



MGT 4125: Competitive Strategy

2021 Winter Session	
Total Class Sessions: 25 Class Sessions Per Week: 6 Total Weeks: 4 Class Session Length (Minutes): 145 Credit Hours: 4	Instructor: Staff Classroom: TBA Office Hours: TBA Language: English

Course Description:

Competitive Strategy is concerned with managing the development and competitiveness of the business enterprise in order to ensure its survive and long-term success. To survive and keep prosperity, every firm must create and sustain a competitive advantage. This course provides frameworks, tools and concepts to help students analyze and understand the creation and sustainability of competitive advantage.

The first section of this course will examine the logic of strategic analysis, including firm performance, industry analysis and resource and capability analysis. Students will understand the external and internal environment of a firm. The second section is about competitive strategy in business level, including cost advantages and product differentiation. The third will discuss distinct competitive strategies in corporate level with particular emphasis around vertical integration, diversification, strategic alliances, merger and acquisition strategies, and international strategies. Class sessions are a mixture of applications (cases and other examples) and lectures.

Learning Objectives:

The objectives of the course will be achieved by means of finishing required readings, listening to lectures given by the instructor, participating in the in-class discussions, finishing case studies, and composing individual case study report.

By taking this course, the students are supposed to acquire 1) an comprehensive understanding of the tools, principles of strategy formulation and competitive advantage, 2) a general knowledge of the external and internal factors that would influence the outcome of the management of a certain business or corporate, and 3) the ability to think critically, make analysis while giving different situations, and present the thoughts logically in writing assignments.

Course Materials:

1. Harvard Coursepack:

Assigned readings and cases for this course are compiled in a course package available from Harvard Business School

2. Gaining and Sustaining Competitive Advantage, 4th edition.



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Authors: Jay Barney

Course Format and Requirements:

This course is a combination of lecture and case study discussion and analysis. In order to achieve the objectives of the course, we will devote the majority of our class time to the analysis and discussion of selected business cases. Lectures will be given to elaborate on key theoretical concepts and frameworks. Cases will help provide vivid examples that aid the memory of concepts.

The contents of the lectures are based on the textbooks, and supplemented reading materials and case studies from Harvard Business Cases(HBC) will be distributed by the instructor. In order to get a thorough understanding of the knowledge presented, students are supposed to finish all the assigned readings before the class and write down their own thoughts and questions for in-class discussions.

Attendance:

Students are supposed to be presented at all class sessions. Notifications about absence reasons to the instructor should be done in advance if students are not able to attend classes. More than three absences will result in the failure of the course. Active participation in all classroom activities is also very important for students to achieve success in this course.

Course Assignments:

Class Participation: 20%

This course relies heavily on case materials, so your active contribution to our case discussions is required to ensure the success in this class. Each student has a responsibility to participate in class and to enhance the learning experience of all class participants. Your overall class participation will be closely monitored. In grading oral participation, I will look at both the quality and quantity of your oral contributions.

Individual Case Study Report: 30%

There will be 4 individual case report assigned to the students, and the case to study will be provided by the instructor later. Students are supposed to make concrete connections between their knowledge in the field of strategic management and the case provided , and the goal of doing the case study is to help students strengthen their understanding toward the new knowledge and learn about how to apply them to cases. Guidelines about the report will be handed to the students. Students should present their ability of critical thinking and their familiarity with the content learned in class as well as their language accuracy. Once assigned, students will have one weeks to complete their report.

Team Final Project Paper and Presentation: (25%)

You will draft a strategic plan for a social enterprise that provides an innovative solution to a pressing social problem in the areas of education, health, the environment or others. The plan



will specify the social problem your venture would like to address, your theory of change, the social venture’s vision and mission, its business model, its growth strategy and how you will measure social impact. The last session of the course is set aside for presentations of your plan. Detailed instructions regarding the final project will be discussed in class and posted.

Peer Evaluations. Each of you will complete a peer evaluation of the members of your team with respect to the team final project. A copy of the peer evaluation form is posted to Blackboard. Scores for individual student contributions to the team final project are assigned by me, based on my assessment of the team’s project quality, my observations of the team’s working dynamics and thoughtful consideration of the information provided through your peer evaluations.

Final Exam: 25%

The final exam is a closed-book and in-class exam, which covers most of the materials used in class, including textbooks, HBC and other reading materials. Classes before the final exam will be left for review and Q&A. The final exam will consist of two parts: 1) multiple-choice and true/false questions on the readings and cases and 2) short-essay questions on a case.

Course Assessment:

Class Participation	20%
4 Individual Case Reports	30%
Team Final Project Paper and Presentation	25%
Final Exam	25%
Total	100%
Class Participation	20%
4 Individual Case Reports	30%
Team Final Project Paper and Presentation	25%

Grading Scale (percentage):

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
98-100	93-97	90-92	88-89	83-87	80-82	78-79	73-77	70-72	68-69	63-67	60-62	<60

Academic Integrity:

Students are encouraged to study together, and to discuss lecture topics with one another, but all other work should be completed independently.

Students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty and integrity that are described in the Chengdu University of Technology’s *Academic Conduct Code*. Any work suspected of violating the standards of the *Academic Conduct Code* will be reported to the Dean’s Office. Penalties for violating the *Academic Conduct Code* may include dismissal from the program. All students have an individual responsibility to know and understand the



provisions of the *Academic Conduct Code*.

Special Needs or Assistance:

Please contact the Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material. Our goal is to help you learn, not to penalize you for issues which mask your learning.

Course Schedule:

Class	Topic	Activity
Class 1	Course Policy and Syllabus Introduction, What is Strategy?	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 1
Class 2	Firm Performance and Competitive Advantage	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 2
Class 3	External Environment: Industrial Analysis (Environmental Threats)	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 3
Class 4	External Environment: Industrial Analysis (Environmental Threats) External Environment: Industrial Analysis (Environmental Opportunities)	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 3 Barney 2014, Chapter 4
Class 5	External Environment: Industrial Analysis (Environmental Opportunities)	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 4
Class 6	HBS Case Study 1 Case: Cola Wars	Individual Presentation 1
Class 7	Internal Environment: Resources and Capability Analysis (Understanding the Firm Strengths and Weakness)	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 5
Class 8	Internal Environment: Resources and Capability Analysis (Understanding the Firm Strengths and Weakness)	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 5
Class 9	HBS Case Study 2 Case: Zara 2014	Individual Presentation 2
Class 10	Cost Leadership	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 6
Class 11	Cost Leadership	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 6 Team Project Instruction and Distribution
Class 12	HBS Case Study 3 Case: Ryanair	Individual Presentation 3



Class 13	Product Differentiation	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 7
Class 14	Product Differentiation	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 7
Class 15	Vertical Integration Strategies	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 10
Class 16	Vertical Integration Strategies	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 10 Team Project Checkpoint 1
Class 17	HBS Case Study 4 Case: Disney-Pixar	Individual Presentation 4
Class 18	Diversification Strategies	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 11
Class 19	Diversification Strategies	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 11 Team Project Checkpoint 2
Class 20	Strategic Alliance	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 13
Class 21	Strategic Alliance	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 13
Class 22	Merger and Acquisition Strategies	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 14
Class 23	Merger and Acquisition Strategies	Reading: Barney 2014, Chapter 14
Class 24	Final Project Presentation	Final project presentation, peer review and comments
Class 25	Final Project Presentation Course Summary	Final project presentation, peer review and comments Review and Q&A
Final Exam (TBA)		