Discussion	Competitive Rivalry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Ch. 5 • CASE: Voice War: Hey Google vs. Alexa vs. Siri
T: October 6 th MIDTERM TH: October 8 th Zoom Discussion	GUEST SPEAKER: Diana Colella, VP of Business Strategy & Marketing @ Autodesk	
T: October 13 th Recorded Lecture TH: October 15 th Zoom Discussion PROJECT CHOICES DUE	Corporate Level Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Ch. 6 • Berkshire Hathaway Shareholder Letter
T: October 20 th Recorded Lecture TH: October 22 nd Zoom Discussion	Mergers & Acquisitions and Cooperative Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Ch. 7 and Ch. 9 • CASE: The Walt Disney Co. and Pixar Inc.

<p>T: October 27th Recorded Lecture</p> <p>TH: October 29th Zoom Discussion POSITION PAPER DUE</p>	<p>Institution-based View of Strategy</p> <p>GUEST SPEAKER: Paul Sturgess, past VP of Strategy & Business Architecture @ RBC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peng, Sun, Pinkham & Chen (2009) Institution-based view. AMP. • CASE: Toys “R” Us Canada
<p>T: November 3rd Recorded Lecture</p> <p>TH: November 5th Zoom Discussion</p>	<p>Corporate Governance and Stakeholders & Social Responsibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Ch. 10 • Text Ch.1 pages 19-24 • The Link between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility • CASE: World Wildlife Fund
<p>T: November 10th Recorded Lecture</p> <p>TH: November 12th Zoom Discussion</p>	<p>Organizational Structure and Controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Ch. 11 • The Secrets to Successful Strategy Execution
<p>T: November 17th Recorded Lecture GROUP PROJECT DUE</p> <p>TH: November 19th Zoom Discussion</p>	<p>Informal Structure and Buy-in</p> <p>Discuss Group Projects on myCourses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail • The Practitioner’s Guide for Communications During Post-Merger integration • CASE: DaVita
<p>T: November 24th No Class</p> <p>TH: November 26th Zoom Discussion</p>	<p>Continue Discussing Group Projects on myCourses</p>	<p>CASE: The Walt Disney Company*</p>
<p>T: December 1st Zoom Discussion FINAL EXAM: TBD</p>	<p>Final Exam Review</p>	

Evaluation

Name of Assignment	Due Date(s)	% of final grade
Class Participation		15
Two, 2-page Position Papers	Sept. 24 th , Oct. 29 th	10
Midterm	Oct. 8 th	20
Group Project	Oct. 15 th , Nov. 17 th	25
Open-book, timed Final Exam	TBD	30

The instructions for the two, 2-page position papers are available on myCourses under 'Assignments.'

An open-book Midterm, available on myCourses, will take place within a 48-hour window lasting from Tuesday, October 6th at 9:30am until Thursday, October 8th at 9:30am. The exam consists of two parts. The first is a timed portion – you will have one hour (plus a 15 minute grace period to account for any technical problems) to complete and submit it from the time you access it. The second part is a critical thinking exercise that you can access and submit anytime within the 48-hour window. Both parts of the exam must be submitted by Thursday, October 8th at 9:30am.

The instructions for the Group Project are available on myCourses under 'Assignments.' You will be randomly assigned into groups on September 24th. You must choose a company to analyze by October 15th.

A formal, open-book final exam will be administered during the final exam period. You will be able to access it within a 48 hour window on myCourses, but once you access it you will only have three hours (+ a 30 minute grace period in case of technical issues) to complete it and submit it via myCourses. The final exam is cumulative in that it covers content from the entire course.

Information about the other assignments can be found under 'Assignments' on myCourses. All assignments should be submitted via myCourses. See the 'Course Information' section of myCourses for tips on using myCourses.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

Language of Submission

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

Additional Information

- The [University Student Assessment Policy](#) exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads. All students and instructors are encouraged to review this Policy, which addresses multiple aspects and methods of student assessment, e.g. the timing of evaluation due dates and weighting of final examinations.
- © Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
- As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.
- McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.
- [End-of-course evaluations](#) are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified in-class and by e-mail when the evaluations are available. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.
- In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.