Brandeis University  
International Business School  

BUS 260a  
Competition and Strategy  

Course Syllabus  

V2  

Spring 2020  
Fridays, 9:30-12:20  
International Hall  

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Course website: www.strategygroove.com
Course Outline

- **SM** stands for Garth Saloner, Andrea Shepard, and Joel Podolny, *Strategic Management* (Wiley; any edition is fine); this is the textbook for the course, available in the bookstore.
- **Cases** and **required articles** are in case packet: [https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/692354](https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/692354)
- **Recommended articles** are available on the Business Source Premier database offered by Brandeis Library. See last page of syllabus for instructions on how to get these.

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Course Description

Course objectives. The performance of any firm -- international or domestic -- depends on the design and implementation of its strategy. This strategy must take account of the industry environment around the firm, the position and strategies of rivals, and the firm's own capabilities and goals.

This course is a fast-moving, broad-ranging, and intensive survey of the most important concepts, techniques, and frameworks in business strategy. We will explore big ideas and key concepts and apply them to decisions using case studies. Cases are drawn from a wide range of industries, and include US and non-US firms.

Learning goals. The readings, study assignments, class sessions, projects, and papers in this course are designed to help you:

- Understand the role of strategy in business
- Develop an approach to diagnosing strategic issues
- Learn frameworks and concepts that are useful in strategic thinking
- Apply strategic thinking in range of industry and company contexts
- Identify salient strategy issues from messy, real-world data
- Skills useful in strategic conversations – research, analysis, and presentation.

Course content. This course deals with issues of general management, not with technical economics or finance. Among the main topics covered are the following:

- Industry structure and dynamics
- Sources of competitive advantage
- Competitor analysis
- Location and international strategy
- Scope of the firm and corporate strategy
- Logic of acquisitions, foreign market entry, and integration
- Leadership, change, and responsibility

Course requirements. The workload will be heavy. Required readings will be HBS cases, HBR articles, and chapters from Saloner, Shepard, and Podolny, Strategic Management, which available in the bookstore. This is a book about both strategy and organization – for this course, we will focus on the chapters about strategy. Students will need to read and analyze at least one case for every class and are expected to participate in class discussions.

- The case packet will be available for purchase online at the link on the top of page 2 of this syllabus: https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/692354
• **Some articles**, as noted in the class assignments, are available for free on the Business Source Premier (BSP) database of Brandeis Library; see end of this syllabus for details of each article. (You will need your UNET account info to sign on to BSP.)

• **Lectures and some handouts** will be available on [www.strategygroove.com](http://www.strategygroove.com). Students are strongly encouraged to subscribe to this WordPress site (it's free), so that they are notified when materials are added to the site. This site will be used instead of LATTE, which is not used.

**Relationship to other courses.** There are no formal prerequisites, but it is assumed that students have a background in micro-economics and business studies, and are able to analyze financial statements. The course is required as a core course for MBA students. The course is also useful to MA students concentrating in Business. For further information, contact the instructor at bgc@brandeis.edu.

**Team presentations.** In the second class, students will be assigned to a team and a topic, based on their background and interests. These teams will be responsible for a short presentation later in the course, which will aim to apply big ideas from the course to a context familiar to the students in the team, or that they can learn about with minimal research.

This year, the team presentations will revolve around industries and companies involved in some way in climate change – causing it, mitigating it, and coping with it. The data for these industries and companies will come in part from this site, which we will refer to in class: [www.drawdown.org](http://www.drawdown.org). This site and related book is the best review I know of that evaluates industries, products, and businesses in terms of their impact on climate change. It lists 100 solutions to decarbonize the world – some existing industries and some far-out innovations.

**Learning by the case method**

Because this course is based on the case method of learning, class participation by all students is critical. This method of learning is based on three premises. First, we can all learn a great deal from each other's points of view and experience. Second, we often learn more by questioning each other and debating issues than by listening passively or by reading alone. Third, there is no “one best way” to manage complex business problems; rather, we must search for alternatives and weigh them critically.

In order for this method to work, we must all be prepared to go beyond case facts in the discussion. We will assume that everyone has prepared the case and readings thoroughly--there is simply no time to explain or reiterate case facts. Our discussions will aim to be analytical, not descriptive. This does not mean that we will ignore the facts; to the contrary, students should strive to back up their arguments with the facts of the case. In sum, I will expect three P’s from students in every class:

• **Presence:** You are expected to prepare for and attend all class sessions. It is your responsibility to catch up on material for any class that you miss. You may be excused
from class if you are ill, or for urgent family or personal reasons, or if you are selected for a school trek. Under those circumstances, you may make up work by submitting a written analysis, upon agreement with instructor (optional). Attending career fairs, interviews, lunches, internships, team meetings, or other career-related events are not excused absences. You need to make your own trade-offs about these, i.e. decide which are important enough for you to miss class. You will not be penalized for the fact that you missed an occasional class for such reasons, but you will obviously miss the material presented and miss a chance to participate in class; there will be no make-up assignments for these absences. Multiple unexcused absences for may carry a penalty in class participation.

- **Preparation:** You are expected to do the class assignments on time. This means that you are ready to start class or answer assigned questions if called on. In addition, it means that you have analyzed the case and exhibits, not just read them lightly. Where there is numerical analysis to be done to understand the financials or economics of the case, you will be expected to do this. It is often extremely useful to work in groups in preparing the cases for each class; you are encouraged to do this.

- **Participation:** You are expected to share your views and questions in class. Your class participation grade will depend on the cumulative quality of your contributions in class (see further below). This means that frequency of contributions counts, but also the quality of your comments. A good quality comment is one that applies relevant concepts to the facts of the case and that advances the discussion of issues on the floor. Listening patiently to your peers and engaging them respectfully will be valued.

Class times are Friday 9.30 – 12.20, with a 15min break in between. Please be on time; we start sharply at 9:30. Late arrivals are disruptive. If you need to arrive late or leave early, please warn me beforehand. Please eat something before class or during the break. If you must bring something to eat into class, please avoid snacks that may be distracting to your neighbors.

In most class sessions, we will discuss the assigned case in the first part of class, which may last between 90min and 120min. Short lectures may be folded into this part of class at any point – at the start of class, or when a topic comes up that deserves a short lecture. You will be expected to draw lessons from the class discussion with your peers, from the instructor’s comments and board notes, and from the lectures. The second part of class, after the break, will be devoted to team presentations, lectures, or other activities.

**Laptops** are not needed during class discussion and should not be open; even "quiet" screens are distracting to those around you. You should print the materials you need for class and take notes on paper, as it is not possible to analyze a case deeply without marking it up. Calculators are allowed in class, text-messaging and Internet access are not. These rules also apply strictly during the in-class mid-term exam too.
Grading

Students will be graded on a combination of the following:

- **Contributions to class discussions (40%).** I will keep a record of class performance for each student and determine a grade based on the frequency and quality of in-class comments. Work on occasional exercises and presentations will be counted as class participation. Students will receive a midterm evaluation on class participation. To help me get to know you and remember your comments, you should always have your name card up. If you feel unsure about your participation, ask me.

- **A written midterm exam (25%).** This will consist of analysis of a case. On the day before the midterm, I will send you the case by email. The exam itself will take place during normal class hours. You will then be asked 2-3 questions about the issues in the case, which should be answered in writing during the 2-hr exam period. This is an open-book exam, i.e. you may bring books and printed notes (no computers or reading pads); but hand in only what you write in the exam class. The required analysis will be similar to what we do in class.

- **A final term paper (35%).** Final papers may be written by single individuals or by teams of 2 or 3 students. The final paper is an opportunity for you to delve more deeply into analysis of a real strategy, as discussed below.

Final Paper

You may choose to study any firm or organization, but your paper must contain the elements described below. To help you in selecting an appropriate topic, case, and approach, I will review and approve your paper proposal in advance. **Please submit a brief outline of 1-3 above during (or before!) our class on March 6.** This outline does not need to be detailed, but you should try to define your issue and approach and do some preliminary research to check if data are available to address the issue. If you are not sure about your focus, say so in the proposal, and I will try to guide you. We can meet to discuss the paper topic, but I prefer that you first try to develop a rough proposal.

The **paper outline** should cover these points, briefly:

- **Statement of the issue or question to be addressed.** You may choose any issue from those discussed in the course, but must state up front in the paper what you intend to address. In this section, give a short overview of where your issue fits in the field of competition and strategy and what concepts you will draw on to explore your issue.

- **Statement of the evidence (or case) you will use to address your issue,** that is, the firm or organization you will examine, and why this is a good context for your analysis. In
selecting the case(s) you will examine, be sure you can get the information you need before you commit to the topic.

- **Choice of concepts or frameworks to be used in analysis.** You will see that there is often a choice of which approach to use in analyzing a strategic issue. But it is important to follow a systematic approach; the frameworks we will learn will help you do this.

The **final paper itself**, due at the end of the course, include the following elements:

- **Presentation of the most important facts about the case you are examining.** For this, you can use data from the business press, from annual reports, and from other sources. A useful place to start is with the online resources available through the Brandeis library; for a guide, go to: [http://brandeis.libguides.com/Strategy](http://brandeis.libguides.com/Strategy). At any rate, in your actual paper, you should keep this section to a minimum – describe only what is needed for the reader to understand the context and to begin addressing the issues you are exploring. Do not write a full-fledged descriptive “case.” It is often best to provide the evidence “as you go” during the analysis, rather than as a stand-alone section.

- **Analysis of your evidence.** This is the body and most important part of the paper; use the evidence and the concepts to answer the questions you raised at the start. It is best to choose a clear focus and framework and use it throughout the paper. The grade for the paper will depend substantially on the depth, breadth, and clarity of your analysis.

- **Conclusions.** End with a section drawing the implications of your study for strategic thinking and decision making. What are the main lessons you learned? You do not need to provide recommendations to your firm.

**Paper length** depends on how many students are writing the paper. Papers written by individuals should be 10-15 double-spaced pages, not including exhibits; papers written by teams of two students should be 15-25 pages, and papers by three students should be 25-35 pages. Exhibits should be used and analyzed in the paper, not added as “padding.” Exhibits can be included in the flow of the text or at the back of the paper; if at the back, make sure that the text refers clearly to each exhibit, as needed. The final electronic file that is submitted to me (see below) should have exhibits in the same electronic file; do not send two separate electronic files.

Please be sure to **cite your sources and provide references.** All direct quotes, specific data, paraphrased text, all tables and graphics, and important arguments should be properly sourced with foot- or end-notes; a bibliography can be used as reference for general discussions. Every year I down grade some papers because of insufficient referencing; papers that plagiarize the work of others in a major way are not treated so kindly. If you have any doubts or confusion about what we require, ask me and or see resources provided at Orientation. **You are responsible for reading and understanding our standards for Academic Integrity** – if you have any questions, ask!
Papers should be submitted to me by email in PDF format no later than the day listed in the schedule. Unexcused late submissions will be penalized. If you have a good reason for missing this deadline (e.g. illness), you will need to get an “Incomplete” from me before this date.

Contacts

Email is the quickest way to reach me; I usually respond promptly. You will also be expected to check your Brandeis email regularly, as I will send out notices to class from time to time.

I will have open office hours in my office (Lemberg 258) on Fridays when school is in session, 1.30-3.00. You do not need an appointment if you come during these open office hours. If you cannot come at these times and want to see me by appointment at another time, please contact me by email at bgc@brandeis.edu.

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, projects, team discussions, preparation for exams, and so on.)

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. This includes proper citation of the work of others in your papers and presentations. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the university. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask. If you have any doubts or confusion about what we require as a school, see materials provided by IBS at Orientation.

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and you wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately. Please keep in mind that reasonable accommodations are not provided retroactively.
Before we start . . .

**Required text:** Garth Saloner, Andrea Shepard, and Joel Podolny, *Strategic Management* (Wiley, any edition), available in the bookstore. *Cited below as SM.*

**Required cases:** All HBS cases are in the case packet, available for purchase here: [https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/692354](https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/692354). *(Note that the cases may have been updated from previous years! You are responsible for the case listed in this syllabus.)*

**Required and recommended readings:** All other articles are available from Business Source Premier (BSP). At the end of this syllabus there is a list of direct links to the articles, but you will also need your UNET account information to get into BSP.

**Recommended, if you have little background in business:** Ronald J. Ebert and Ricky W. Griffin, *Business Essentials*, any edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999 or later). This text is used in the undergraduate course BUS 10a (“Functions of the Capitalist Enterprise”) and is on reserve in Goldfarb Library.

**Preparing for class:** Please follow the assignments below carefully. The readings are of two types – there is usually a conceptual reading from the text or an article, and an HBS case study.

The **conceptual readings are there to give you definitions, tools, and approaches** that will help you analyze the cases; they will also help you develop a general framework over the course of the semester. Usually, one conceptual reading applies to many cases, not just the one with which it is paired in an assignment. So feel free to review them later in the course and apply them to new cases. Remember: we do not study theory for its own sake, but to apply it to the real world, i.e. to the cases and in your paper.

Even though the conceptual readings are important, in class we will usually focus on analyzing the cases, not on reviewing concepts in the abstract. In the process of discussing the cases, the use of the concepts will become clearer. But this means that you should prepare the case carefully and fully – using the assignment questions as loose guidelines, you should read and analyze the case, work the numbers in the exhibits, formulate your conclusions, and prepare to share your work in class through discussion and debate.
Tips for Preparing, Participating, and Learning in Case Classes

1. **Read the assignment questions and think** about how this case and the questions fit in the course. What have we done so far? What appears to be the topic for this class?

2. **Skim the case:** this means:
   - Read opening paragraphs and the
   - Look at every exhibit to see what kind of data are offered
   - Read quickly a few parts of the case to glean the main themes
   - Go back to the assignment questions: What will you need to focus on in the case?

3. If there is an additional reading that is to be used in analyzing the case, read that next, or decide what other **tools you need to attack the case.** Sometimes additional reading is optional; in that case read it later. Use your judgment in allocating reading time.

4. **Read the case** and mark up useful information. Don't highlight all of it; just scribble and highlight as needed to bring out the most important facts and issues. Keep an eye out for case facts that may be useful in answering the assigned questions or the main issues.

5. **Analyze the exhibits:** this means:
   - Identify what important messages they contain that speak to the issues
   - Do some calculations to get beyond the numbers that are presented (e.g. ratios)
   - Spend extra time on exhibits that seem to be core to the issues, skim over others

6. **Prepare your analysis,** this means:
   - Write down your answers to the assignment questions, in bullet or short form
   - Make reference to case facts to support your answers
   - Write down any additional issues that may be interesting to bring up in class

7. **Discuss your analysis** with fellow students; this means:
   - Get together in a study group or over coffee or dinner
   - Hear the perspectives of others; share insights; get tips for your analysis
   - “Rehearse” with them how and what you would say in class

8. You are now **ready for class!**
   - If you are lucky, you will be called to start class; open with your best shot
   - Otherwise, raise your hand and jump into the discussion with additional thoughts
   - Early in a class, you can usually use your prepared analysis; later, topics may evolve

9. **When you get the floor:**
   - Try to connect (build, debate) to what was said before, or to the issues “on the floor”
   - Try to explain your idea and argument, using facts to back it up, and be ready to elaborate
   - Don’t be concerned about your speaking skills or accent: We will listen!

10. **After class,** jot down **what you learned,** including
    - New insights about the topic or about how to approach the subject next time
    - Tips to yourself about case analysis and preparation
Study Assignments

**Note:** For each class, the assignment usually includes one or more cases and one or more conceptual readings (article or chapter). In class, we will discuss the cases, while applying the concepts. In other words, you must study and "prepare" each case, using the assignment questions to guide you. Look carefully at the assigned pages, as in some cases you do not read to read the whole case or chapter.

See page 2-3 of this syllabus for a summary of readings and for reminder of where to get the materials. You are responsible for acquiring the materials and following this syllabus.
Introduction

Friday, 1/17

What is strategic thinking?

Required readings:

- “Prelude Corp.,” in case HBS packet. (Even though this is our first class, you are expected to have acquired and prepared this case by the time we meet.)
- SM, Chapters 1 and 2.

Study questions:

1. What was Prelude’s strategy up to 1972? Evaluate how the various pieces of this strategy fit together to address the company’s goals.
2. What key forces in the firm’s external environment shaped the success of businesses like Prelude’s?
3. Evaluate how well Prelude’s strategy responds to these external forces.
I. Industry Analysis

Friday, 1/24

How to analyze industries

Required readings:

- “The Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy,” Porter in HBS case packet. Study this carefully, as we will use this framework extensively. It is also discussed in the textbook.
- SM, Chapter 6, especially 6.3 and pp. 136-144.

Study questions:

1. Be sure you understand Porter’s “Five Forces” model discussed in the article and in section 6.3 of the book; many of the concepts in pp. 136-144 elaborate on this model. Apply the model to the case. We will use this model in the next few classes.
2. Why is the soft drink industry so profitable? Consider this question for two separate segments of the industry: (1) concentrate producers and (2) bottlers.
3. Why do concentrate producers want to integrate vertically into bottling?
4. How has the rivalry between Coke and Pepsi affected the industry’s profitability?
Friday, 1/31

*How industry structure shapes strategy*

**Required readings:***

- SM, Chapter 7, especially sections 7.2 and 7.3.
- “Math Tools for Strategists” in HBS case packet. Focus on the tips on pp. 13-14, and then consider the tools on pp. 6-7 (and Exhibit 2).

**Study questions:**

1. What were the most important competitive challenges facing the companies competing in Crown’s industry in the decades up to 1989?
2. Why did Crown perform so well during Connelly’s tenure (1957-1989)?
3. What should Avery do now to respond to emerging threats and opportunities in the industry, and why?
4. What calculations based on the case and exhibits were useful in your analysis?

**TEAM PREZOS on Industry Analysis:**

If your team is assigned to this day, please *analyze the industry structure of the industry you have been assigned.* You do not need to provide extensive background about the industry; just go right into your analysis and end with a conclusion about the structure and attractiveness of the industry. Of course -- be sure also to prepare the case and readings above.
II. Competitor Analysis

Friday, 2/7

*How to analyze competitors*

**Required reading:**

- “Adolph Coors in the Brewing Industry,” in HBS case packet.
- SM, Chapter 3, especially sections 3.2-3.3 and 3.7.
- “Math Tools for Strategists” in HBS case packet. Focus on the tips on pp. 13-14, and then consider the tools on pp. 7-8 (and Exhibit 4).

**Study questions:**

1. Coors was successful throughout the mid-1970s. What was its strategy historically?
3. What, if anything, might Coors have done differently to avoid its decline?
4. What calculations based on the case and exhibits were useful in your analysis?
Friday, 2/14

*Competitor strategies and performance*

**Required readings:**

- SM, Chapter 9, especially section 9.2.
- “Competing on Resources” Collis and Montgomery in *HBR* on Business Source Premier.

**Study questions:**

1. What are Wal-Mart’s sources of competitive advantage in discount retailing? How did Wal-Mart create these advantages?
2. Compare the performance and cost structure of Wal-Mart to that of an average retailer and explain the differences that you see.
3. Why are many communities so resistant to allow Wal-Mart to establish locally? Is Wal-Mart good or bad for the local community?
4. Is Wal-Mart too big?

**TEAM PREZOS on Competitor Analysis:**

If your team is assigned to this day, please analyze how the strategy and performance of your firm compares to those of its rivals. You’ll need to decide which rivals to study – no need to cover all rivals, just one or two main ones. You do not need to provide extensive background about the industry, the firm, or the rivals; just go right into your analysis. You may want to tie your analysis to a brief analysis of the industry, but avoid presenting a full industry analysis. Of course -- be sure also to prepare the case and readings above.
III. Location and International Strategy

Friday, 2/28

*Tech strategies in (vastly) different countries*

Required readings:

- “Microsoft, 1995,” in HBS case packet. **Skip and ignore the (large) section called “New Growth Opportunities,” as we will not discuss that section. Focus on the rise of MSFT.**
- SM, Chapter 12, section 12.2 and 12.4. You may skim the rest of the chapter.

Study questions:

*For "Microsoft, 1995":*

1. What accounts for Microsoft’s success in the Operating Systems segment up to 1995?
2. How have the forces of competition changed over time in this industry?
3. In Bill Gates's view, what are the sources of Microsoft's advantage?

*For "Microsoft in PRC":*

1. What was the emerging structure of the software industry in the PRC in the early 1990s?
2. Was this structure different from the same industry in the United States at the time?
3. What were the implications for Microsoft’s entry strategy at the time?

**Note:** Paper outline due in next class! See p. 7 of this syllabus for description of the paper project and the outline that you will hand in.
Friday, 3/6

*Locational advantages and global strategy*

**Required Paper outline due:** Please hand in a 1-2 page outline of your proposed final paper topic, stating the key issues you will address, the main evidence you will use, and your conceptual approach (see p. 7 of this syllabus).

**Required readings:**

- SM, Chapter 13, especially sections 13.3-13.5.
- “Math Tools for Strategists” in HBS case packet. Focus on the tips on pp. 13-14, and then consider the tools on pp. 12-13 (and Exhibit 6).

**Study questions:**

1. How has CEMEX managed to outperform its international rivals, first in Mexico and later in other countries?
2. Why did CEMEX enter foreign markets in the sequence that it did? How do the markets it has entered recently compare with the markets that it entered early on?
3. What benefits have CEMEX and its international rivals derived from globalization? More broadly, how can cross-border activities add value in this industry?
4. What calculations based on the case and exhibits were useful in your analysis?
IV. Scope of the Firm and Corporate Strategy

Friday, 3/13

*Vertical integration and the scope of the firm*

**Required readings:**

- “Arauco (A),” in HBS case packet.
- SM, Chapter 10, sec 10.1-10.3.
- “Math Tools for Strategists” in HBS case packet. Focus on the tips on pp. 13-14, and then consider the tools on pp. 10-12 (and Exhibit 5).

**Study questions:**

1. In what industries does Arauco compete? How different or similar are these industries?
2. What are the sources of Arauco’s competitive advantage?
3. Should Arauco own both forests and pulp production facilities?
4. Should Arauco build the Nueva Aldea project?
5. What calculations based on the case and exhibits were useful in your analysis?

**TEAM PREZOS on Emerging Markets Multinationals:**

If your team is assigned to this day, please analyze how your firm has become a multinational company. You do not need to provide extensive background about the industry, firm, or the country of origin of the firm; just go right into your analysis. You may want to consider how the firm first grew in local markets, and then what it did to go abroad. Of course -- be sure also to prepare the case and readings above.
Midterm Evaluation

Thursday, 3/18
*Not a class, but be on the lookout: I will email the exam case to you.*

If, for any reason, you cannot receive the email in this way, talk to me beforehand. You will need this case in order to do take the exam the following day. The exam itself is open-book; bring the case itself to the exam.

Friday, 3/20  9.30-11.30
*Midterm exam (in normal class time and place)*
You will be asked to answer 2-3 questions about the situation in the case; please bring the case with you, but do not hand in the case. You will get exam booklets to use and that is the only material you should hand in.
Friday, 3/27

**Corporate advantage and organization strategy**

**Required Readings:**

- SM, Chapter 4, sections 4.1-4.2 and 4.4-4.6. *(Note: This is our only class on the A-R-C framework, which is dealt with in several chapters of the textbook; it is a useful framework, so try to get the main idea in this class.)*
- Skim, as needed: SM, Chapter 14.

**Study Assignment:**

*On ARC:*

1. What use is the A-R-C framework in the field of strategy? Look over some of the cases we have had and apply it to one of them; come prepared to share an example or two.

*On Newell:*

1. How does "corporate" strategy differ from "business unit" strategy?
2. What has been Newell’s corporate strategy?
3. How did its acquisitions add value to the corporation?
4. What do you conclude about the value of highly-diversified conglomerates, such as those that were popular in the US in the 1960s (ITT, Textron) and that exist today in many developing countries?

**TEAM PREZOS on Corporate Structures:**

If your team is assigned to this day, please explain *how your firm governs its diverse businesses.* You do not need to provide extensive background about the industry, firm, or the country of origin of the firm; just go right into your analysis. You may want to consider whether the firm follows the logic of corporate advantage discussed in class. Of course -- be sure also to prepare the case and readings above.
Friday, 4/3

Corporate innovation

Required Readings:

- “Elon Musk’s Big Bets,” in HBS case packet.
- “Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave” by Bower and Christensen in HBR – Optional in HBS packet and freely available on Business Source Premier.

Study Assignment:

1. Evaluate Tesla’s acquisition of Solar City. From the point of view of public investors in Tesla, what are the pros and cons of the deal? Is Elon Musk’s point of view different?
2. Evaluate Tesla’s joint investment with Panasonic in the battery Gigafactory. What are the advantages and disadvantages for Tesla?
3. The case describes several of Elon Musk’s investments. Imagine that these were not just investments by one person, but parts of a conglomerate that was owned by public investors, called Musk Inc. Should Musk Inc. divest any parts of it portfolio or focus more on any parts? Why?
4. Does Christensen’s model of disruptive technologies apply?

TEAM PREZOS on Clean Tech Startups:
If your team is assigned to this day, please explain the role of startups in innovation in the business you were assigned. You do not need to provide extensive background about the industry, firm, or the country of origin of the firm; just go right into your analysis. You may need to speculate on the future of technologies, but try to fix ideas on how the market and economics of your industry evolve. Of course -- be sure also to prepare the case and readings above.
V. Leadership and social responsibility

Friday, 4/17

*Leading change in organizations*

**Required Readings:**

- “GE’s Two-Decade Transformation: Jack Welch’s Leadership,” in HBS case packet.
- "Creating Corporate Advantage,” Collis and Montgomery in *HBR* – optional in HBS packet or freely available on Business Source Premier.

**Study Assignment:**

1. Why did Welch do what he did in the 1980s and early 1990s?
2. What is Welch’s concept of strategic analysis?
3. How did he go about implementing strategy from his seat at the top of the corporation?

**Special assignment (we will do this in the second "half" of class):**

If you could transfer *one aspect of Jack Welch’s management system at GE* to companies with which you are familiar, what would that aspect be? Would you have to adapt the system to your company? If so, why and how? (Think about companies in your country, if not the USA, or where you have worked.)
Friday, 4/24

**Personal and corporate responsibilities**

**Required reading:**

- “Parable of Sadhu,” McCoy in HBS case packet. You must read this article; it is our “case” for the day. And then **think** about it!

**Recommended reading:**


**Study questions:**

1. Why do you think Bowen McCoy acted the way he did?
2. Did Bowen McCoy do the right thing? How do his actions relate to your individual ethics?
3. How does this parable relate to business ethics and corporate social responsibility?
Final Paper

Monday, 5/4    Final papers of GRADUATING STUDENTS are due

Monday, 5/11    Final papers for ALL OTHER STUDENTS are due

All papers should be in PDF format and contain all text and exhibits (i.e. please do not send separate documents or spreadsheets). Submit to bgc@brandeis.edu before midnight of the due date.

See pp. 7-8 of this syllabus for paper requirements and suggested content. Unexcused late submissions will be penalized. If you have a good reason for missing this deadline, you will need to get an “Incomplete” from me before this date.

Remember to reference your sources properly. Improperly references papers will be returned ungraded and may be subject to disciplinary action. If you have any doubts about our standards of Academic Integrity or the processes by which these are enforced, see materials presented at IBS Orientation.

Course requirements differ; in this course, the minimum you should cite are:

- All direct quotes and verbatim text
- All major ideas and arguments
- All graphics, charts, and data series (if you compile a chart or calculate a series, say where the raw data is from and say what you did)
- Any text taken verbatim from the web or another source
- Major portions of text that are paraphrased or drawn from another source
Selected Bibliography

Strategy and General Management


** Ebert, Ronald and Griffin, Ricky. Business Essentials, any edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999). (This is a good general introduction to business functions, and can serve as brush-up reading, if you feel that is useful in your study.)


Firm Strategy and Industry Structure


Scope of the Firm and Firm Capabilities


Technology Strategy and Innovation


**International Strategy and Management**


**Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Development**

Bogle, John C. *The Battle for the Soul of Capitalism* Yale University Press, 2006


Recommended Readings available on Business Source Premier

Because the publisher does not allow permalink to be posted, you’ll have to find each article the old fashion way....

Go to the BSP database, and search by title and author to get a PDF that you can save and read (not sure if it prints). (The three readings that are required, shown here in bold, are also included in the HBS course packet, so you will be able to print them.)

To get to “Business Source Premier” by following these tabs on the IBS website:

→ Current Students → Academic Resources → LTS Library Research Guide → News & Articles tab → Business Source Premier → Search for your article

Title: The Five Competitive Forces That Shape Strategy. (REQUIRED READING – also in HBS Course Packet)
Authors: Porter, Michael E.

Title: The Core Competence of the Corporation.
Authors: Prahalad, C. K.; Hamel, Gary

Title: Competing on Resources
Authors: Collis, David J., Montgomery, Cynthia A.

Title: Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave (Optional in HBS Course Packet)
Authors: Joseph L. Bower; Clayton M. Christensen
Source: Harvard Business Review, Ja-Feb 1995

Title: Creating Corporate Advantage
Authors: Collis, David J.; Montgomery, Cynthia A.

Title: The Parable of the Sadhu. (REQUIRED READING – also in HBS Course Packet)
Authors: McCoy, Bowen H.
Source: Harvard Business Review; May/Jun97, Vol. 75 Issue 3, p54-64, 8p, 1c

Title: Strategy & Society: Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility (Optional in HBS packet)
Authors: Porter, Michael E., Kramer, Mark

Last updated Jan 6, 2020 by BGC