COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Corporate Strategy Course deals with the organizational and leadership challenges/choices facing multi-business firms. The course provides students with a unique perspective on how corporations formulate a vision and develop strategies to allocate resources and create synergies across their portfolio of businesses. In this course you will discuss practical and field-tested methods that corporate leaders use to achieve sustained results. Using the case study method you will examine strategies of successful and failed corporations. Executive guest speakers will be invited to our classroom to discuss their corporate strategy perspectives.

COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED

1. **Text**: Michael Goold, Andrew Campbell, Marcus Alexander, *Corporate-Level Strategy*, John Wiley & Sons, 1994. This text will be used throughout the course and is available at the Newark Campus Bookstore.
3. **For readings and case studies**: A course packet is available for on-line purchase from the Harvard Business School Publishing Website at the following URL: [https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36634720](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36634720)
4. Also, we will start every class with a discussion of current Corporate Strategy events. The *Wall Street Journal* and *Investor's Business Daily* are reliable sources for learning about current corporate strategic events.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify methods used by multi-business corporations to create value between and among their business entities.
2. Choose among the various buy, build and borrow strategies and know the advantages and disadvantages of each.
3. Describe what corporations do to keep their strategies relevant and profitable.
4. Discuss and solve numerous challenges and issues currently facing many multi-business organizations.
5. Understand the role that a business’ culture plays in determining its strategic success.

6. Utilize management concepts discussed in the course to enhance your executive & business acumen.

GRADING

PARTICIPATION: 30%

Your participation is critical to the learning process in this course. Each individual's contribution will be evaluated on the quality of his or her preparation and participation. Class participation will be graded as follows:

100 - Evidence of exceptional and careful advance preparation by taking a major role in pointing out relevant issues and new points of view in case discussions with fellow students regularly.

70 - Evidence of careful advance preparation by contributing an analysis and interpretation of some issues on several occasions. Moderate discussion with fellow students.

50 – Occasionally contributing some factual details. Marginal fellow student discussion.

30 – Rare (if ever) discussion with fellow students while in session. Only by general agreement with ongoing discussion or participated only when directly asked by the instructor.

0 No participation, or frequent late coming or frequent early leaving or any other behavior that disrupts or distracts from class discussions/lectures.

(NOTE: missing class without letting me know in advance will result in an automatic 10% reduction in your participation grade.)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: 20%

Two times during the semester (sessions: 5 & 10) you will be asked to prepare a written one page paper (8 1/2 by 11, single-space, 12pt font) on strategic issues facing a multi-business corporation. (See schedule for dates and topics.) We will discuss specific details including grading criteria in the classroom. Please note: I believe a major challenge for most business executives is the ability to write clearly and concisely, and at the same time cover essential material in a minimal number of written words. This will be a key point taken into consideration when grading. More will be discussed on this point during the semester.

GROUP PRESENTATION: 20%

In March the class will be divided into several small groups of students. Each group will be assigned one of three corporate growth strategies, Buy, Borrow or Build. Each group will develop a presentation about its assigned strategy including a real life corporate success, or failure, and present to the class. Class members will be given an opportunity to question and challenge presenters. Poor or noncontributing team members will be subject to receiving partial or no credit. We will discuss specific details including grading criteria in early October.

TESTS and QUIZZES: 30%

There will be a written Midterm and a Final test (sessions: 7 & 14). Please refer to the schedule section of this syllabus for dates. Each test will cover reading assignments, assigned cases and classroom discussions. The format of the tests may vary. Also, please note that there will be pop quizzes at various times throughout the semester.

GRADE RANGES
A=95-100, A-=90-94, B+=85-89, B=80-84, C+=75-79, C=70-74, D=60-69, F=0-59

CLASS GUIDELINES

1. **Be here and now**, class discussions are critical for your learning and your success. Class attendance is mandatory. Should you miss a class, it will be your responsibility to find out what material was covered and what assignments may be due from classmates. Please notify me **in advance** if you will be unable to attend a class. No call / no show will result in losing points towards your final grade. Emergency situations will be treated on a case-by-case basis, yet you are responsible for contacting me after the emergency.

2. **If you miss** a test or quiz, you will not be permitted to take a make-up except in an extreme circumstance to be determined by professor.

3. **Efficient and effective use of class time.** This includes arriving, starting and concluding on time.

4. **Written assignments** are due on the date specified. **Late submissions will not be accepted** except in an extreme circumstance to be determined by professor.

5. **Be courteous and mindful while in class and avoid disruptions.** This includes use of electronic devices of any kind and/or eating during class.

6. **Check Blackboard** for important announcements (i.e. I often post notes/questions to assist you in your pre-class preparation for all assigned case work one week to that session and/or after a class)

7. **Academic and personal integrity.** Zero tolerance, you should cite all external sources of information fully and completely. Violators of academic integrity will be penalized and reported to University authorities.

SCHEDULE

**Session 1 (9/3): Introduction to Corporate Strategy**

Pre class reading assignment:
- Textbook Chapter 1, Corp. Strategy and HBR Article, *Growth as a Process, an Interview with Jeffrey R. Immelt*

Classroom: 1. Introductions, 2. Class requirements, 3. Discussion of reading assignments, 4. Q&A.

**Session 2 (9/10): Creating and Destroying Value**

Pre class assignment:
- As you read this case, consider the following questions as we will discuss the answers in class
  1. Evaluate Kodak's strategy in traditional photography. Why was the company so successful for so long?
  2. Evaluate Kodak's response to Sony's introduction of the Mavica in 1981. Was it appropriate?
  3. How do you assess Fisher's attempt to transform Kodak? Why did it fail?
  4. What is Kodak’s current position in digital imaging? Why?
Classroom: 1. Brief discussion of any major Corporate Strategy events occurring during past week, 2. Discussion of reading assignment and assigned case, 3. Q&A.

**Session 3 (9/17): The Parenting Advantage**

Pre class assignment:
- Read: Textbook Chapter 3, Questions about Parenting Advantage and HBR Article, *Barbarians in the Boardroom*
- Research: Find out what you can about Applied Data Research, Inc. the “first independent software company” Prepare brief notes. Bring your notes to class.


**Session 4 (9/24): Divisionalization, Diversification, Portfolio Planning and Restructuring**

Pre class assignment:
- Read: Textbook Chapter 4, The Background and Case, *Transforming Verizon: A Platform for Change*
  In Class we will discuss the following questions: What might limit Verizon’s progress? What else should Verizon do to make sure its people, processes and culture could anticipate and deal with the next challenges and surprises?

Classroom: 1. Brief discussion of any major Corporate Strategy events occurring during the past week, 2. Discussion of reading assignment and in depth discussion of assigned case, 3. Q&A.

**Session 5 (10/1): Four Types of Value Creation**

Pre class assignment:
- Reading assignments: Textbook Chapter 5, How Parents Create Value and Case, *Corporate Strategy at Berkshire Partners*
- Write one page the answers to the following questions:
  1. What is Berkshire Partners' corporate strategy?
  2. Is their organizational design aligned with their current strategy?
  3. Do they have corporate advantage relative to other private equity firms?

*Turn in your written assignment (*) at the conclusion of class. (*) Check syllabus for specifications.* Classroom: 1. Brief discussion of any major Corporate Strategy events occurring during the past week, 2. Discussion of reading assignment and assigned case, 3.

**Session 6 (10/8): Successful Corporate Strategies**

Pre class assignment:
- Read: Textbook Chapter 11: Successful Corporate Strategies and Case, *Bank One: The Uncommon Partnership*

Classroom: 1. Brief discussion of any major Corporate Strategy events occurring during the past week, 2. Discussion of reading assignment and assigned case, 3.
week, 2. Discussion of reading assignment and discussion of assigned case, 3. Q&A.

Session 7 (10/15): Group Project, Discussion on Buy, Borrow & Build, Presentation Guidelines and Midterm

- Definition of group projects and formation of groups: Each group will be assigned one of the following readings:

- Midterm Written Test on material covered from sessions 1 to 6

Session 8 (10/22): Buy, Borrow or Build growth strategies and built-in time to prepare for Class Presentation.

Classroom: 1. Brief discussion of any major Corporate Strategy events occurring during the past week, 2. Group breakouts to plan and organize presentations, 4. Q&A.

Presentation Guidelines:
1. Include pertinent points from the reading that executives need to know before deciding to **buy**, **borrow or build** including advantages, disadvantages and issues. (To the extent possible be specific on when, where and how.)
2. Present a real life example of a corporation's success or failure to use your group’s assigned method of obtaining targeted resources, i.e., **buy, borrow or build**. Focus on why and how the company made its decision. (To the extent possible, present specific criteria and results used to determine success or failure.)
3. Build your presentation with no more than 10 PowerPoint slides. Each team will have 15 minutes to present.
4. Be clear and concise. Allow for more than one person to present and plan for a "smooth" transition.
5. There will be a 10-minute Q&A upon completion of each team’s presentation

Session 9 (10/29): Class Presentations. The entire class will be devoted to group presentations - each group will present for no longer than 15 minutes followed by questions and feedback from class members.

Session 10 (11/5): Developing A Corporate Strategy: Overview

Pre class assignment:
- Reading Assignments: Textbook Chapter 12: Developing a Corporate Strategy: Overview and Case: *PNC Financial: Grow up Great – Part A*. As you read this case, please consider the following questions:
  1. Why did PNC financial leaders choose to give back to the communities where they work?
  2. What did you like about the Grow Up Great's (a) design, (b) development and (c)
implementation? Explain why.

3. What didn't you like about the Grow Up Great's (a) design, (b) development and (c) implementation? Explain why.

Classroom: 1. Brief discussion of any major Corporate Strategy events occurring during the past week, 2. Discussion of reading assignment and assigned case - including corporate philanthropy: Why corporate leaders choose to "give back" to the communities in which they work. 3. Guest speaker to be invited.

**Session 11 (11/12): Corporate Strategies Evolve and Change**

Pre class assignment:

- Reading Assignments: Case, *Apple Inc. 2008* and *Managers, Can You Hear Me Now?* Chapters 1, 2 and 3.
- Classroom: 1. Brief discussion of any major Corporate Strategy events occurring during the past week, 2. Discussion of assigned case, reading assignment, and the link between corporate strategy and culture will be introduced, 3. Q&A.

**Session 12 (11/19): Integrating Acquisitions**

Pre class assignment:

- Read: *Managers, Can You Hear Me Now*, Chapters 4, 5 and 6.
- Written assignment: Article, Balanced Scorecard Report, *Toward a More Perfect Union: How OSMs Supported Integration at Sprint Nextel*. Based on your reading, please provide a brief case background and your reaction/conclusion(s). Additionally, please provide (and explain why) the three most vital contributions the Sprint/Nextel scorecard brought to their newly merged organization.

Classroom: 1. Brief discussion of any major Corporate Strategy events occurring during the past week, 2. Discussion of reading assignments, assigned case, and the importance of accountability to achieving strategic goals, 3. Q&A.

**Turn in your written assignment at the conclusion of class. (*)Check syllabus for specifications.**

(11/26) Thanksgiving Recess

**Session 13 (12/3): Global Corporate Strategy**

Pre class assignment:

- Read: Case: *Tyco International* and *Managers, Can You Hear Me Now?* Chapters 7, 8, 9 & conclusion.

Classroom: 1. Brief discussion of any major Corporate Strategy events occurring during the past week, 2. Discussion of assigned cases, and the relationship between Corporate Strategy success and Corporate Culture, 3. Q&A

**Session 14 (12/10): Course Conclusion and Final Test**

Pre class assignment:
• Read: Article, *The Most Important Job: Entrepreneurial Leadership*

Classroom: 1. Discussion of assigned reading, 2. Course discussion and summary, and

• **Final Written Test on material covered from sessions 7 to 13**