MGT590 Syllabus
Spring 2015
Professor: Phil Benson

Contact Information

Cell Phone: (575) 644-5689
Email: pbenson@nmsu.edu
Office: BC338 Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:00-4:00, and by appointment

I am generally available at these two contacts. I monitor email very regularly, and this is often the best way to reach me. Please do not rely on Blackboard for contacts to me, as I prefer direct email to me at the address above.

The cell phone listed is one dedicated for student use. You can call or text to this number at any time. If the time is too late at night, or if I am otherwise busy, the phone will be off and you can leave a message for me. If it is on, it means I'm available at that time.

Course Objective

Business firms operate within complex, dynamic environments. As such, 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. In essence, this course builds on the analytical tools taught in previous MBA core and required courses meant to help students learn to formulate strategies, make strategic decisions and create action plans for implementing those strategies and decisions. Learning to view organizations from a total systems approach is complex and challenging, but absolutely necessary in order to effectively manage a modern organization.

1. This course is concerned with the management of the total enterprise. One of the basic objectives is the development of a total system viewpoint for analyzing and evaluating the operations of any business firm.

2. The total system concept requires an understanding of the values and component parts that make up the overall operations of any business endeavor. Therefore, a second objective of this course is to investigate, integrate and unify the various functional aspects of a business.
3. Every firm must operate in some external environment. The success or failure of the firm is a function of how the firm responds to the factors which make up the external environment. Taking this into consideration, the third objective is to identify and understand the variables that are included in the environment of business firms and to assess the relationships among these variables and their impact on the overall functioning of the business enterprise.

4. The overriding objective of this course is to provide the content for developing the skills and ways of thinking which are uniquely appropriate to total enterprise management within a complex, dynamic business world.

Course Meetings

This course will meet every Tuesday night from 6:00-8:30, in BC106. While formal attendance will not be recorded, it is critical in a class of this sort that students attend regularly, and come to class prepared for the work to be done that meeting. In short, don’t miss class unless the reason for non-attendance is very serious.

Basis of Student Evaluation

Student evaluations and grades will be based on multiple sources of information. We will have various in-class activities, and these will total 100 points. The cases to be analyzed will be worth 100 points (20 points for each of 5 cases). A review of the book *Shackleton’s way: Leadership lessons from the great Antarctic explorer* will be completed late in the semester and is worth 100 points. The final exam will amount to 200 points. Thus, the course total will be 500 potential points, and the grades in the class will be assigned according to the following scale:

- A 450 points or more
- B 400-449 points
- C 350-399 points
- D 300-349 points
- F less than 300 points

*In-class activities* will focus on applications of topics we discuss in course meetings. For this reason students should be certain to attend regularly; because these take place in class, there will not be a means for making them up once they’ve been done. Most class meetings you should expect some sort of graded activity to take place.

*Cases* require preparation outside of class, in advance of the discussion. For each case we discuss, you will need to write an analysis of the case, with a focus on the key issues in each case. Generally, consider the guidelines posted to the course webpage as “How to Study a Case”, and prepare accordingly. Written case analyses are to be handed in during the class discussion of each, and must be typed. Cases will be assigned to more or less correspond to course discussion on the evening discussed.
Your grade on the case will reflect your written critique, and will also reflect your participation in the class discussion of the case.

The book review should focus on your personal reactions to the book: Do not simply recount the content of the book. What do you see as the critical points in the book, and most importantly, how do the points made fit your own life? Are there examples in your own experiences that highlight the points made in the book? What are the key issues?

The final exam will be completed in class, and will be open book, open notes, open internet, closed email, closed chat facilities. In other words you can use information that is generally available, but you must do your own work. If you use a source of information (text, internet, or other) you absolutely must cite that source to make it clear that you are building on the work of others. Failure to cite sources will result in failing the course. In general, exams that show insightful thought about the questions posed will be graded favorably; answers that simply restate course content will be viewed as less valuable. Think about the issues involved and come to your own conclusions.

Program Evaluation

The major accrediting agency for schools of business requires that programs evaluate various aspects of learning within the curriculum. While students do not need to bother themselves with details of these efforts, MGT590 has been selected as the place in the curriculum where certain parts of program evaluation will take place. In the early weeks of the semester, students will be expected to complete some exercises that will be designed to assess the effectiveness of the MBA program (and will not focus on the evaluation of any particular course by itself). This activity will be graded and will be treated as 25 points, above the points outlined above in this syllabus. Details of this effort will be given when done in class.

Textbooks


Other readings as assigned.

Course Schedule

January 20: Introduction to Course (Chapter 1)

January 27: External Opportunities and Threats (Chapter 2)

February 3: Internal Analysis: Competitive Advantage (Chapter 3)
February 10: Functional-Level Strategy (Chapter 4)
   Case 10: Nucor in 2013

February 17: Business-Level Strategy (Chapter 5)

February 24: Strategy in the Industry Environment (Chapter 6)
   Case 2: Century 21 Sussex and Reilly Residential

March 3: Strategy and Technology (Chapter 7)
   Case 14: Tesla

March 10: Global Strategy (Chapter 8)

March 17: Corporate-Level Strategy: Integration and Outsourcing (Chapter 9)

March 24: Spring Break

March 31: Corporate-Level Strategy: Diversification (Chapter 10)

April 7: Governance and Ethics (Chapter 11)
   Case 27: Disaster in Bangladesh

April 14: Strategic Implementation in a Single Industry (Chapter 12)
   Case 3: Estonian Air’s Big Buy

April 21: Strategic Implementation across Industries (Chapter 13)

April 28: Course Session on Sir Ernest Shackleton’s Leadership
   Film: The Endurance (2012)

May 5: Final Exam and Paper Due