

Course Syllabus for  
**Mgt. 590, STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**  
Summer Session, 2009  
May 29-30, June 19-20, July 24-25

“Strategies take on value only as committed people infuse them with energy.”

-- Philip Selznick, 1957

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**Overview and Course Content**

It is essential that executives in both public and private organizations know how to responsibly lead their businesses on a strategic path to long-term success. Your previous coursework in the MBA program has given you many analytic tools to effectively develop an organization. These courses representing numerous functional areas (accounting, finance, marketing, organizational behavior, information systems, economics, etc.) have been presented to you in an independent stand-alone fashion. To create effective organizations these analytic tools need to be integrated in order to formulate strategies, make strategic decisions, and create action plans for implementing those strategies and decisions. The primary purpose of this course is to assist you in this integration process and to help you take a total systems view of organizations – a view necessary for CEOs and General Managers. Learning to view organizations from a total systems approach is complex and challenging, but absolutely necessary in order to effectively manage a modern organization. Strategic management has become an important approach in helping you analyze and evaluate the operations of any business firm. To take a total system view requires that one understand the values and component parts that make up the overall operations of any business endeavor in an integrated and unified way. In addition, every firm must operate in some external environment. Success or failure of a firm is a function of how the firm responds to the factors that make up the external environment. This course will help you identify and understand the important variables of business firms and the impact these variables have on the overall business functioning. The overriding objective is to help develop your skills and ways of thinking which are uniquely appropriate to a total enterprise management within a complex, dynamic environment. Whether you want to develop your own firm, work in the non-profit sector, or work in a governmental or public business, the strategic management discipline is a key resource to practicing managers.

**General Course Objectives**

The general objectives for this course are threefold. First, the class should help you in the mastery of course material so that you can competently discuss issues of strategic management. Second, the class will develop your skill in applying course concepts to organizations in which you are a member. And the third general objective of this course is to create a forum for personal introspection. Class activities will push you to examine your organizing and life assumptions that you seldom think about and that many of us are unaware. Course material may

suggest new views that could be utilized to design organizations and how these different assumptions may create new organizational forms as well as very different experiences for members of these groups

### **Learning Methods**

Classes will be conducted in a seminar style, with intensive discussion of the readings the primary topic of the seminar sessions. Students are expected to have thoroughly prepared the material, and to take active responsibility for discussing each topic in order to enrich learning in the seminar. During the seminar individuals are encouraged to use their personal experience as a means to integrate and validate course material.

This may be a very different method of learning than you are used to, but a learning/teaching method that is appropriate for the advanced student in a capstone course like strategic management. Due to our small class size we have the opportunity to employ this technique.

According to Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seminar>): The word seminar is derived from the Latin word *seminarium*, meaning "seed plot". One definition (<http://www.answers.com/topic/seminar>) suggests that *sem-i-nar* (sēm'ə-nār') is: A small group of advanced students in a college or graduate school engaged in original research or intensive study under the guidance of a professor who meets regularly with them to discuss their reports and findings. The Wikipedia goes further in describing a seminar:

Seminar is, generally, a form of academic instruction, either at a university or offered by a commercial or professional organization. It has the function of bringing together small groups for recurring meetings, focusing each time on some particular subject, in which everyone present is requested to actively participate. This is often accomplished through an ongoing Socratic dialogue with a seminar leader or instructor, or through a more formal presentation of research. Normally, participants must not be beginners in the field under discussion (at US universities, seminar classes are generally reserved for upper-class students, although at UK and Australian universities seminars are often used for all years). The idea behind the seminar system is to familiarize students more extensively with the methodology of their chosen subject and also to allow them to interact with examples of the practical problems that always crop up during research work. It is essentially a place where assigned readings are discussed, questions can be raised and debates conducted. It is relatively informal, at least compared to the lecture system of academic instruction.

It will be my responsibility to set the structure for the seminar. I will help everyone get involved in discussions. I will pose questions, counter your explanations, encourage you to think in new ways, push you to consider further issues, etc. I will seldom answer your questions, nor will I lecture. Answers will come from you and your seminar colleagues. It will be your responsibility to grapple with the material, and to identify learnings and practical applications. Learning outcomes from seminars often result in a deeper understanding of the material, and an understanding that is grounded from your own analysis and interpretation and of research. The seminar will likely challenge you. It will require that you be active, come prepared, and open to learning.

For those of you who are typically dependent learners, this seminar will likely feel awkward at first, and it might even feel more efficient if the instructor would just "tell you the answers" or distill the information in a way that identifies the key points. A key learning in seminars is becoming an independent learner. A vital skill of the CEO/General Manager. In all

assignments I want you to wear the hat of a CEO/General Manager. Your focus should always be to learn how to ensure long-term competitive superiority of a firm. You also should be asking yourself, how do I pull together all these courses I have taken in the MBA program and the analytic tools they offer. This type of integration is something that when one does, they never forget.

## **Components of the Course**

### **Learning Teams**

The primary structure around which this course is designed is the team and team learning. All class participants will be assigned to one of two learning teams (probably). The team will be a semi-autonomous structure in which you will engage in many of the course requirements. Fellow team members will help you to master course material and concepts, work with you on in-class exercises and cases, listen to your analyses and applications, provide support and feedback to you, etc. The majority of the learning from this course will be generated through discussions and exercises with your learning team as well as the entire seminar group. You will need to develop strong working relationships with your team members so that you can teach and learn from each other. There are two major tasks that your learning team will perform: (1) your team will select three articles for each of the second and third class sessions that everyone will read and your team will facilitate the class discussion; and (2) conduct strategy research on an industry and one of its firms which is a player in this industry, orally present your report during the last class session, and submit a written report of up to ten pages (excluding appendices) to the instructor.

### **In Class Activities and Exercises**

As described above the class will be designed as a seminar or and often more like a workshop than traditional class lectures. A major emphasis of these sessions will be increasing your self-insight as well as your managerial/interpersonal skills. In particular, one managerial skill that will be emphasized in the course will be how to create an effective team. You will need to be actively engaged in class in order to learn from these classroom experiences.

### **Course Readings, Cases, and Exercises**

All participants are personally responsible for reading class assignments, understanding the material, and demonstrating their knowledge/understanding of course material in the seminar. The readings for the course will come from the required Hill and Jones text book, the Collins book, as well as other class handouts and readings.

Your learning team will also have the opportunity to select three readings for each of two class sessions.

### **Reflected Best-Self Exercise and Personal Learnings Paper**

All class participants will also engage in two research/writing activities of a personal nature:

Reflected Best-Self Exercise. Each individual will collect data on their best-self, analyze this information, write a reflected best-self portrait, and hand in a written report on these activities. The assignment is due our third weekend meeting in July. A handout is provided with further

details (Appendix A).

**Personal Learnings Paper:** Each individual will write a concise paper (2-3 pages) documenting what they have learned about strategic management and themselves from participating in this course. In this paper you will also need to assess your skills as a productive team member. More specifics on this assignment will be given as the seminar proceeds. This assignment will be due shortly after our last class session. We'll decide as a class when this is due.

### **Team Research**

As mentioned above, a project will involve your team in conducting strategy research on an industry and one of its firms which is a player in this industry, orally present your report during the last class session, and submit a written report of up to ten pages (excluding appendices) to the instructor. Your team will select the industry and organization to study, conduct a strategic analysis, and report your findings. A more detailed handout on this project is provided at the end of this syllabus (Appendix B).

### **Individual Participation and Preparation**

Since the class will be conducted as a seminar it is critical that all students participate fully, but in a manner that will result in effective learning for all members. We will be co-producing knowledge so it is critical that students follow some general rules of seminar behavior. First, students will be expected to be able to listen, discuss, and critique key points of assigned readings at each class session to demonstrate mastery of the material. Ratings of class participation will be based largely upon students' demonstrations of knowledge and understanding of readings as reflected in comments, reactions, and questions; reactions to discussion questions; comments which show connections among different concepts and issues; comments connecting the classroom to actual practice (e.g., examples from work); listening and non-judgmental attitudes; and group process and nonverbal behaviors. All of these behaviors are relevant in an administrative setting and reflect administrative skills. The following standards will be used when assigning participation grades:

A: Consistent, active involvement without dominating; high level of knowledge and insight; comments are on topic; efficient use of air time; interacts with, refers to comments of, and/or draws out other students, challenges ideas respectfully, is willing to test new ideas and thoughts, integrates materials from numerous readings, class norms followed

B: Regular involvement; good level of knowledge and insight; interacts effectively with others comments and thoughts, comments are on topic; class norms followed

C: Occasional comments; usually on topic

D: Rare comments, usually on topic, norms not followed

F: No participation, or participation always off topic, norms not followed

## **Evaluation and Grading**

### **Grading components (percentage)**

Seminar Participation and Preparation (50 percent)

Reflected Best-Self Report (5 percent)

Personal Learnings Paper (10 percent)

Team Research Project (Presentation and Report) (35 percent)

### **Required Texts**

Hill, C.W.L, and Jones, G.R. (2008). ProStrategic Management: An Integrated Approach (Eighth Edition). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Collins, J. (2001) Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don't. New York, NY: HarpersCollins Publishers, Inc.

### **Some Other Thoughts on the Course**

This course will demand a fair amount of work from you! My expectations are very high. You will be challenged to discuss your beliefs and values in the context of organizational situations and to appreciate sufficient levels of complexity that are not easily understood with the limitations of ordinary human cognitive processes. You will lose points with me if you miss class or fail to actively engage in discussions. You will not lose points for contributing half-baked ideas, asking philosophical questions, or challenging teaching approaches.

The style of teaching in this course may be significantly different from what you've experienced in other courses. Much of my time will involve designing processes and structures in which this class can successfully accomplish learning objectives. I will provide the structure through a sequence of activities that will expose you and your classmates to particular organizational dynamics or intellectual inquiries. These activities include discussions, mini-lectures, questions and answers, and exercises that place the lessons to be learned in context. As an instructor I have the responsibility for controlling the rate and degree of conceptual input through assigned readings, lectures, and interventions. In addition, it is my role to model leadership and, as a part of the learning process in the course, may (or may not) chose to share my thinking processes. I will try to facilitate your learning and the discover of new insights.

All students are expected to attend all class meetings and to come prepared to fully participate in the activities that have been scheduled. Preparation includes reading and writing assignments in advance with enough depth and concentration so you can develop the background and concepts needed in order to contribute effectively. Since the medium of learning in this course is interaction, you are expected to participate actively in all events and to attempt to influence others as well as to allow yourself to be influenced. As a student you are expected to respectfully challenge the instructor as well as your peers when there are differences of opinion, and to seek clarification and explanation when necessary. Students are expected to recognize the resources in the class and to ask for help from those who can give it. If unavoidable absences occur, you are expected to take steps to see that activities planned for the date of the absence can be carried out as scheduled. This may require notification to the people concerned and affected, substitution by other persons, or other measures as appropriate.

# Reflected Best Self Exercise: Assignment and Instructions<sup>1</sup>

All of us can recall our own extraordinary moments, those moments when we felt that our best self was brought to light, affirmed by others and put into practice in the world. These memories are seared into our minds as moments or situations in which we have felt alive, true to our deepest selves and pursuing our full potential as human beings. Over time, we collect these experiences into a portrait of who we are when we are at our personal best. To help compose a best-self portrait, it is important to draw on the perceptions of significant others who have unique and valuable insights into the ways we add value and make a contribution. The Reflected Best Self (RBS) exercise creates an opportunity for participants to receive feedback regarding who they are when they are at their best.

In this exercise, you will obtain data from other people to create a more extensive reflected best-self portrait. You will obtain short descriptions of who you are and what you do when you are at your very best from a diverse array of significant people in your life. From this feedback, you will learn important things about yourself that you may have never realized before.

The goal of this feedback exercise is five-fold.

- To generate awareness of how others see you when you are at your best
- To enhance understanding about what kinds of work situations bring out the best in you
- To create personal and career development plans and actions, based upon the reflections that your reflected best-self feedback generates
- To provide a tool for future times when you may be discouraged and need to get back on track
- To assess the individual strengths that exist within your learning groups.

## **Directions**

In this exercise, you will develop a reflected best-self portrait based on feedback from an array of significant others. There are several steps to follow:

### **Step 1: Identify Respondents**

Identify 10-20 people you know well. These may be colleagues (former or current), friends (old or recent), family members, customers, supervisors, or anyone who has had extended contact with you. Think about who will give you their honest opinion. The more diverse the group is, the better. Also, realize that due to time constraints, everyone will not be able to respond. Ideally, you need at least 10 responses to complete this part of the assignment, so ask enough people to ensure at least 10 responses.

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<sup>1</sup> Developed by Robert E. Quinn, Jane E. Dutton, and Gretchen M. Spreitzer

## **Step 2: Compose a Feedback Request Form**

Compose a feedback request (see example request below) and email it to the 10-20 people identified in Step 1. Although this request may seem awkward or difficult for you, participants have found this assessment to be a profound learning activity, and that significant others are quite willing to assist with this exercise. Over time, we have found that 10-20 is the desired number of respondents to collect sufficient data.

### *Sample Email Request for Feedback*

*As part of my college program, I am taking a course that requires me to construct a profile of the ways that I add value and make a contribution. I have been asked to contact twenty people who know me well. I am to request that each person provides me with answers to three questions and as many examples as you can provide. All questions ask you to describe me when I was at my best. I would like to invite you to help me with this exercise.*

*I appreciate your taking time to do this for me. This will require you to think about your interactions with me and to identify those incidents/behaviors when I was at my very best in your eyes. In writing, please be sure to provide examples so I can understand the situation and the characteristics you are describing.*

*Your feedback to me:*

*Please provide me with three examples of how I add value by completing the following statements.*

- 1. One of your greatest strengths is ...*

*For example, I think of the time that .....*

- 2. What I value most in my relationship with you is ...*

*For example, I think of the time that ...*

- 3. One thing that I think is unique about you (in a good way) is ...*

*For example, I think of the time that ...*

*Please e-mail your responses to me by (insert date). Thank you very much for your cooperation. I will be sure to tell you what I learn.*

## **Step 3: Analyze Feedback**

Read all of your feedback and take notes on the key insights. Look for commonalities across the responses. Create themes where you find a commonality and link the several examples to it. You may find it useful to use a table like the following.



*groups surface the darkest realities and the most painful conflicts. From these emergent tensions comes the energy for transformation. I liberate people from their fears and help them embrace new paths. In all of this I try to model the message of integrity, growth, and transformation.*

**Due Date:**

Your written Reflected Best-Self Portrait is due our last weekend. In your report please provide details from your data collection and analysis (maybe in an appendix) as well as your best-self portrait. We will share these in class with your learning group and will profile the strengths that exist among the members of our team.

## Appendix B

### Group Assignment<sup>2</sup>

A key assignment in this course involves research on an industry and one of its firms which is a player in this industry. After you have formed teams, you begin to plan a topic, with a firm and its market. Your textbooks (Hill & Jones and Collins) will provide a good basis for your research. Your analysis should be in two parts. The first part should represent an analysis of the industry and the second part should detail and analysis of a specific firm in the industry. In the second part be sure to cover issues of strategic leadership and external analysis, competitive advantage, strategies, and implementing strategies. A key aspect to your analysis will be deciding on what is important to analyze. After you determine the industry and firm you will analyze, then you will quickly need to develop a framework for analysis.

Most case analyses cover the following aspects of a firm (see C1 – C12 in Hill and Jones). This might be helpful to your group to review in deciding the framework for your analysis.

1. Analyze the company's history, development, and growth.
2. Identify the company's internal strengths and weaknesses.
3. Analyze the external environment.
4. Evaluate the SWOT analysis (what do your findings from 2 and 3 mean?).
5. Analyze corporate level strategy (mission and goals).
6. Analyze business level strategy (functional strategies your firm pursues to create competitive advantage).
7. Analyze structure and control systems (degree of fit between company's strategy and structure).
8. Make recommendations.

The group paper should draw from the concepts and frameworks of the course. Regarding the industry analysis you should tell us key trends in markets and technologies that might destroy a prevailing dominant design, and /or the substitution by a new one. You might focus on process and/or product changes, together with the demise and or emergence of new markets. For example in tennis rackets, the dominant design is the composite, long body racket which gradually has replaced the graphite, wide-body racket but since the death of the wooden racket, there have been other dominant designs. In photography, the technology shows a substitution from gelatin based to digital imaging. In health care HMOs have replaced the conventional insurance-provider infrastructures, and managed care is increasingly becoming prominent now. New markets are replacing existing markets or redrawing their boundaries. Dramatic examples include Passbook savings accounts that have been killed by money markets, (off ) track betting is being replaced by virtual casinos and state lotteries. In other cases the product remains largely the same, but the functionality, convenience or price is undergoing a transformation. Well known examples are conventional photo versus Polaroid or silver gelatin versus digital pictures, the market for 5 1/5 inch disk drives and 3 1/2 or even smaller disk-drives and combustion versus fuel cells . The more specific the case, the more narrow the definition of market or industry, the better. So it is better to focus on 'commercial real estate' than on "building and construction industries", on "digital imaging" than on printing, and better to deal with "bovine growth hormones" than pharmaceuticals.

So your challenge is to pick an industry/market and perform some historical examination of key trends that spell potential disaster for dominant designs in product or, process technology. It is

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Johannes M. Pennings, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

helpful to spell out discontinuities in the industry (market/technology). For example, sales or product launches associated with different dominant designs during the period 1985-2001 can have a dramatic impact in making your point. One team might track the book retail sales through mom&pop stores, mall stores, superstores and internet and show the share of these channels to evolve considerably. Another team might plot product introductions by year with flat years sandwiched between bubbling years. Fault lines might be hidden or quite visible, but you better know where they are. Typically, in the first part of your paper you describe the industry and the technology, much less, if at all, the firms that make up the industry. Industry analysis include a listing of firms, their size distribution and / or market shares, concentration ratio, but also a review of the value chain and the stage that is the focus of your inquiry. A standard or dominant design such as PalmV, credit card or “Wintel” is often shared by all stages of the value chain from the producers of micro-processors, software applications. In the second part, you should give us some analysis of how the firm of your choice is coping with the trends, that are discernible in its industry. Include information on the firm’s structure, the presence of an idea champion, incentives, strategic moves or absence of any move (e.g, why did Microsoft dawdle when approaching the internet entry?). The more specific the better. For example, does your firm have a joint venture with firms whose technology might disrupt its industry/market conditions. Does Kodak have joint ventures with Canon, Agfa, Xerox, HP, Intel or Adobe, to name a few players who might join the digital imaging playground? How are these JVs doing? Do they give Kodak access to other people’s technologies? What does Kodak bring to the table, or does it expect a free lunch? Fear in losing proprietary knowledge and other intangible assets? In the second part, it is more important what you analyze, than what you describe: depth over superficiality is preferred!

Examples could include Motion Pictures, Book Retail, Electric Utilities, ZIP Drives and Publishing. Do not hesitate to aggressively surf the net, to obtain industry analysis reports from Wallstreet or consulting firms, Dow Jones retrieval services, etc. Sky is the limit. Identify trends, uncover “fault lines” in the landscape, or spell out discontinuities in technological trajectories, or markets. What new segments are emerging, and what challenges do they present?

Begin your deliberations immediately to select an industry and a firm within it. Submit a one paragraph proposal to me before before June 12, 2009. The first part of your paper (about 750 words – 3 pages) should be on the industry-market, and the second part (up to 1750 words – 7 pages) should be the write up regarding research on a specific firm. The paper length limitation does not apply to appendices such as ARs, industry reports from Wallstreet firms, spreadsheets and excel charts, etc. The presentations are the apotheosis of the class!.

The paper will be graded on four equally weighted criteria: First how well you apply course concepts you choose. Second, is your analysis insightful? Third, how relevant and useful are your recommendations? And fourth, the quality of your in-class team presentation.

The total length of the paper is not to exceed 10 pages (part 1, 3 pages, 750 words, and part 2, 7 pages, 1750 words), *excluding* figures, charts, and appendices. Try to be succinct, to the point, allocating your 2500 words to the stuff that really matters. The paper and presentation are due the last weekend in July.

Have fun!

## Appendix C

### Michael R. Manning, Ph.D. Bio

Professor Michael Manning has dedicated his professional career to educating and developing executives/managers, consulting with and designing effective organizations, and creating applied action research processes and intervention techniques. He consults extensively with business owners and top corporate officials in both public and private sectors throughout the US and internationally in Mexico, Europe and the Baltic States, the Middle East, and the Far East. Dr. Manning publishes broadly in academic journals in the field of organizational change and development. He also researches issues of occupational stress. Recent research is on the role of emotional contagion in processes of change. His special expertise is designing and implementing large group interventions for whole systems change, creating specialized management development workshops, creatively designing action research, and teaching and applying both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Dr. Manning is Professor of Management at New Mexico State University located in Las Cruces, New Mexico. He has held faculty appointments at Case Western Reserve University and the State University of New York at Binghamton. He is a distinguished visiting faculty member at the Executive Doctoral Program in Organization Development at Illinois Benedictine University and at the Fielding Graduate University in the School of Human and Organization Development. Professor Manning lectures frequently at both the Helsinki School of Economics and the Helsinki University of Technology in Finland and works extensively with faculty colleagues at the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Occidente in Guadalajara, Mexico. During Fall 2004 Professor Manning was a visiting professor at the Consortium Institute of Management and International Business Studies in Asolo, Italy.

As a university professor, Dr. Manning has educated executives and managers from diverse companies such as GM, Ford, Lubrizol, British Petroleum, Picker International, IBM, Cleveland Clinic, TRW, General Electric, Progressive Insurance, Rubbermaid, Eaton Corporation, Nokia, etc. In addition, he has trained numerous individuals to be organizational consultants. His former doctoral students are now with universities such as Stanford, William & Mary, Dartmouth, and George Mason and companies such as Boeing, Alcatel-Lucent, Motorola, Boeing, Hewlett Packard, and McDonald's Corporation. His teaching has been recognized with numerous awards. He was elected to the executive board of the Organization Development and Change Division of the Academy of Management in 2003 and served in various capacities on the board until 2009. He was Program Chair (2005-2006) and Division Chair (2007-2008). Dr. Manning is also a current member of two editorial boards: the Journal of Applied Behavioral Science and the Journal of Change Management.