

## **NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY**

### **College of Business Administration**

MGT U501: Strategy in Action

Spring 2007, TuF mornings, in Dodge 270

Professor: Andrew Watson, Hayden 319H

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It may be necessary to make changes to the syllabus. In fact, it probably will be, given the scarce and changeable availability of some of the guest speakers I have in mind. It is my responsibility to let you know about such changes, and yours to keep track of them (even if you are absent from a class meeting in which they are announced). I will announce such changes via Blackboard, as well as in class meetings.

Northeastern University's Academic Honesty and Integrity policy applies to this course, and will be enforced if necessary.

### ***Overview and Objectives***

Strategy in Action is a "big picture" course as well as a capstone course. One way of introducing it is by contrast with most other courses within business schools. Whereas these other courses, explicitly or implicitly, present the perspective of a specific function (e.g., marketing, finance), this course presents a general management perspective.

On successful completion of this capstone course, you will be able to:

- Describe the key concepts of strategic management.
- Use these concepts, together with concepts from functionally specialized courses, to analyze problems faced by general managers.
- Clearly present your analysis, verbally and in writing.

### ***Books***

Carpenter, M.A., & Saunders, W.G. 2007. *Strategic Management: Concepts*. Pearson Prentice Hall. Available from the campus bookstore, and on reserve at the Snell library.

Case packet. Available from the campus bookstore, and on reserve at the Snell library. The title is *Strategy in Action*. It is different from the case books used by other professors here, so you need to use the one with my name, not one with anyone else's.

Various handouts, to be distributed as we go along. One of these is the Participant's Guide for the Glo-Bus management simulation. Each *student* (not just each group) must register for the simulation, and pay to do so.

*Schedule*

Tue Jan 9		Introduction to course Introduction to Glo-Bus (G-B) simulation
Fri Jan 12	Skim G-B Participant's Guide	Introduction to strategy (Chapter 1)
Tue Jan 16	Prepare for case discussion	Krispy Kreme Start to form groups for G-B
Fri Jan 19		Growth strategies (handout) Guest or video
(Mon Jan 22)	Register for simulation Introduce self on Blackboard	No class
Tue Jan 23	Read G-B Guide	G-B workshop
Fri Jan 26	G-B deadline at noon: - Practice decision 1 (year 6, group) - Quiz 1 (individual)	No class
Tue Jan 30	G-B printout, not for handin, but: prepare to discuss; make sure that your group has hardcopy	Discuss practice decision 1 External analysis (Ch. 4)
Fri Feb 2	G-B at noon: practice decision 2	Internal analysis (Ch. 3) Leading strategically (Ch. 2) Test preparation exercise
Tue Feb 6	Prepare for case discussion G-B printout, as above	EasyCar Discuss practice decision 2
Fri Feb 9		Test 1

<b>Date</b>	<b>Due from you</b>	<b>In class</b>
Tue Feb 13	Prepare for case discussion G-B at noon: decision 1	NextCard Business strategy (Ch. 5)
Fri Feb 16	G-B printout, as above	Strategy in dynamic contexts (Ch. 6) Discuss decision 1
Tue Feb 20	G-B at noon: decision 2 E-mail me your mini-reflection	Corporate strategy (Ch. 7) Guest or video
Fri Feb 23	Case writeup G-B printout, as above	Case to be announced and distributed Discuss decision 2
Tue Feb 27	G-B at noon: decision 3 Prepare for case discussion	International strategy (Ch. 8) Kikkoman
Fri Mar 2		Test 2
(Tue Mar 6)	No class: Spring break	
(Fri Mar 9)	No class: Spring break	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Due from you</b>	<b>In class</b>
Tue Mar 13	G-B at noon: decision 4 (first year in which you can bid for special orders)	Corporate governance (Ch. 13) Guest or video
Fri Mar 16	Prepare for case discussion	Ikon New ventures and corporate renewal (Ch. 12)
Tue Mar 20	G-B annual reports for year 9 (decision 4) due in or before class from each group G-B at noon: decision 5	Strategy implementation (Ch. 11) Guest or video
Fri Mar 23	Prepare for case discussion Skim annual reports, bring hardcopy to class G-B at noon: decision 6	Chasen mini-case (handout) Discuss annual reports Alliances (Ch. 9)
Tue Mar 27	Prepare for case discussion	PFS: identifying the players (see Blackboard discussion forum) Mergers and acquisitions (Ch. 10)
Fri Mar 30	G-B at noon: decision 7, no special order bidding	No class (by order of Northeastern University)
Tue Apr 3	Prepare for case discussion	PFS: bidding to win (see Blackboard)
Fri Apr 6	Test 3	
Tue Apr 10	G-B company presentations, in ascending order of G-B company score. (Note that the grade you get for the simulation depends on more than your company score. See below for details.)	
Fri Apr 13		
Tue Apr 17		
(Mon Apr 23)	Email me your final reflection Complete peer evaluations at G-B web site	No class. This date is in finals week, but there is no final.

## Assignments

Assignment	%age of grade
Simulation (the only group assignment)	35
Class participation	20
Written case analysis	20
Tests	25

Your grade for the **simulation** will depend mainly on your group's grade. Your group's grade in turn will depend on three main factors: the score computed by the simulation itself; your presentation; and your annual report. You may if you wish add an extra factor, by submitting extra work. For example, you might issue press releases. They would of course be timely and visible to your competitors. To expand the example, a press release relating to your results for decision 2 would be posted on Blackboard prior to the decision 3 deadline.

Your simulation grade also depends on your individual contribution to your group. I can assess this contribution via the quizzes, peer evaluations, reflections, and other indicators. If my assessment is sufficiently negative, your simulation grade will be lower than your group's and thus lower than the simulation grade of other group members.

There is more to **class participation** than mere attendance. Punctuality, preparation, and, of course, active participation are also vital. So is turning off mobile phones and similar devices during class.

Note that preparation is required for almost every class meeting. In particular, when I assign a case, I expect to be able to call upon any student with questions such as the following. What are the main issues in this case? Who are the key decision-makers? What are the key strengths of the organization? What are the key threats facing the organization? What alternatives are available to the organization? Which of these would you recommend, and why? How should your recommendation be implemented? (This is a list of rather general sample questions; the list would differ from case to case.)

There will be opportunities to participate in the class on-line, in Blackboard discussions, as well as in the classroom. The two reflections you will email me (see above for specific dates) count towards your class participation grade; or it might be more accurate to say that failure to send them will count against your grade.

The **written case analysis** should be no more than four double-spaced pages, plus exhibits (plus a cover page if you use a separate one. Hence an analysis with a cover page, four pages of double-spaced text, and two pages of exhibits would comprise seven pages in all). As well as being concise, it should be clear and thoughtful.

Each of the three **tests** will comprise a mix of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. We will discuss sample questions before the first test.

### ***Web Sites***

We will use two web sites for this course: one for the syllabus, and one for the simulation. You (as an individual) must register at each of the two sites.

The **web syllabus** is a Blackboard site. It is the home site for this course, and provides links to other relevant sites and pages. You can access it via:  
<http://blackboard.neu.edu> (note the lack of “www” in this URL).  
Make sure that you enroll in the appropriate section of MGT U501.

You can access the **simulation web site** via [www.glo-bus.com](http://www.glo-bus.com). Register there once you have been assigned a registration code. You will use this site to upload your decisions (prices, production, etc.), and to download the outcomes of those decisions. There is a *per student* cost to registration at Glo-Bus.