BA 495-005 Business Strategy – University Studies Senior Capstone Spring 2015, TR 17:40 - 20:30, CRN: 60318, Room: SBA 390

Professor: Peter Tashman, SBA 467, 503-725-8435, ptashman@pdx.edu
Office Hours: 16:30-17:30, TR and by appointment (email me to schedule)

REQUIRED READING

Casebook: Also sold online by Harvard Business Publishing for about $20. Register first if you’re not already in the system. You’ll be purchasing online access for 6 months, but you can also print the files (https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/35983337).

COURSE OVERVIEW
BA495 covers the key subjects of strategic management and applies them through the University Studies (UNST) capstone project. Strategic management involves planning, discovering, and implementing a coherent set of practices that aim to make the firm more competitive. First and foremost, being competitive means commercializing products/services that are more valuable per dollar than competitors’. It also means creating unique value for other stakeholders that are essential to the firm and its strategy (investors, employees, suppliers, communities). Strategy can be incremental (gradually improving the firm’s products/services and relationships with key stakeholders), or entrepreneurial (identifying and seizing previously unrealized, unrecognized and/or transformative opportunities). Topics will include how to analyze external opportunities and threats to competitiveness and internal resources/capabilities/competencies used by firms to seize opportunities and manage threats; how to develop strategies to address opportunities and threats, and develop resources/capabilities/competencies to implement those strategies.

The capstone project organizes you into teams of strategy consultants for Portland business clients. You will be drawing on strategic management theory, as well as the knowledge and experience you have gained in the SBA and beyond. The specific goals of each project depend on the clients’ stage of business and specific strategic issues. Many clients are start-ups in need of market entry strategies or business plans. Others are new ventures with a proven concept that need to grow to a sustainable scale. Some are mature businesses that need to update their strategies to fit with current external trends. Some are non-profits with the same types of issues.

The mission of PSU and the UNST program is to “let knowledge serve the city.” This course is a key component of how we as faculty and students of the SBA work to fulfill that mission. Thus, the primary goal of our capstone projects is to make a difference in the community. In doing so, we will focus on the 4 pillars of the UNST program, which are appreciation of the diversity of the human experience, communication, critical thinking, and social/ethical responsibility as we learn and apply strategy to our capstone projects. Page 6 of the syllabus discusses the goal of the UNST program and its pillars in more detail.
**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

(1) To develop your understanding of strategy, and your skills at evaluating and formulating it.
(2) To help your clients develop, evaluate and/or formulate their strategies.
(3) To improve your mastery of the language of strategy.
(4) To make a difference in the community
(5) To reflect upon the strategic importance of UNST pillars: appreciation of the diversity of human experience, communication, critical thinking, and social responsibility.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. **THE CAPSTONE PROJECT** is about both giving something back to the community and experiential learning. Our clients may not have formal business school training, so the project will allow you to directly apply your business knowhow in a way that contributes to economic development in Portland. In some cases, our clients have the potential to create positive social and economic change in Portland, and you efforts will help enable that potential. The project has two main deliverables: a final written report and a presentation of that report. You will also have two “warmup” presentations of your work in progress. We will encounter the 4 UNST pillars during the project, as well as during the academic part of the course.

Grading for the capstone project will be both top-down and bottom-up. I will assign an overall grade to each team based on my view of the team’s work as a whole, but each person will also be assessed on their individual efforts, in part through anonymous peers evaluations.

**Why is the capstone integrated with the strategy course?**

- Our clients may need help with issues that cut across business disciplines and strategic management offers a holistic perspective to understanding business.
- A goal of the capstone course is to bring advanced students from diverse majors together to work together on the project; BA495 is uniquely positioned for this because it is a required 400-level course.

Page 5 of the syllabus provides more general information about the capstone project.

2. **CLASS DISCUSSION** will be based on discussion questions for assigned cases and business news articles. Most often we will discuss one case and one article each week. Discussion questions are posted in D2L. Discussions will be based on these questions so use them to prepare! Cases can be bought directly from Harvard Business Publishing (https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/35983337). The articles are from various news outlets (e.g. NY Times, WSJ, Financial Times, Bloomberg), and are also posted in D2L. The **course schedule** (at end of the syllabus) indicates when each case and article are assigned.

Class discussion directly supports the UNST goals of critical thinking & communication, as well as a great change to practice team discussions that are essential to how businesses generate ideas and solve problems. Folks who contribute insightful analysis and good ideas in the business world get noticed by their supervisors and other decision-makers in the firm. Being skilled at engaging in this type of discussion is not necessarily reflected in how often a person
speaks, but rather in how well comments advance the objectives of discussion. **In class, effective discussion only happens if you are prepared through reading the assignments and thinking about the discussion questions.**

The goals of our class discussion include analyzing the circumstances facing the focal firm and the actions that it is taking, as well as developing ideas to improve the firms’ position. Sometimes I or one of your colleagues may challenge your assumptions or facts when you offer a comment. Do not take being challenged personally! This happens constantly in the business world, whether you are right or wrong, and it takes practice to focus on the best argument and dispassionately defend or change your position.

I recognize that some folks are less comfortable than others with public speaking – still, the classroom is a safe place to practice something that is expected in the business world. Every time you engage in class discussion, you seize an opportunity to refine your skills in this area.

**Attendance:** If you are not in class, you cannot contribute to class discussion, so being regularly absent will definitely affect your class participation grade. Being regularly late can be disruptive as well, and also impacts the grade. Absences are excused only if you are sick or have a family emergency. You must email me before class to let me know what is happening. If you have multiple excused absences, you’ll have makeup assignment(s) if you do not want those absences to affect your participation grade.

**Grading class discussion:**
Grade of A: less than 2 absences, high quality contributions that demonstrate preparation by doing assigned readings and considering discussion questions;
Grade of B: less than 2 absences, regular participation;
Grade of C: attends most classes without being late, but rarely participates;
Grade of D (or less): does not attend class most of the time and/or does not participate.

3. **QUIZZES:** There will be 3 quizzes. Typically, they are short-answer and cover 2-3 chapters. The course calendar indicates when the dates and chapters of the quizzes.

4. **SYNTHESIS OF READINGS MEMOS:** This writing assignment involves answering two question about recently covered strategic management concepts: one about a recent case and one about a recent business news article. Each answer should be about 5-6 sentences (be concise!). One of the goals of the assignment is to express arguments in a manner that fits the short attention spans of executives and managers. **THIS ASSIGNMENT IS NOT TO BE DONE IN GROUPS!** Working together will be considered cheating and will result in a 0. I’ll provide an example before the first one is due.

The memos are due on Sunday at midnight at the end of week 3 (4/19), week 4 (4/26), week 6 (5/10), and week 8 (5/24). Submit memos in the “Dropbox – Synthesis of Readings Memos – Week #” folder before midnight on its due date. Late work = no credit.
SYLLABUS

5. ESSAY ON UNST GOALS: This is a 4 page (double-spaced) essay (Times New Roman 12 pt font) that should explain how your thinking on the 4 pillars has evolved during the capstone project. Each goal should receive approximately 1 page of attention. THIS ASSIGNMENT IS NOT TO BE DONE IN GROUPS! Working together will be considered cheating and result in a 0. The key to this assignment is to describe experiences that have changed the way you think about the UNST pillars, including how you perceived these issues before the course and how your experiences in the course transformed your thinking on each pillar. Please write from your own experiences with I/me/my language. Also, please be specific when explaining your experiences. I’ll provide more details as we get closer to the due date. Please submit the essay via D2L in “Dropbox – UNST Goals Essay” on (5/31) by midnight. Late work = no credit.

ORGANIZATION OF CLASS TIME:

About 30% Lecture. I’ll review important content from assigned readings. I know – nobody likes lectures (teachers included), but they are important for establishing common ground on important concepts and theory, and reinforcing learning from reading.

About 40% Class Discussion. Typically, we’ll mix discussion in with the lectures, so we are reinforcing our understanding of concepts and theory by applying them.

About 30% Capstone project. Often, one day a week will be devoted to project planning meetings and presenting work on your capstone projects (see More on Capstone Project below).

COURSE POLICIES

1. Absences/lateness/make-up assignments for excused absences affect participation grades.
2. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting caught up.
3. No electronic devices during class sessions accept as indicated on the course calendar.
5. Students needing a disability accommodation should contact me privately and have the Disability Resource Center confirm the accommodation with me.

GRADING:

Strategy Content

  15%  Class discussion/attendance
  15%  Synthesis of readings memos
  15%  Quizzes
  5%   Essay on UNST pillars

Capstone Project

  15%  2 graded presentations
  15%  Final presentation
  20%  Final written report

Determination of Final Grade

>93 = A  83-87= B  73-77= C  63-67=D
90-93 = A-  80-83= B-  70-73= C-  60-63=D-
87-90 = B+  77-80= C+  67-70= D+  <60=F
IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES:

- 4/02 (2\textsuperscript{nd} class session) – Clients will attend class and discuss their capstone project goals.
- 4/21 (7\textsuperscript{th} class session) – 1\textsuperscript{st} Quiz
- 4/30 (10\textsuperscript{th} class session) – 1\textsuperscript{st} presentation.
- 5/12 (13\textsuperscript{th} class session) – 2\textsuperscript{nd} Quiz
- 5/14 (14\textsuperscript{th} class session) – Meeting in class with clients (tentative).
- 5/21 (16\textsuperscript{th} class session) – 2\textsuperscript{nd} presentation.
- 5/28 (18\textsuperscript{th} class session) – 3\textsuperscript{rd} Quiz
- 5/31 UNST Goals essay is due
- 6/04 (20\textsuperscript{th} class session) 1\textsuperscript{st} round of final presentations.
- TBD (21\textsuperscript{th} class session) 2\textsuperscript{nd} round of final presentations.
- 6/13 – Final written projects due.

MORE ON THE CAPSTONE PROJECT:

Our section has 3 clients and so there will be 6 teams (2 teams for each client). I’ll assign folks into teams and pair them with clients over the weekend between weeks 1 and 2. I will also assign the “scope of work” for your project, which will be an outline of the work for the project. The clients and I will work together on writing the scopes of work after their presentations in the first week of class. The nature of projects varies as mentioned above, depending on the nature of the strategic issues facing the clients. Common issues include planning new products/services, marketing channels, market niches, supplier relationships, or entirely new business opportunities. The nature of the project also depends on the stage of client’s business. Startups, growing ventures and established businesses typically have different strategic issues to manage. In general, your projects will cover:

- opportunities & threats in the external environment relevant to our client’s strategic issue;
- important resources and capabilities that the client needs to use or develop;
- important stakeholders and their interests;
- strategic recommendations;
- changes to resources, capabilities and/or stakeholder relationships that will be required to implement your recommendations;
- the projected cost (capital budget) of your recommendations and their projected impact on income statements and balance sheets;
- any foreseeable issues with implementing your ideas;
- and, the specific plans for acquiring resources, refining capabilities, building competencies, reaching targeted markets, and developing essential stakeholder relationships. These recommendations should fit with the clients’ access to capital and be consistent with the client’s mission and vision.

Each team will develop a final written report of around 25 pages single-spaced, 12 pt times new roman font (not including charts, tables, figures, graphs and/or appendices) that addresses each of the items in the team’s scope of work. Cite all sources of information, whether they come from library databases, webpages, or interviews.
As mentioned above, each team will give 3 presentations. The first 2 are warm-ups for the final presentation and will cover tasks in your scopes of work, including possibly Market and Industry Research, SWOT Analysis, Projected Financial Statements/Capital Budgets, and Strategic Recommendations. The final presentation is a synthesis of all of this work once it has been finalized. Teams should develop PowerPoint slideshows for their presentations, which need to be emailed to me prior to the presentation class session (please do not use Prezi as it broadcasts presentations on the web and some of our clients have confidentiality issues). I will give you more specific guidance on the presentations depending on your scopes of work in the weeks preceding them. **Strategy concepts should be applied in all project deliverables**

**MORE ON THE UNST CAPSTONE GOALS:**

**Critical (and Creative) Thinking** is essential in strategic management because it is the key to effectively diagnosing problems and prescribing solutions. It involves gathering salient evidence and interpreting it through the lens of valid theory. Sometimes information is too imperfect to develop an accurate forecast of the future. In these cases, critical thinking can help you develop reasonable assumptions about possible futures that the firm should consider, as well as what the firm can reasonable do to confront those possible futures.

**Communication** is essential to strategic management for many reasons. CEOs need advisors that can communicate effectively so they can make good decisions. CEOs need to be good communicators to ensure that all members of the organization understand the strategy of the firm. All managers need strong communication skills to motivate their supervisees. Finally, firms rely on teams at every level of the organization to get things done. The only way teams can function is if members are effective at communicating with one another and with management.

There is great concern in the business world that new entrants in the workforce are losing the art of communication because more and more folks rely on digital interactions. Communication within organizations is increasingly challenging as well as they become more diverse. But, diversity can be harnessed by those who communicate well into a source of competitive advantage. In the course, communication will be essential for showing me your understanding of strategy, working effectively in your capstone teams, and explaining strategy to the clients. Communication skills include being able to write effectively.

**Diversity** can create organizational challenges because people from different cultures or backgrounds may not intuitively know how to work together. Still, it is an opportunity to draw on broader sets of knowledge and experience and apply them strategically, especially in the multicultural global arena. Managing diversity is critical for growing businesses since growth always involves new and different kinds of employees, stakeholders, cultures, and/or markets.

**Ethics and Social Responsibility**: our legal system often promotes ethical individual and corporate behavior, but not always. As a result, NGOs, community groups, shareholder activists, the media, and consumers often pressure firms to be ethical/socially responsible (CSR) beyond legal compliance. Sometimes CSR is a response to these pressures. Other times, it is a strategic behavior that considers pressing social issues as opportunities to develop and market valuable products/services. In your capstone projects, you may find that clients will have opportunities and/or threats associated with ethical stakeholder management and CSR.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Class Session Plans/Assignments/ Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>- Course overview&lt;br&gt; - What is strategy and why is it important?</td>
<td>Class session plan:&lt;br&gt; -Overview of strategic management&lt;br&gt; -Overview of syllabus and D2L&lt;br&gt; -Discuss RIM/Blackberry’s recent strategic history&lt;br&gt; Read:&lt;br&gt; -Syllabus and Chapter 1&lt;br&gt; -Articles on RIM/Blackberry, assigned discussion questions for articles</td>
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<td>Session 2</td>
<td>- Client presentations</td>
<td>Class session plan:&lt;br&gt; -Client presentations&lt;br&gt; Read:&lt;br&gt; -Preliminary information on the clients’ scope of work, posted in D2L&lt;br&gt; -Prepare questions for the clients, research clients and client competitors online&lt;br&gt; By Fri evening 4/03:&lt;br&gt; -Send me your client preference/student info form&lt;br&gt; On Sun 4/05:&lt;br&gt; -Look for an email regarding your capstone project group assignments and scopes of work</td>
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<td>Session 3</td>
<td>- The strategic management process&lt;br&gt; - Missions, visions, values and strategy</td>
<td>Class session plan:&lt;br&gt; -Discuss the strategic management process&lt;br&gt; -Discuss the importance of the mission, vision and values for strategy&lt;br&gt; -Discuss Wholefoods’ mission, vision and values (discussion questions in D2L).&lt;br&gt; Read:&lt;br&gt; -Chapter 2 section on strategic management process and missions, visions, and values&lt;br&gt; -Wholefoods case (in casebook)</td>
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<td>Session 4</td>
<td>- Strategic leadership&lt;br&gt; - Review capstone project scopes of work&lt;br&gt; -Capstone project planning</td>
<td>Class session plan:&lt;br&gt; -Discuss strategic leadership&lt;br&gt; -Discuss strategic leadership at Apple (discussion questions in D2L).&lt;br&gt; -Go over capstone project scopes of work&lt;br&gt; -Break into capstone project teams, break the ice, begin discussing team roles and responsibilities&lt;br&gt; -Schedule meetings with prof to discuss initial steps and questions for clients&lt;br&gt; Read:&lt;br&gt; -Chapter 2 sections on strategic leadership&lt;br&gt; -Chapter 1 opening and closing cases on Apple&lt;br&gt; -Articles on strategic leadership at Apple (posted in D2L)</td>
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<td>Session 5</td>
<td>- External analysis&lt;br&gt; - Review external analysis resources at PSU</td>
<td>Class session plan:&lt;br&gt; -Discuss external analysis (5 forces analysis, PESTEL analysis)&lt;br&gt; -Analyze the external environment in High Noon at Universal Pipe case (discussion questions in D2L).&lt;br&gt; -Review PSU library external analysis research resources&lt;br&gt; Read:&lt;br&gt; -Chapter 3&lt;br&gt; -High Noon at Universal Pipe case (in casebook)</td>
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| Session 6 | TH 4/16 | - External analysis (cont.)  
- Capstone project planning | **Class session plan:**  
- Analyze the external environment of universities and higher education  
- Review example of Synthesis of Readings Memo (first one is due on Sunday)  
- Break out into teams for capstone project planning session, finalize team roles and responsibilities and discuss with professor  
**Read:**  
- Articles on external environment of higher education industry (discussion questions in D2L).  
- Your scope of work and SWOT presentation rubric (posted in D2L)  
**Due on Sun (4/19):**  
First Synthesis of Readings Memo on Universal Pipe and higher education external environments |
| Session 7 | T 4/21 | - Quiz 1  
- Internal analysis | **Class session plan:**  
- First Quiz on Chapters 2 and 3.  
- Discuss internal analysis  
- Analyze the internal environment of Whole Foods (discussion questions in D2L).  
**Read:**  
- Chapter 4  
- Wholefoods Case (in casebook) |
| Session 8 | TH 4/23 | - Assessing past strategy by assessing financial performance  
- Capstone project planning | **Class session plan:**  
- Discuss performance (as a tool for both analyzing strategy)  
- Analyze performance at Universal Pipe  
- Chemalite case to discuss how financial statements demonstrate performance  
- Break out into teams for capstone project planning session  
**Read:**  
- Chapter 5 (except section on business models)  
- Microsoft – Google article (posted in D2L)  
- Universal Pipe case (in casebook)  
- Chemalite case (in casebook)  
**Due on Sun (4/26):**  
Second Synthesis of Readings Memo on Wholefoods internal analysis and Universal Pipe’s performance |
| Session 9 | T 4/28 | - Assessing the potential of future strategy by projecting financial performance  
- Capstone project planning | **Class session plan:**  
- Develop financial statement projections for Whitetooth Mountain Brewery  
- Bring your laptop your laptop with the “Whitetooth Mountain Brewery Financial Statements” file to class (D2L-> Course Content)  
- Break out into teams for capstone project planning session |
| Session 10 | TH 4/30 | - Capstone project SWOT analysis presentation | **Class session plan:**  
- 1st presentation on SWOT analysis (5 forces, PESTEL, internal analyses, financial analyses)  
**Prepare:**  
- Use SWOT presentation rubric as a guide for preparation (posted in D2L) |
| Session 11 | - Business strategy formulation | Class session plan:  
- Discuss business strategy, strategic positioning, and competitive scope  
- Discuss Skullcandy’s business strategy (videocase in class) (discussion questions in D2L).  
- Discuss business strategy implications of Facebook’s acquisition of Whatsapp (discussion questions in D2L).  
Read:  
- Chapter 6 and Chapter 5 section on business models  
- Articles about Facebook’s acquisition of Whatsapp (posted in D2L) |
| Session 12 | - Business strategy implementation: CSR, diversity, stakeholders and strategy | Class session plan:  
- Discuss the interrelationships among CSR, diversity management, stakeholder management and strategy  
- Compare the similarities and differences in CSR/diversity/stakeholder issues and strategies at Whole Foods and Tropical Salvage  
Read:  
- Chapter 1 sections on CSR and stakeholder management  
- “Strategy and Society” by Porter and Kramer (in casebook)  
- NY Times article “Decoding the rules of conversation” (posted in D2L)  
- Wholefoods and Tropical Salvage (posted in D2L) cases  
**Due on Sun (5/10):**  
Third Synthesis of Readings Memo on Tropical Salvage or Wholefoods CSR/diversity/stakeholder strategies |
| Session 13 | - Quiz 2 - Capstone project planning | Class session plan:  
- Second quiz on chapters 4 and 6  
- Break out into teams for capstone project planning session for first presentation  
- Team meetings with professor to work through planning issues.  
  - Bring scope of work and “strategy recommendations presentation rubric” (posted in D2L) |
| Session 14 | - Meeting with client to refine recommendations | (Tentative) Clients will be in class for team meetings (about 40 minutes for each team). Schedule TBD  
- Bring scope of work and “strategy recommendations presentation rubric” (posted in D2L) |
| Session 15 | - Business strategy implementation: Innovation and strategic entrepreneurship | Class session plan:  
- Discuss strategic entrepreneurship and innovation as a means of transforming strategy  
- Discuss Netflix’s innovation strategy (discussion questions in D2L)  
- Discuss our clients’ innovation strategies (discussion question in D2L).  
Read:  
- Chapter 7  
- Netflix case (in casebook)  
- Articles about Netflix (posted in D2L) |
| Session 16 | - Capstone project strategy recommendations presentation | Class session plan:  
2nd presentation on strategy recommendations (including implementation and financial projections)  
Prepare:  
- Use “strategy recommendations presentation rubric” as a guide for preparation (posted in D2L)  
**Due on Sun (5/24):**  
Fourth Synthesis of Readings Memo on the innovation strategies of Netflix and our clients. |
## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<tr>
<th>Session 17</th>
<th>T 5/26</th>
<th>- Corporate strategy: diversification and vertical integration</th>
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<td>- Discuss how and why firms may compete in different industries</td>
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<td>Read:</td>
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<td>- Articles on Twitter and MoPub (posted in D2L)</td>
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<th>TH 5/28</th>
<th>- Quiz 3 - Capstone project planning</th>
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<td>- Team meetings with professor to work through planning issues.</td>
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**Due on Sun (5/31):**
UNST Goals Essay

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<th>Session 19</th>
<th>T 6/02</th>
<th>- Capstone project planning</th>
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**Session 20**
TH 6/04
**FINAL PRESENTATIONS**
Use “Final presentation rubric” as a guide for preparation

**Session 21**
TBD
**FINAL PRESENTATIONS**
Use “Final presentation rubric” as a guide for preparation

**SAT 6/13**
**FINAL REPORTS ARE DUE**