Course Objective: The objective of this course is to provide students with a basic knowledge of the literature in organizational strategy, including both theoretical perspectives and research methods. While the primary audience for the course is doctoral students in management, students from other business- and organization-related disciplines could also benefit from a better understanding of how strategy is made and communicated in the types of organizations that concern them.

Readings: A variety of readings, selected to illustrate theoretical perspectives and/or research methods, will be covered.

Learning Methods: Classes will be conducted in a seminar style, with intensive discussion of the readings the primary learning method. Students are expected to have thoroughly prepared the material, and to be able to answer questions about it.

Grading: The components that make up the grade in this course are 1) class contribution; 2) take-home exam; and 3) a paper/presentation. The components will be weighted equally. The exam will be distributed on April 7, and due April 14.

Paper/Presentation: The assignment for the paper is for students to collect and analyze data on the strategy of one organization from at least two theoretical perspectives. Students will be expected to make contact with one or more representatives of an organization, identify an interesting and important strategy decision made recently (or better yet, in process) in the organization, and collect data on the strategy decision through interviewing, review of documents, observation, distribution of questionnaires, etc. (The combination of research methods should be tailored to the case.) The general format of the papers should be:

1) Description of the site and strategy decision
2) Brief description of the theories to be utilized, and
3) Theoretical analysis of the strategy decision.

A one-page proposal for the paper is due by the end of the eighth week of the course. The paper itself (approximately 20-25 pages) is due on May 5th. During class on this date (during the final exam period) each student will present his or her paper to the other students in class.

Generic Discussion Questions: While the readings vary quite a bit, there are a few questions that may be helpful to you in preparing for class each week. Some questions pertain to conceptual articles, while
others are more relevant for empirical articles. In general, if you review this list of questions for each of the readings, you should be well prepared for class discussion. The list is as follows:

**GENERIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**For conceptual articles:**

What questions is the paper trying to answer?

Are these important questions?

What are the central points made by the paper?

What conception of organizational strategy does the paper propose?

What are the weak points of the paper?

Is the logic of the paper internally consistent?

Are the insights of the paper universally applicable?

In what ways does the paper complement or contradict others from the course?

What does the paper imply about the nature of organizations in general?

What research questions does the paper suggest?

What recommendations for strategy-makers does the paper suggest?

**For empirical articles:**

What research methods are utilized in the paper?

Are these methods appropriate given the questions being addressed?

What are the weak points of the methods?

Is the sample adequate? Are the statistical techniques appropriate?

What is your assessment of the reliability and construct validity of the measures, and the internal and external validity of the findings?

Are the conclusions drawn justifiable in light of the findings?

How do the conclusions relate to those of other papers from the course?
COURSE SCHEDULE

January 20  Introduction and Administration

January 27  Strategic Leadership


February 3  Strategic Decision-Making


February 10  I-O Perspectives


February 17  Efficiency Perspectives in General


February 24  Resource-Based Theory


March 3  Diversification


March 10  Vertical Integration


March 17  Agency Theory


March 23-27  Spring Break

March 31  Ethical Issues in Strategy-Making


April 7  Strategic Choice


April 14  International Strategy


**April 21**

**The Evolution of Interorganizational Governance and Trust**


**April 28**

No class, student paper preparation

**May 5**

Student presentations