



Concordia University

John Molson
School of Business



MBA

Business Policy & Strategy

622

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Meeting with me: At my office (Place Ville Marie, Building 5, Suite 1100) almost any time by appointment
On campus - before or after class

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course develops a general management perspective on the firm, its strategy, and the competitive environment. In this regard, the course is intended to provide an overview of senior decision-making and provides an opportunity to integrate material covered in other MBA courses.

The concept of strategy is the central theme in the course. This concept is used to analyze and understand the evolution of competition and the structure of the industry and to comprehend and mold a firm's responses to competitive threats and opportunities.

We also address issues of how to develop core competencies, and develop a variety of strategies including product differentiation, low-cost strategy, diversification, corporate strategy, strategic alliances, mergers and acquisitions and proactive approaches to re-invent the firm.

PEDAGOGY

This course is taught through a combination of conceptual readings, case studies, case discussions, lectures and a group project/presentation. The course is oriented towards individual and group learning. Typically, we will cover some new material and then we will discuss a case that highlights the material previously discussed.

I expect you to read the material for each session before the class meets and to be prepared to analyze and discuss the concepts and issues from the readings and the cases.

You should also prepare by summarizing the main points in each conceptual reading.

For the cases, you should think particularly about how the concepts and theories from the assigned readings might apply to the case.

The world is always more complex and interesting than any textbook. In this course, we use cases because they give life to management theory and help us to see how theory and concepts play out in real organizational settings. There are, of course, weaker and stronger ways of analyzing a case, and there may be more than one appropriate answer. Therefore do not fall into the trap of expecting a single "right" answer. You are expected to build your own strategic management toolbox over the semester and apply whatever tools you think are most appropriate in the given case scenario. There must, however, be a consistency throughout every case analysis and strategic proposal. Moreover, as you develop your own analytical framework be prepared to challenge and be challenged by the frameworks of your peers. In preparing a case, look for solutions that "push the envelope"; do not limit yourself to questions included with or to choices presented in the cases.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no text for this course but should you want to supplement the lecture material, any recent strategic textbook would be fine. Look at authors like Miller, Dess, Lumpkin & Eisner or Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson. Conceptually, strategy has not changed much over the years although older editions would miss some of the evolving industries and would place less emphasis on globalization.

All my class slides will be posted on Moodle.

We will cover 4 cases during the term. In addition, you will have a case to analyze for your individual assignment and we will cover 8 more cases during group presentations. All of these cases are housed on a Harvard site. The links are on pages 7 and 8 of this outline.

There are also a number of articles that we will be discussing in class. These can be accessed at the links below. If I come across anything else that looks interesting during the semester, I will either post it or a link on Moodle and/or tell you about it during class.

LINKS TO ARTICLES

Article: *The Five Competitive Forces That Shape Strategy* (Porter)

<https://hbr.org/2008/01/the-five-competitive-forces-that-shape-strategy>

Article: *Creating Competitive Advantage* (Ghemawat & Rivkin)

No free link

Article: *Blue Ocean Strategy* (Kim & Mauborgne)

<https://hbr.org/2004/10/blue-ocean-strategy>

Article: *Red Ocean Traps* (Kim & Mauborgne)

https://hbr.org/2015/03/red-ocean-traps&cm_sp=Article_-_Links_-_Top%20of%20Page%20Recirculation

Article: *Looking Inside for Competitive Advantage* (Barney) **NOT EASY TO PRINT BUT DOABLE**

http://www.jstor.org/stable/4165288?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Article: *Creating Corporate Advantage* (Collis & Montgomery)

<http://www.akbareftekhari.ir/fa/Files/Paper/CREATING%20corporate%20advantages.pdf>

Article: *What is a Global Strategy? And why is it Important?* (Lynch)

<http://www.global-strategy.net/what-is-global-strategy/>

Article: *A Strategic Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility* (McElhaney)

[http://responsiblebusiness.haas.berkeley.edu/documents/Strategic%20CSR%20\(Leader%20to%20Leader,%20McElhaney\).pdf](http://responsiblebusiness.haas.berkeley.edu/documents/Strategic%20CSR%20(Leader%20to%20Leader,%20McElhaney).pdf)

ALLOCATION OF MARKS

Individual Case Assignment.....	30 marks
Group Project/Presentation.....	30 marks
Executive Summary/Judging.....	15 marks
Participation in Class Discussions.....	25 marks

GRADING

Grades are based on performance, not effort. There are no 'A' or 'B' students; rather there is "A" or "B" work.

A+	EXCEPTIONAL in all respects (original, creative, outside the box)
A to A-	EXCELLENT (above course expectations, critical thinking, very analytical)
B+	ABOVE AVERAGE (Advanced comprehension, logically organized)
B to B-	ADEQUATE/GOOD (Meets expectations, little extension of concepts)
C	WEAK (Laundry list of ideas, no original thinking, not meeting expectations)

INDIVIDUAL CASE ASSIGNMENT

This is an individual assignment and must be completed independently. It is not acceptable to submit text, exhibits and appendices that have been jointly prepared.

The purpose of this assignment is to put yourself into the shoes of the decision maker(s) of the company highlighted in the case and to provide actionable recommendations that are supported by fact-based analysis.

I expect that you incorporate into your analysis, insights and concepts covered in this and pre-requisite courses.

In your analysis, you should not go beyond the facts presented in the case except for information about the economy/market. Even if no material is given in the case, you should research economic/market conditions at the time of the case - growth versus stagnation or economic slowdown, interest rates, exchange rates and the strength of financing markets (if appropriate), etc. Apart from that, stick with what is given to you in the case.

My evaluation is based upon the quality of the argument(s) you make to support your conclusion(s). In other words, how well your identification of the issues connect to the findings and conclusion of your analysis and how well your recommendation(s) connect to your problem(s)/issue(s) statement(s). At the core of my evaluation is your assessment of the situation, your ability to identify key issues and your ability to persuade me that your recommendations make sense.

There is no page limit for this project. However do not make it wordy, just to impress me with the length of your project. Rather impress me with the quality of your work. (I would expect 12 to 15 pages on average but this is just a guideline). Similarly, there is no recommended font size or style; just make your project inviting to read.

Refer to the separate package that gives more detail of my expectations.

The allocation of marks will be:

<u>ANALYSIS & EVALUATION</u>	40
<u>ISSUES and/or PROBLEMS</u>	10
<u>ALTERNATIVES</u>	15
<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	15
<u>PLAN OF ACTION</u>	10
<u>THE FLOW</u>	10

Your case assignment is due electronically on June 1st by 9:00 a.m.(a Monday). Send me an e-mail with a PDF attachment. (howardc@cnid.ca)

Do not bring a hard copy to class.

The case of this assignment is: Bitcoin: The Future of Digital Payments? (9-714-519)

GROUP CASE PROJECT/PRESENTATION

The class will be divided into **eight groups** (about five students per group).

By the third class you must tell me the members of your group and your choice of case. Cases will be presented, two per class during the last four classes, in the order listed below.

It is on a first come, first served basis. No two groups can do the same case.

You cannot reserve a case before you have a group (of at least four members) formed.

Students who have not joined a group by the third class will be assigned to one.

Each group will have 40 minutes to present their analysis, issue(s) statement, alternatives considered, recommendation(s) and justification and plan of action. Make sure you stay within that time limit.

In fairness to other groups, I will enforce a strict adherence to the time limit.

Following the presentation, there will be a 15 minute question period where another pre-assigned group will have an initial time to get the presenting group to defend and justify their analysis and proposals. Following that initial period, the remainder of the class can ask questions and we will wrap-up any loose ends before moving on to the second presentation of the evening.

The general format of the presentation should follow the case format guidelines, summarized above and spelled out in more detail in a separate document.

Due to time constraints of your presentation, you may have to be selective in what you can cover and in how much detail. Make sure you select the material with the greatest impact and interest to the audience. Additional material can be included in backup slides not used in your presentation.

No hard copy of the presentation is required but you must provide me with an electronic version **by noon** on the day of the presentation. **You still need to make your own arrangements for the presentation.**

There are three components to the assessment of your project/presentation.

- Content worth 50%
- Group presentation component worth 25%
- Individual presentation component worth 25%

Prior to the presentations, I will provide you with the criteria I will be assessing.

For the most part, the first two components will be the same for all members of a group unless the group indicates that someone in the group deserves an adjustment of their grade. **Do not make this a last minute surprise.** If you are having difficulty with the contribution of a group member, get me involved early so that the situation can be addressed to everyone's benefit.

The judges will have some input into the group's mark.

June 4th 17:40 Mobileye: The Future of Driverless Cars (9-715-421)

June 4th 18:40 Tesla Motors in 2013: Will Sparks Fly in the Automobile Industry? (MH0017)

June 9th 17:40 The Allstate Corporation (9-715-426)

June 9th 18:40 Patagonia (9-711-020)

June 11th 17:40 Sonata Software Ltd., India: Building Global Competitive Advantage...(NA0331)

June 11th 18:40 Samsung Electronics (9-705-508)

June 16th 17:40 Netflix in 2011 (9-615-007)

June 16th 18:40 Telenor (A): From Cellular Networks to Financial Services (NA0272)

JUDGING

Every team has a second role - to judge a presentation done by a group of their peers.

Your team is responsible for reviewing a second case and preparing a list of pertinent items that the presenters should have covered. Also prepare a list of questions to be asked of the presenters. The judges get first crack at the presenting team before the questioning period is opened to the rest of the class. Be prepared to ad lib in case the presenters answer your anticipated questions during their presentation. Ask questions that make the presenters think but don't go out of your way to stump them.

Judges will also be responsible for evaluation (form will be provided) of the presentation in terms of:

- Quality of Coverage (% of items on your lists covered)
- Quality of Presentation (how professional the other team was)
- How well they answered your questions

You will be required to e-mail me your list of pertinent items and your questions by noon on the day of your judging. Only one summary and list of questions per group.

You must hand in and identify yourself on your evaluation forms on the night you judge.

On June 4th

Group 1 will present...	Mobileye	Group 6 will judge this presentation
Group 2 will present...	Tesla Motors in 2013	Group 8 will judge this presentation

On June 9th

Group 3 will present...	The Allstate Corporation	Group 7 will judge this presentation
Group 4 will present...	Patagonia	Group 5 will judge this presentation

On June 11th

Group 5 will present...	Sonata Software	Group 3 will judge this presentation
Group 6 will present...	Samsung Electronics	Group 4 will judge this presentation

On June 16th

Group 7 will present...	Netflix in 2011	Group 2 will judge this presentation
Group 8 will present...	Telenor (A)	Group 1 will judge this presentation

PARTICIPATION

Much of the learning in this class will come from applying the ideas from the conceptual readings and lecture material to the cases discussed in class. Your preparation of the readings slides and cases for each class will contribute substantially to what you and your classmates learn. Thus, constructive contribution to class discussion is an integral part of the course.

I will, therefore, evaluate your contribution to class discussions of course material, cases and readings and your willingness to commit yourself in the class. Since it is difficult to contribute to the discussions without being in the classroom, attendance in the class and arriving before the start of class are important elements of your overall evaluation. However, while attending classes is an important element, it is not enough to simply be in the classroom. You have to contribute.

During the presentations, actively asking questions of the presenters and contributing to any discussions are essential.

Three factors determine good class participation:

- being able to identify the important issues in the readings or cases
- using analysis to define a concise and coherent position on and approach to the managerial issues under discussion
- able to constructively analyze the positions of your classmates

Stating the obvious or rephrasing what has already been said will not be considered a contribution unless your rephrasing really clarifies a point.

ATTENDANCE

Since constructive contribution to class discussions is an integral part of this course, attendance at all class sessions is vital. Past experience has shown that there is a strong positive correlation between class attendance and course grade.

The Department has prescribed a minimum attendance, for a passing grade, to be 80%. Attendance is defined as being on time and attending the full class session. You may, therefore, miss no more than three (3) classes and I hope I can make the classes interesting enough to encourage 100% attendance.

In case of unavoidable circumstances, please advise me. Make like this is an important meeting that you are unable to attend.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND THE ACADEMIC CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct (Academic) at Concordia University states that “the integrity of University academic life and of the degrees, diplomas and certificates the University confers is dependent upon the honesty and soundness of the instructor-student learning relationship and, in particular, that of the evaluation process. As such, all students are expected to be honest in all of their academic endeavors and relationships with the University,” (Academic Code of Conduct, art. 1).

All students enrolled at Concordia are expected to familiarize themselves with the contents of this Code. You are strongly encouraged to read the pertinent section in the Concordia Graduate Calendar. Graduate Calendar is available at:

<http://graduatestudies.concordia.ca/publications/graduatecalendar/current/> and visit the following web address: <http://provost.concordia.ca/academicintegrity/> . Both of these provide useful information about proper academic conduct.

OTHER POLICIES

All cell phones and pagers should be turned off. In rare cases of emergency, set your electronic device to vibrate.

You can certainly bring laptops to class to follow course material and/or take notes but do not "go surfing" during class.

DISCLAIMER

The instructor reserves the right to change or update this outline, and any other course related materials, as required. The student will be informed in a timely manner through Moodle and/or announcements during class.

HARVARD LINKS

I have created a number of case packs for this course. Choose the one/s that is/are appropriate for you.

There is one that includes all cases on the Harvard site - the individual case assignment, 4 cases we will be discussing in class and all 8 cases that will be presented during the last four classes. This is the complete package and is highly recommended. It is however the most expensive option.

(13 cases @\$3.95 each).

Choose this package if it fits your budget and if you are willing to put in the effort to read all cases that will be presented.

The link of this package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36953271>

If you chose the above option, do not choose any more case packs.

If money is a concern and/or if you do not see yourself reading all presentation cases, the following option may be your best choice. There is a CORE package which includes the individual case assignment and the 4 cases we will be discussing in class (5 cases @\$3.95 each). If you choose this option, you must also choose a second case pack of 2 cases that include the case you will be presenting and the case you will be judging.

The link for the CORE package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36958507>

If you chose the CORE option, you must choose one more case pack depending on your Group number.

If you are in the group that is presenting Mobileye, and you decided to purchase the CORE pack, you will also need to order the case pack for Group 1 which includes Mobileye (the case you will be presenting) and Telenor (the case you will be judging).

The link for the GROUP 1 package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36958819>

If you are in the group that is presenting Tesla Motors in 2013, and you decided to purchase the CORE pack, you will also need to order the case pack for Group 2 which includes Tesla (the case you will be presenting) and Netflix (the case you will be judging).

The link for the GROUP 2 package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36958877>

If you are in the group that is presenting Allstate Corp., and you decided to purchase the CORE pack, you will also need to order the case pack for Group 3 which includes Allstate (the case you will be presenting) and Sonata Software (the case you will be judging).

The link for the GROUP 3 package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36958939>

If you are in the group that is presenting Patagonia, and you decided to purchase the CORE pack, you will also need to order the case pack for Group 4 which includes Patagonia (the case you will be presenting) and Samsung Electronics (the case you will be judging).

The link for the GROUP 4 package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36958995>

If you are in the group that is presenting Sonata Software, and you decided to purchase the CORE pack, you will also need to order the case pack for Group 5 which includes Sonata Software (the case you will be presenting) and Patagonia (the case you will be judging).

The link for the GROUP 5 package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36960255>

If you are in the group that is presenting Samsung Electronics, and you decided to purchase the CORE pack, you will also need to order the case pack for Group 6 which includes Samsung (the case you will be presenting) and Mobileye (the case you will be judging).

The link for the GROUP 6 package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36960420>

HARVARD LINKS cont'd.

If you are in the group that is presenting Netflix in 2011, and you decided to purchase the CORE pack, you will also need to order the case pack for Group 7 which includes Netflix (the case you will be presenting) and Allstate (the case you will be judging).

The link for the GROUP 7 package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36960510>

If you are in the group that is presenting Telenor (A), and you decided to purchase the CORE pack, you will also need to order the case pack for Group 8 which includes Telenor (the case you will be presenting) and Tesla Motors (the case you will be judging).

The link for the GROUP 8 package is: <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/36960541>

DETAILED CLASS PLAN

May 5	<u>ENVIRONMENTAL, INDUSTRY, COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS</u> Lecture Slides on Moodle Article: <i>The Five Competitive Forces That Shape Strategy (Porter)</i>
May 7	<u>INTERNAL EVALUATION</u> Lecture Slides on Moodle Article: <i>Creating Competitive Advantage (Ghemawat & Rivkin)</i>
May 12	<u>CASE BASED ON EXTERNAL & INTERNAL ANALYSIS</u> Case: <i>Gillette (Understanding the Environment)</i>
May 14	<u>STRATEGIC CHOICES</u> Lecture Slides on Moodle Article: <i>Blue Ocean Strategy (Kim & Mauborgne)</i> Article: <i>Red Ocean Traps (Kim & Mauborgne)</i> Article: <i>Looking Inside for Competitive Advantage (Barney)</i>
May 19	<u>MODELS TO CONFIRM STRATEGIC CHOICES</u> Lecture Slides on Moodle Article: <i>Creating Corporate Advantage (Collis & Montgomery)</i>
May 21	<u>CASE BASED ON STRATEGIC CHOICES</u> Case: <i>Starbucks (Competitive Advantage)</i>
May 26	<u>UNIQUE ISSUES OF GOING GLOBAL</u> Lecture Slides on Moodle Article: <i>What is a Global Strategy? And why is it Important? (Lynch)</i>
May 28	<u>CASE BASED ON GOING GLOBAL</u> Case: <i>CEMEX (International Expansion)</i>
June 1	Monday morning 9:00a.m. e-mail your individual case assignment
June 2	<u>SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & CASE BASED ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY</u> Article: <i>A Strategic Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility (McElhaney)</i> Case: <i>Make Green Delicious: Sustainability at James Kenedy Kitchens (Social Resp.)</i>
June 4	<u>GROUPS 1 & 2 PRESENTATIONS</u> Presenters and judges - e-mails by noon
June 9	<u>GROUPS 3 & 4 PRESENTATIONS</u> Presenters and judges - e-mails by noon
June 11	<u>GROUPS 5 & 6 PRESENTATIONS</u> Presenters and judges - e-mails by noon
June 16	<u>GROUPS 7 & 8 PRESENTATIONS</u> Presenters and judges - e-mails by noon