

ACU COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
COURSE SYLLABUS
MGMT 439: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
SPRING 2020



Professor:	Dr. Sarah Easter	Office: COBA 254	Phone: 325-674-3773
Office Hours:	Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30 – 3:30 pm; or by appointment		
Email:	sge02a@acu.edu		
Student Assistant:	Eden Lopez		
Class Times and Meeting Locations:	9:30 – 10:50 am TR in MMB 215 (439.01) 12:00 – 1:20 pm TR in MMB 215 (439.02)		

“To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world”
- ACU Mission Statement

“To educate business and technology professionals for Christian service and leadership throughout the world”
- COBA Mission Statement

MGMT 439 Strategic Management (3-0-3), fall, spring. Formulation and interpretation of policy, executive responsibilities, and decision-making; administrative practices and business ethics. This class serves as the *capstone and a writing-intensive course*.

About Writing Intensive Courses: Writing-intensive courses emphasize writing as a primary mode of learning, and written assignments constitute much of the final grade. Adopting language from the ACU Catalog, writing-intensive courses contribute to students’ “strong analytical, communication, quantitative, and information skills - achieved and demonstrated through learning in a range of fields, settings and media, and through advanced studies in one or more areas of concentration.”

Contribution of Course to Overall Business Perspective: This course provides an opportunity to integrate distinct knowledge areas and apply them as part of complex organizational decision-making. This course facilitates the transition from highly structured problem-solving and skill acquisition to the more realistic world of ambiguous problems and poorly defined solutions.

Contribution of Course to the Development of Communication Skills: The ability to organize and express ideas in a professional manner is critical to organizational effectiveness. The assessments for this course will require the solid use of both oral and written communication. All written work should be completed to professional standards of neatness and format.

Contribution of Course to Christian Service and Leadership: This course will engage students in an examination of personal ethical standards and ask them to apply these values to a variety of organizational situations.

For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
Proverbs 2:6

Course Overview: This course is designed to give you a big picture view of the entire organization. Strategy is different from other courses that emphasize the development of expertise related to a specific aspect of the organization (e.g., finance, operations, marketing, accounting, etc.). Instead of focusing on a particular functional area, this course provides you with a process for problem-solving and decision-making and requires you to build on, to integrate and to apply the knowledge gained from those disciplines in order to develop an integrative general management perspective. Because strategy issues are characterized by ambiguity, complexity and uncertainty, this course is as much about asking the right questions as it is about having the “right” answers. We will reach consensus on some issues, yet many among you will have differing interpretations on the most appropriate course of action. Such is the nature of strategic issues. As opposed to the right answer, we are more interested in developing a thought process that leads to an appropriate answer. Overall, the primary objective of this course is to develop expertise in analyzing, formulating and implementing strategy.

Specific Goals for Student Competency: As a result of completing this course, you will be able to:

- Understand the strategic decision making process
- Develop a “toolkit” of strategy tools, concepts and frameworks that can be utilized in examining strategic decision making approaches
- Understand how to consider business functions from the perspective of the *overall* organization
- Reflect on your own personal strategy as you prepare for graduation
- Examine and apply strategic decision making approaches to a wide variety of complex organizational scenarios
- Demonstrate proficiency in obtaining, synthesizing and analyzing relevant data and information by conducting a live case analysis individually and as a part of a team

Course Materials:

A required coursepack is available for purchase from Ivey Publishing website by using this direct link:

<https://www.iveycases.com/CoursepackView.aspx?id=25549>

. It includes the following cases:

- Introductory Note on the Case Method
- Netflix Inc.: Streaming Away from DVDs
- Vietnam Handicraft Initiative: Moving Toward Sustainable Operations
- Nameste Solar
- Apple and Its Suppliers: Corporate Social Responsibility
- IMAX: Larger Than Life
- The U.S. Postal Service: A First Class Disruption
- Burro: Tools for a Better Life in Ghana
- Amazon Go: Venturing into Traditional Retail
- Swiss Army: Diversifying into the Fragrance Business
- Volkswagen Strategy 2025: Shifting Gears in Disruptive Times

While you will need to purchase the pack of cases as detailed above from Ivey Publishing, there is no other textbook requirements you will need to buy for this course. This helps to minimize costs to you and allows me to introduce you to the most relevant and current materials from a variety of different mediums. I may also add assigned readings to web-links and/or online articles found at ACU’s electronic resource library to Canvas. Readings will be posted at least one week in advance of a given class session, so please insure that you regularly visit the Canvas course site.

Course Format: This course is designed to be very applied in nature, meaning that we will move beyond comprehension of strategic management concepts to a focus on the growth and development of your own strategic thinking, decision making and skill sets. As such, in addition to some lecture on relevant content to insure understanding of key concepts, we will draw on a range of learning tools such as in-class activities, guest speakers, team presentations and illustrative case analyses so that you will learn to analyze, synthesize and evaluate strategic decisions.

In order to make this a positive learning environment for you and your peers, I provide the below guidelines for individual and team in class contributions:

- Complete readings *before* class, and use those readings as a basis for your active participation during in-class activities and discussions. Developmental, theory-based comments are valuable for moving the discussion forward.
- Ask questions that add to your understanding of the course material as well as the knowledge base of your classmates. Encourage your classmates to get involved. Avoid repeating what has already been said.
- Be considerate – come to class on time and do not leave early. Do not interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
- To limit distractions for your peers and to facilitate active learning, this course has a policy of no web/email/texting during class except during windows designated by the instructor
- Have an opinion and respect others’ rights to hold opinions and beliefs that are different from your own, recognizing that there are many different ways to view the material
- Allow everyone the chance to talk. If you have much to say, try to hold back so that your peers might have an opportunity to participate. If you are hesitant, look for opportunities to contribute.

Attendance

My attendance policy mirrors the workplace. If you keep coming late, leaving early, or not showing up for your job, you will probably not have that job for long. You are entitled to **THREE** free absences. An “absence” can be considered missing *any part* on any given class day. If you miss, you are still responsible for any information or work on that day.

You start losing points off the in-class participation portion of your grade after your three allowed absences. There are no “approved” or “unapproved” absences; all absences are counted equally. They are just all absences. Except in rare cases at the discretion of the instructor, the only *excused* absences are for University-approved absences for which “Advance Approval for Absence” documentation is provided in advance as required (preferably via email). Those who miss class for sports, illness, etc. must work closely with me to insure that sufficient progress is being made in the course. All students must keep track of their own absences. I am keeping track as well, but I will not answer questions about how many absences you have.

Each student has three (3) “free” unexcused absences to use for illness, doctor visits, family trips, work, job or graduate school interviews, emergencies, etc. For each unexcused absence beyond three, the maximum amount of participation you can earn is reduced – please see the corresponding in class contributions document for more details. I say maximum here since there are other factors at play in your citizenship grade.

If a student is having an unusually difficult semester with regard to attendance for some reason, they should speak with me about it as soon as they are aware of the challenge they are facing. I may make exceptions to this policy depending on the circumstances. However, the longer you wait to discuss the issue, the less inclined I will be inclined to make any exceptions.

A pattern of *tardiness* is not acceptable. If a student is late, they may miss important information at the beginning of class and their homework for the day will be counted late. Moreover, a late arrival is impolite to students who are on time and desire to learn. Two tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence.

What You Can Expect From Me

I am committed to making this course a valuable (and hopefully fun!) learning experience for you. It will be both rewarding as well as challenging.

I am here to help you succeed – I am available to help via email and office hours (or by appointment). For email, please include ‘MGMT 439’ at the beginning of your subject headline, so that my attention is immediately drawn to your email, followed by the subject of your email. Before you send me an email, please check the course syllabus, notes, with your classmates and Canvas for the answer to your question. I will try to respond to emails in a timely manner (*within 24 hours, excluding weekends*). Please attend office hours for your more detailed or complicated questions. I’m also available to talk about your future career goals, life at ACU, etc. ☺

I will upload the PPT slides to Canvas after each class.

I will give and receive feedback – I am available during office hours to give feedback on assignments. Please also feel free to offer constructive feedback about your experiences with the course, to help me make it as valuable a learning experience as possible (I am always open to your thoughts and opinions about the course!)

Course Grading:

Name	Weight % of grade	Overview Description
Capstone surveys and career preparation exercises	5%	As this is a Capstone course, there may be a number of surveys, assessments and career preparation exercises that you will be required to complete. More information will be shared in class as the university gives me more information on these assessments.
Contributions to course and team activities	10%	Your contributions in class (10%) and within your teams will be evaluated based on the guidelines listed on page two. Please also see separate document on Canvas outlining the specific requirements for individual contributions. Our time together in class is value added for synthesizing and applying course content, learning from your classmates’ input and engaging in activities and exercises that you are not able to do on your own. The quantity and quality of your in-class contributions will also factor into this overall score.

		As well, there will be regular activities/class preparation assignments such as preparing questions for guest speakers that will factor into this portion of your grade that will be explained in class as we progress through the semester. This means that simply showing up to class is not sufficient to qualify for full participation. See contributions rubric on Canvas.
Case Write Ups	10%	You will be responsible for completing 5 individual case write ups as well as 1 write up with your teammates. More details will be discussed in class
Case Based Test	10%	One case-based test will be administered about halfway through the semester. The purpose of this test is to evaluate your mastery of and ability to apply strategic management concepts to an organizational scenario prior to working on the more experiential elements of this course. More details will be discussed in class.
Personal strategy paper	10%	This assignment is an opportunity for you to think about your own life as a strategy as you move toward graduation from COBA and consider future career options. This 750-1000 word paper should outline what major goals you wish to accomplish in life, and how you expect to achieve them (i.e., your action plan). Higher marks will be awarded to those who are truly reflective. I also encourage you to have some fun with this assignment – creativity is always welcome. Senior level writing is expected. Further details on this assignment including grading rubric will be available on Canvas
Team case presentations	30%	As a team, you will present your team case analysis to the class. Your team's analysis will go head-to-head with a rival team and the class, including your professor, will vote on the team that best analyzes the case. Students will choose their teams for this assignment. You will have the opportunity to provide input on team contributions. You will also be analyzing a live strategic scenario for a live client and providing recommendations; the winning team will be determined by the client. Teams will be assigned by me and comprised of a variety of business majors. You will have the opportunity to provide input on team contributions. More details on both team presentations will be discussed in class.
Final Individual Capstone Project	20%	Central to the strategic management course are analyses of active organizations. For your final individual course project, you are asked to address a <i>current</i> strategic issue within an organization (must be an organization distinct from the organizations we discuss in case format throughout the semester). The organization can be a for-profit, non-profit or public organization. An organization for which significant information is publicly available is recommended and I would advise you to choose a specific issue or opportunity on which to focus. The final written report should be between 2,000-3,000 words in length. A separate document outlining this assignment in detail will be posted to our Canvas course site and discussed in class as we progress throughout the semester.

Class Schedule (please note that this schedule is tentative and subject to change. **It is your responsibility to consult Canvas on a regular basis for updates regarding daily class preparation, cases, readings and assignments**)

Week	Dates	Class topics	Readings	Assignments/ Action Items
1	Jan 14	<i>Understanding Strategy Basics</i> Review of Course		
	Jan 16	Types of Strategic Decisions & Processes		
2	Jan 21	Introduction to Case Analyses	Introduction to Case Analysis (Coursepack) Robin Hood case (Canvas)	Form teams (5 students maximum)
	Jan 23	Introduction to Case Analyses & Dynamics of Strategy	Netflix case (Coursepack)	Netflix case analysis due
3	Jan 28	Scanning the External and Internal Environment		
	Jan 30	Scanning the External and Internal Environment	Vietnam Handicraft Initiative case (Coursepack)	VHI case analysis due
4	Feb 4	Setting Aspirations – Mission, Vision & Values	Nameste Solar case (Coursepack)	Nameste Solar case analysis due
	Feb 6	Incorporating Sustainability	Apple case (Coursepack)	Apple case analysis due

5	Feb 11	Business Level Strategy		
	Feb 13	Business Level Strategy	IMAX case (Coursepack)	IMAX case analysis due
6	Feb 18	Generating Innovative Solutions	USPS case (Coursepack)	Team in-class assignment due
	Feb 20	Review and In Class Work Day		
7	Feb 25	CASE TEST		
	Feb 27	<i>Developing Your Personal Strategy</i> Developing your Personal Strategy Workshop		Select preferred case for team presentation
8	Mar 3	Mini Mock Interviews		
	Mar 5	Mini Mock Interviews		
<i>Spring Break, March 9-13!</i>				
9	Mar 17	<i>Strategy Applications</i> Head-to-Head Team Case Expectations, Strategy-in-the News Exercise, Introduction to Individual Capstone Project		Personal Strategy Paper due 3/15 at 11:59 pm
	Mar 19	Head-to-Head Team Case Presentations	Burro: Tools for a Better Life in Ghana case (Coursepack)	
10	Mar 24	Head-to-Head Team Case Presentations	Amazon Go: Venturing into Traditional Retail (Coursepack)	
	Mar 26	Head-to-Head Team Case Presentations	Swiss Army: Diversifying into the Fragrance Business (Coursepack)	One-page Overview of Individual Capstone Project due at 11:59 pm
11	Mar 31	No class		
	Apr 2	Head-to-Head Team Case Presentations	Volkswagen Strategy 2025: Shifting Gears in Disruptive Times (Coursepack)	
12	Apr 7	In Class Work Day: Individual Capstone Project, Introduction to Team Consulting Project	Review Client Information Provided	New teams assigned
	Apr 9	Q&A Session with Client		
13	Apr 14	In Class Work Day: Team Consulting Project & Individual Capstone Project		
	Apr 16	Out of Class Workday: Live Case Analysis & Individual Capstone Project		
14	Apr 21	Out of Class Workday: Live Case Analysis & Individual Capstone Project		
	Apr 23	Review of Strategy Process & Course Aims		
15	Apr 28	Client presentations		
	Apr 30	Client presentations		Individual capstone project – final report due on Canvas – May 1st @ 5 pm

University Policies:

ADA Compliance Policy: Abilene Christian University is dedicated to removing barriers and opening access for students with disabilities in compliance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Alpha Scholars Program facilitates disability accommodations in cooperation with instructors. In order to receive accommodations, you must be registered with Alpha Scholars Program, and you must complete a specific request for each class in which you need accommodations. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please email alpha@acu.edu or call their office directly at 325-674-2667

Academic Integrity Policy: Academic integrity is defined as academic work completed as assigned for each class by the individual or group responsible for the work. Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating involve the intention to deceive, mislead, or misrepresent and therefore, are a form of lying. Such actions are contrary to behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: 1) Failure to give credit to sources used in a work in an attempt to present the work as one's own, 2) Submission of papers or projects obtained from another source (e.g., research service or club paper file) as one's own, and 3) Falsifying information orally or in writing. Academic misconduct may result in, but is not limited to, a zero on the assignment and/or an F in the course. Additionally, the department chair, Dean of your school, and the Dean of Student Life will be notified. See the full university policy, including how to appeal a decision, by following [this link](#)

Anti-Harassment Policy: As a professor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a professor. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep the information you share private to the greatest extent possible. When I am not able to keep your information confidential, I will only share it with responsible administrators on campus who can provide you with services and resources. I am required to share with the Title IX Coordinator information regarding sexual misconduct or harassment, dating or domestic violence or stalking that you report to me. If you would prefer to share information in a confidential setting, I encourage you to speak with someone in the [ACU Counseling Center](#). All of your options are available for review by clicking on the link to ACU's [policy](#)

Course Policies:

Assignments are due on the date scheduled: As in the business world, work has to be received on time to matter. To be fair to all the students who submit on time, if you are late on an assignment, your grade on that assignment will be reduced by 10% for each day it is late.

Attendance and Participation: This is an active class, so you will learn new things in class that are not in the readings, and in turn, your participation will also help your classmates learn. For this reason, participating in class is an important part of the learning process in this course. Your course grade may be lowered up to 10% if you frequently miss class, are repeatedly tardy, if you are physically present but mentally absent, if you are rude, disruptive, or generally disagreeable, or if you violate the technology policy.