BUSINESS POLICY
Rutgers School of Business - Camden

Syllabus – Spring 2016
Note: This syllabus is subject to change

Instructor: Kelechi Nwoke
Class time: Thursdays: 6:00 PM - 8:40 PM   1/21/2016 - 5/5/2016
Office: Course: 52:620:450
Office hours: Thursdays, 4:50pm-5:50pm  Course website:
https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal
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COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

Business Policy is a senior-level undergraduate management course focusing on the strategies which firms use to create and maintain competitive advantage. With firms needing to respond to issues in both their internal and external environments, it becomes necessary for their strategies to encompass all departments and functions of the organization. Thus, this course is designed to incorporate knowledge and skills acquired from your business studies (such as accounting, economics, finance, marketing, etc). This course employs a general management perspective and will involve the analysis of the decisions and strategies made in light of the enterprise. We will also study corporate strategy - the tool which firms with multiple business units utilize to create value for their stakeholders.

Major course objectives:

(1) To help you develop a working knowledge of fundamental strategic management issues, concepts, and frameworks;

(2) To prepare you to have an orientation for "general management" and to provide you with opportunities to think strategically about business issues;

(3) To give you opportunities to combine strategic management skills, knowledge from other experiences and courses, and work-related insights to analyze and solve strategic problems;
This course will reflect assurance of learning (AOL) ideals, and will include an exam for assessment of general management knowledge.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There are two materials required for this course. They are:

   Michael A. Hitt | R. Duane Ireland | Robert E. Hoskisson

2. Case package: This package consists of the cases that you will be analyzing, reporting on, and discussing in class. Use the following link to obtain the coursepack:
   https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/43434819

GRADING

Your "deliverables" for the class are: (a) class participation, (b) one exam, (c) two written case analyses, (d) one news analysis/presentation (e) Participation in a panel discussion (f) one group research project. Note that you are expected to complete each assignment in your bid to pass the course. Given below are the grading breakdowns and a description of each deliverable.

Individual/Group Contributions (65 points [65% of total obtainable points])

The class involves five major individual contributions:

1. Readings: All of the assigned readings for this course are from the Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson text as well as the cases. You should ensure that you do all the readings for each week, before each class
Group Assignments  (35 points [35% of total obtainable points])

Coordination is a major part of management. This is especially true for strategic management, which demands close coordination of executive teams across different functional areas. Accordingly, we will form teams of 5 students to work together on a written cases analyses and a team project.

1. Panel discussion 5 points

2. Team Project. (A PowerPoint presentation and a written report) 30 points

With regard to grades, there is no room for "curving". The final grade will be as follows:

A  over 90%
B  over 80% to 90% (B+ for 87 – 90%)
C  over 70% to 80% (C+ for 77 – 80%)
D  over 60% to 70%
F  60% and below
EXAM

The single in-class exam will be based on the strategy concepts we have covered in the text, and class lectures. (Note: The cases are not to be explicitly covered in the exam.) The exam will consist of multiple choice and/or essay questions. I will provide more details on the exam in advance.

There will be no final exam for the course, but you will need to hand in your group project by the required date.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

As workers participating in the business world, you would be expected to communicate your ideas as well provide constructive responses to those of others. Such inputs would need to be backed up by a sound knowledge of the industry in general, as well as the specific positions of your organization in particular. Class participation in this Business Policy course will help prepare you to fulfill such roles in different ways such as thinking through case particulars, working with assumptions, making deductions, interacting with others and building upon their ideas. During this course, you will integrate your functional skills gained through other courses and experiences, utilizing them in a classroom atmosphere which, though not as challenging as the business environment, serves as a stepping stone to it.

It is important to begin to see yourself in the position of a business executive or consultant as you participate in this course. You are required to use this opportunity to develop your analytical and communication skills. This being a case-study based course, it is critical that we have student participation. Class participation is required from everyone who intends to pass this course. You should strive to contribute your comments or questions frequently and constructively during this course. The expected result of such quality participation would be a contribution to learning and enjoyment of the course by yourself and others.

A very important aspect of this course is the practice of grounding your statements with supporting information. In making your contributions in class, I expect you to support your comments every now and then, with facts and data from the cases, the text, or from other readings. You must be present for all classes and presentations.

To encourage you to make your own contributions and ask questions, note that solutions to strategic management problems in the business world do not follow a 'one-size-fits-all' pattern.
There could be different ways to solve a problem, without any of them being labelled as clearly right or clearly wrong. The important thing is to provide recommendations based on thorough analyses of the facts and data on ground, as well as a sound knowledge of strategic management principles such as will be treated in this course. Thus you should not be fearful of being wrong and thus refrain from participating. However, you are required to make the effort to prepare by reading the cases and texts on your own before each class. As you do this, you can jot down questions and comments which come to mind, and bring them to class.

This Business Policy course is not strictly a lecture course. I will serve as a facilitator, helping you: (a) understand and apply strategic thinking with regard to firms, and (b) communicate with, and learn from each other in class. Student participation is vital to the overall success of the class and I will be awarding participation grades.

Grading Criteria for Class Participation

(a) Class attendance is absolutely essential and required for this course; I will collect attendance records for each class and these will contribute to your attendance/participation grades. The other component of class participation grade is your involvement during your group’s review/what’s in the news session. The only recognized legitimate absences are documented illnesses, religious holidays, emergencies, and university engagements (for example, scheduled sports events). Absences as a result of attending job fairs or job interviews are not legitimate absences. In the case of legitimate absences, you are advised to contact me promptly, rather than after the absence. Non-legitimate absences will negatively impact your class participation grade.

(b) Disrupting the class will negatively impact your class participation grade. You are subject to penalties due to arriving late to class. I ask that you please respect your fellow students and instructor and do not disrupt the class in any way. Rather, be prepared to contribute towards a positive experience for yourself and others during class.

(c) Your participation grades will depend on the quality and quantity of your class participation. The case discussions as well as the discussions based on the text during classes will provide relevant opportunities for you to participate and develop strategic and analytical skills.

WRITTEN CASE ANALYSES
We will use the case study method in this course. This method is widely used in business schools to expose students to complex, real-world problems which companies face. Each student is to prepare and submit two case study analyses/reports by the due dates. These reports are to be done on an individual basis.

Note the due dates/times. Do not submit your case analyses/reports late.

The maximum length of a written case analysis is 1000 words. The minimum is 750 words. Normally you will not need to refer to external literature for these reports. You are to confine your analyses to the information in the case. Do not conduct outside research for the individual case analysis (you are to do that for the team project).

In your report, do not simply summarize the case, and do avoid laundry lists. Rather, you should:

(1) read and analyze the case in depth
(2) use the case data constructively to analyze the strategic issues and make your own strategic recommendations
(3) use the strategic management concepts and frameworks taught in the course for the purpose of your analysis of the case

GROUP PROJECT & PRESENTATION

Group Project

Another essential part of this course, which will contribute to your learning experience, is the team project. The goal of this project is to provide you with the opportunity to apply your knowledge and skills to an interesting, strategic situation currently being faced by a real-life company. Your team's task is to identify one or more key strategic issues which the company is facing, and to research its current situation. Your team will prepare and present strategic recommendations for the company. The products of this research will be threefold: (1) An 8-10 page company report (double-spaced, excluding any appendices); (2) A PowerPoint document reflecting your findings and recommendations; (3) A presentation session to a make-believe audience of company shareholders or board of directors. Your task is to carry out as much research as possible to obtain primary or secondary data (or both), using means such as personal interviews, accessible data, newspaper articles, academic journals, internet, etc. Your goal should be to ground your work on
credible, significant, and substantial information on the company. It is also very important that you avoid plagiarism. Cite appropriately; use quotation marks and give credit to the author(s) if you are using any quotes from previous work. Your report should reflect a thorough understanding of strategic management principles we will cover in this course, and should present insightful analyses and well-grounded recommendations for the company.

You may consider focusing your research on your current, or prospective employer, or other companies in an industry where you are interested in working, and present the idea to your teammates. I advise that everyone have their own idea of a company to be studied and let the team come to an agreement on which company to follow-up on, for the project, based on issues such as availability of data, time duration for the project, etc. Each group project must be based on only one company.

If you have the problem of free riders in your group, try to address it with them, but if this fails, let me know. There will be peer evaluation with regard to the team project.

Each team will give a presentation to the rest of the class, summarizing their project. Team presentations will be a very interesting aspect of the course. Information on this will be given to you before the presentations. Be creative and try to make the presentation both informative and interesting. For your presentation, dress professionally, use visual aids, speak clearly and professionally, and keep to your allotted time. Every member of the team should participate in the presentation.

TOPIC REVIEWS/WHAT’S IN THE NEWS?

As part of this course, each student is to acquaint himself/herself with current business issues as found in popular journals such as Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Businessweek, etc. All students are expected to participate in these discussions which will be geared towards different aspects of the strategic management process. Each student will be assigned to a group (not the project group) which will review the previous class topic and give a presentation to the class, and analyze a current business trend or a firm’s current situation, in light of a part of the strategic management process.

CLASS POLICIES
1. **Academic and personal integrity**: It is totally unacceptable for you to violate honor codes or cause other integrity problems. For your projects, ensure that you cite all external sources of information (including sources on the Internet) fully and completely. For this course, you are not permitted to reuse products from another class or another student. Violators of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary actions such as receiving failing grades and being reported to the relevant University authorities.

2. It is your responsibility to do all the assignments by their due dates, attend all classes, and be prepared for, and participate in class discussions.

3. I will make the effort to use the class time effectively and I ask you to do likewise. The goal is to arrive, start, and end on time.

4. All written work should be typed and submitted by the due date. Please write your name on all personal work, and your team number and member names on your group work.

5. In the event of class cancellations due to the weather, please call the Rutgers main number (973-932-INFO) or 973-353-1766.

**CLASS ADMINISTRATION**

1. I would like to know each of you personally and have an idea of your future career goals.

2. Although this course is a part of formal education, I would like us to maintain a reasonable level of informality that would, hopefully, encourage student participation, and support your learning. Of course, this does not do away with the need for discipline and mutual respect.
3. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have with regard to this course, by email, during my office hours, or at any other mutually convenient time.

4. CLASS SCHEDULE (Note: This schedule is subject to change.)

**TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES POLICY:** during the classes for this course, you are required to put away your laptops, tablets, mobile phones and any other technological device. This is in order to help facilitate collaboration between the lecturer and students and to reduce distractions during class. We have a lot to do in this course. Please be respectful of others. If there is a need to access a device in order to help move the course forward, I will let you know.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Th 1/21</td>
<td>Introduction and Course Overview; Strategic Management and Strategic Competitiveness</td>
<td>Hitt, Ireland &amp; Hoskisson (HIH) Ch. 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Th 1/28</td>
<td>External Analysis: Industry Analysis;</td>
<td>Ch. 1 review/What’s in the news?</td>
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<td>Case 1: Southwest Airlines 2002</td>
<td>HIH Ch. 2;</td>
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<td>Prepare for class discussion of case</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Th 2/4</td>
<td>What’s in the News?</td>
<td>Ch. 2 review/What’s in the news?</td>
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<td>Doing a case analysis / writing a report</td>
<td>Prepare for class discussion of Business news;</td>
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<td>/Case 1: Southwest Airlines 2002, continued</td>
<td>Prepare for class discussion of case</td>
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<td><strong>Group Project: Group formation to be completed this week (send one email per group, with names of group members)</strong></td>
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<td>Th 2/11</td>
<td>Internal Analysis</td>
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<td><strong>Group Project: Initial Proposal Due</strong></td>
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<td>Business Level Strategy; Current Topic:</td>
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<td>Differentiation through Corporate Social Responsibility?</td>
<td>HIH Ch. 4;</td>
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<td>Th 2/25</td>
<td>What’s in the News? Case 2: Genzyme</td>
<td>Ch. 4 review/What’s in the news? Prepare for class discussion of Business news; <em>Case Analysis 1 due</em></td>
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<td>Th 3/3</td>
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<td>Th 3/10</td>
<td>Competitive Rivalry and Competitive Dynamics</td>
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<td>SPRING RECESS</td>
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<td>Th 3/24</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy I: Diversification</td>
<td>Ch. 5 review/What’s in the news? HIH Ch. 6 <em>Group Project: Progress Report Due</em></td>
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<td>Th 3/31</td>
<td>Project feedbacks/in-class project work [What’s in the news?] * MID-TERM EXAM *</td>
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<td>Th 4/7</td>
<td>What’s in the News? Case 3: Jollibee</td>
<td>Prepare for class discussion of Business news; Prepare for class discussion of case</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Th 4/14</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy II: Acquisition and Restructuring Strategies; Case 4: L’Oreal</td>
<td>HIH Ch. 7; Prepare for class discussion of case <em>Case Analysis 2 due</em></td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Th 4/21</td>
<td>Strategy Implementation: Corporate Governance What’s in the News?</td>
<td>Ch. 7 review/What’s in the news? HIH Ch. 10 Prepare for class discussion of Business news; <em>Group Project: Draft Report Due</em></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Th 4/28</td>
<td>Project feedbacks Panel Discussion (In Groups): Case: Research In Motion: The Mobile OS Platform War</td>
<td>Ch. 10 review/What’s in the news?</td>
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<td>Tu 5/3</td>
<td>READING DAYS BEGIN (NO CLASS)</td>
<td>Group Project: Final Written Report Due</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Th 5/5</td>
<td>FINAL PRESENTATIONS (Group Project Presentations)</td>
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