

**MBA P720  
Strategic Management  
Fall 2023 Course Outline**

**Strategic Management Area  
DeGroot School of Business  
McMaster University**

**COURSE OBJECTIVE**

As the capstone to McMaster’s MBA program, this course is designed to unify the functional knowledge you gained during the program. This course will also give you a working knowledge of how firms gain and sustain competitive advantage. In sum, this course will enhance your capacity to do the job of a general manager responsible for setting strategy and managing performance.

**INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Dr. Brent McKnight**  
Instructor  
[bmcknight@mcmaster.ca](mailto:bmcknight@mcmaster.ca)

**TA Information:** See Avenue

Office: TBD

Office Hours: By Appointment – Zoom and in-person office hours will be posted around critical deliverable due dates

**Course Website:** <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

**COURSE ELEMENTS**

Avenue:	Yes	Leadership:	Yes	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
Participation:	Yes	Ethics:	Yes	Numeracy:	No	Written skills:	Yes
Evidence-based:	Yes	Innovation:	Yes	Group work:	Yes	Oral skills:	Yes
Experiential:	Yes	Guest speaker:	Yes	Final Exam:	Yes		

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Strategic management focuses on the concept of strategic analysis, formulation, and implementation by exploring the functions and nature of general management. The course serves as an opportunity to develop skills for strategic thinking and analysis, leadership, communication, teamwork, and cross-functional integration. This course is taught primarily through the case-method and involves readings, lectures, videos, exercises, a simulation, and a live case exam.

What you will learn in this course has utility beyond the senior leadership of organizations. Increasingly, organizations need employees that can think strategically and understand how their actions contribute to the overall success of the firm. What you will learn is applicable to large corporations, but applies to organizations of all kinds, including start-ups, non-profits, and government organizations. The cases and concepts of the course are used to explore the strategic challenges facing such organizations today. The materials used in the course encompass a wide range of industries, businesses, and issues to provide depth and breadth of experience.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- Analyze industry structure and environmental trends.
- Assess how a firm’s resources and capabilities generate competitive advantage.
- Formulate new strategies under different contexts.
- Explain how firms add value to multiple businesses.
- Implement strategies and organize the firm for success.

## REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Course content, readings and case materials

- <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca> \$ FREE

Textbook and Reading Options

- Mastering Strategic Management (open source) by Ketchen and Shook available at <https://opentextbc.ca/strategicmanagement/> \$ FREE
- A collection of online readings \$ FREE
- Optional Strategic Management by Frank Rothaermel, 4th Edition \$99-\$150

Cases and Readings

- Purchase two course packs
    1. Ivey Course Pack <https://www.iveypublishing.ca/s/ivey-coursepack/a1R5c00000EjQiYEAU> \$37.35
    2. WDI Publishing Course Pack \$3.95 USD
- <https://wdi-publishing.com/coursepack/purchase/?cpack=NQY19>

TopHat membership	\$ FREE
• An email invitation should have been sent to you. See below for details.	
Airline Simulation	\$ 44.95 USD
• credit card required	

Students can choose from a free open-source textbook or a more full-featured textbook.

- The free textbook is an open-source textbook called Mastering Strategic Management (<https://opentextbc.ca/strategicmanagement>). I have coupled this with selected readings that can be found on Avenue. You can print this textbook or choose from a number of online formats.
- The full featured textbook is Rothaermel's Strategic Management textbook. You can purchase a physical copy or just the online version. Both come with the interactive Connect feature.

## TOP HAT

We will be using the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to follow the class discussion and submit answers to in-class questions using smartphones, tablets, or laptops.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as provides a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you, but if you don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website. Our Course Join Code and websites are:

**C01 538051** <https://app.tophat.com/e/538051>

**C02 179646** <https://app.tophat.com/e/179646>

**C03 221438** <https://app.tophat.com/e/221438>

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email ([support@tophat.com](mailto:support@tophat.com)), the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

## EVALUATION

The course offers a balance of evaluation methods. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

### *Components and Weights*

Midterm	Multiple Choice (individual and shared)	20%
Simulation	Strategy Airline Simulation (shared)	20%
Engagement	Classroom Engagement (individual)	25%
Final Case Exam	Final case exam (individual and shared)	35%
Total		100%

Note, students will remain in the same group for each of the shared components of the course.

### *Multiple Choice Midterm (15% individual and 5% shared)*

This is an in-class multiple choice exam. The exam will cover material from the first 7 classes (case content excepted). This midterm has been created using pedagogical innovations shown to improve learning outcomes.

**Generating Multiple Choice Questions.** Students are called upon to create the multiple-choice questions that will constitute the midterm. Prior to the Friday (11:59pm) following each of the first 7 classes, students will submit a single multiple-choice question based on *content from the required readings and/or classroom learning* (no case facts please). The purpose of doing this is to encourage you to actively identify important course content.

Each question should be accompanied by 4 potential answers (a through d) with the correct answer clearly identified. Questions must be submitted using the **excel spreadsheet template** found on Avenue. Subsequent submissions should build on this spreadsheet such that the final submission of an Excel spreadsheet has 7 questions. Submissions will be due on Avenue.

Strong questions and answers should:

- Be clearly worded and not misleading.
- There must be one, and only one, correct answer.
- Demonstrate understanding of strategic management concepts taught in class.
- Present a range of difficulty—questions should not have an obvious answer
- Reflect either learning from readings or learning from classroom discussion
- Questions should not be specific to teaching cases from class. For example, do not ask a question about what strategy Amazon adopted.

There is a presentation on Avenue under Course Administration with some tips on writing strong multiple-choice questions.

The strongest ~60 questions will be selected for inclusion on the multiple-choice test (see above). It is therefore in your best interest to produce high quality questions, because these will be only minimally altered before examination (corrected as necessary). The professor reserves the right to add questions beyond those submitted by students if necessary. Further, if one of your questions in creating the midterm, you will receive **one bonus mark/percent** on your final grade. This is a valuable incentive that can make a difference on your final grade!

**Group Exam Writing.** You will first write the multiple-choice exam individually. Once completed individually, students will get into their course groups to complete the same test. Writing tests in groups has been showing to improve learning outcomes. The course group will be the same for the midterm, live case exam, and theory of change assignment. The individual submission will account for 15% of the final grade while the group submission will account for an additional 5%. Students who score individually better than their group will receive their individual test score for the full 20%.

NOTE: The use of a McMaster standard calculator is allowed during examinations in this course but is not needed.

### ***Strategy Airline Simulation (20% shared)***

In the strategy airline simulation you will run a fledgling regional airline in a computer simulated world. This simulation provides an environment where students can design, implement, and refine their strategy in a dynamic context. Students compete in groups against their classmates making decisions across functional management areas related to aircraft acquisition, marketing, operations, human resource development, and financing.

The simulation is an exciting way to explore the complexities and challenges of running a business and integrating multiple functional areas.

Students will work together in groups of about 4-5, to compete against their classmates in the airline simulation. The airline simulation takes place in two stages.

**Practice and dashboard stage (10%).** Students will gain access to the simulation in late September and begin a series of 3 practice rounds through early October. The objective of this first stage is two-fold. First, it should familiarize students with the simulation and how the system functions. Second, students will use these practice rounds to develop a dashboard support tool to assist strategic decision making during #simulationfestsaturday. This assignment responds to requests by students for opportunities to develop data analytical skills and experiences.

This will include a ***Dashboard Support Spreadsheet*** and a ***Strategy PowerPoint Deck***.

For more details about this assignment, see the Simulation Dashboard Assignment pdf on Avenue.

Late dashboards (spreadsheet and PowerPoint) will be penalized at a rate of 25% per day starting the Wednesday following the due date.

**Simulation Performance (10%)**

The second stage begins on *Simulation Fest Saturday* which is **Saturday October 21<sup>st</sup> from 9am until 3pm**. It runs for **7 simulation decisions** over an exciting on-campus event. Check the Course schedule near the end of the syllabus for detailed dates. In this simulation you compete against other teams in this class. Your team's simulation grade is determined using a ranked score of stock price (50%) and cumulative net income (50%); ties go to cumulative net income. In addition to the highest grade, the names of the team members with the highest performance will be immortalized on a plaque on a course trophy displayed prominently at the Ron Joyce Centre. Bragging rights included.

***Classroom Engagement (25% individual)***

**In-Class Quizzes and Reflection (10%).** Each class in this course focuses on a particular topic important for properly understanding strategic management. To guide your learning, during class you will answer questions pertaining to a) the prepared case, b) short answer and multiple-choice on concept comprehension, and c) short reflections on key strategic concepts. To facilitate this the Top Hat presentation platform will be used.

**Participation (15%).** The daily classroom discussion represents a unique opportunity for you to develop and enhance your confidence and skill in articulating a personal position, reacting to new ideas, and receiving and providing critical feedback from a group of assertive and demanding colleagues. Much of your learning will come from these classroom experiences.

You are expected to come to each class having read cases and assigned readings with a readiness and willingness to contribute to class discussion. Close to half of each class will be focused on case discussions. It is not possible to contribute without having sufficiently prepared for the case. Analyzing the case using the tools and frameworks from the textbook and past classes will give you valuable insights.

A good contribution involves presenting a clear opinion, expressing it civilly, and supporting the opinion with sound logic. Every student shares the responsibility to create an environment where each member of the class feels comfortable offering his or her opinion. Learning from others and contributing to the learning of others through the experience and insights you share is a key part of this learning process. Contribution will be graded based on quality, quantity, and consistency. Some of the things that will determine a contribution include:

- a) Relevance – Do your comments speak directly to the issues and concepts being addressed? Do they extend our understanding of those issues or concepts? Do they reflect your adequate preparation to participate in the discussion?
- b) Additivity – Do your comments reflect active listening to the comments of other class members? Have they incorporated insights introduced earlier and built upon them?

- c) Substance – Do your comments make a real contribution to the ideas being exchanged? Has anything new been gained from your contribution to the discussion?
- d) Persuasiveness – Have your points been well articulated, argued, and supported? Are your arguments convincing?
- e) Questioning – Have your comments reasonably questioned the comments of others or challenged their assumptions without disparaging the person who offered them?
- f) Amount of participation (this does NOT mean dominating the discussion, rather frequency of additive comments).

Participation will be graded by an in-class TA.

### ***Live Case Exam (15% individual case exam) and (20% shared presentation)***

Your final exam is a live case that starts on the first day of class. On the first day of class, real executives will make a presentation in your class detailing their organization, industry, and their strategic problem(s). You will receive an approximately 5-page case detailing the organization along with documents as appropriate. In addition, you will continue to engage the client, asking questions and clarifying the problem throughout the duration of the course.

You may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) in support of this project.

The final exam takes place in three parts; two of which you will work in your groups to accomplish.

#### **PART 1: Live Case - Analysis (Shared 10%)**

In the first phase, students will work in their course groups to conduct analysis of both the resources and capabilities within the firm as well as the external environment in which the firm is operating. Students will use knowledge gained in the course to apply strategic analysis frameworks to this analysis. This case *analysis* will be graded both on thoroughness and detail as well as how well the analysis highlights the “so what” implications of the internal and external analysis.

**Note:** While a SWOT analysis can be a useful brainstorming exercise, the strategy tools taught in the class are better ways of organizing this information. Strengths and weaknesses are best organized through VRIO analysis, value chain, and strategic understanding through generic strategy identification and strategy diamond resource analysis whereas opportunities and threats are best organized through PEST, Porter’s, Strategic Groups. Seek to show a holistic understanding of how these tools inter-relate.

Analysis portion of report **8-10 pages**, 12-point Times New Roman, single space, 1-inch margins. This page count is inclusive of exhibits and figures. Endnotes can take additional pages as necessary. Make sure to use figures to economize on space. The report must be completed in essay format.

Cite your work using the end note formatting found here though I am comfortable with Chicago or APA style: <https://library.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/businesscitation.pdf>

Student groups will submit their solutions through dropbox in Avenue. Submissions will be subject to the turnitin.com service and will be reviewed in accordance with the university's academic integrity policy. Please be careful to read the case exam instructions carefully.

Live Case analysis will be due **Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm** to dropbox. Late exams will be penalized at a rate of 25% per day beginning on Wednesday November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**PART 2: Live Case Exam (Individual 15%)**

Students will submit solutions to the live case exam. These solutions constitute the recommendations you as a consultant to the client are making. This case exam will be graded on how well the proposed solution demonstrates an understanding of the client's strategy, an assessment of strengths and weaknesses including internal and external strategic fit, as well as how proposed solutions are argued to improve strategic fit and performance. *Each case solution must be completed individually.*

Live Case Exam portion **maximum of 7 pages**, 12-point Times New Roman, single space, 1-inch margins. This page count is inclusive of exhibits and figures. The report must be completed in essay format. Long reports will be penalized at a rate of 10% per page. Endnotes can take additional pages as necessary. Cite your group report like an existing published work such as: "Group 5 Live Case Report, P720 course submission, October 2023." Do not include this group report.

Cite your work using the end note formatting found here though I am comfortable with Chicago or APA style: <https://library.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/businesscitation.pdf>

Students will submit their solutions through dropbox in Avenue. Submissions will be subject to the turnitin.com service and will be reviewed in accordance with the university's academic integrity policy. Please be careful to read the case exam instructions carefully.

Your final solution to the case will be due to **Friday November 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm**. Exams that are handed in late will be penalized at a rate of 25% per day.

The case exam is considered the final comprehensive evaluation component of this course. As such, performance on this exam is critical for successful completion of this course.

**PART 3: Presentation to Executives (Shared 10%)**

Following submission of the individual portion of the case exam, students will work in their course groups. They will share and then discuss their individual case exam solutions to arrive at a final recommendation and solution for the client executives. In these groups, students will then prepare a **10-minute** presentation with supporting documentation for delivery as a final exam. Groups will have an **additional 5 minutes** to answer questions. This presentation will take place on the final day of class during normal class time.

Presentations will be graded based on four elements:

1. **Problem:** The presentation of a clear, concise, and well supported problem statement. This includes supporting the explanation of the problem with key takeaways from



strategic analysis covered in the course (ie Porter's, Value chain, Strategy Diamond, etc.). This problem may be articulated in terms of a mismatch between a firm's strategy and external environment and/or internal capabilities and features.

2. **Strategic Solution:** A clearly articulated strategic solution including why that solution is appropriate for the identified problem. Stronger solutions clearly explain how the strategic solution addresses mismatches of strategy and external and/or internal analyses.
3. **Implementation.** A well detailed implementation plan that includes short, medium, and long-term action items, key performance indicators (KPIs) and risks. Financials are required. While solutions do not need to be fully costed, groups should be able to answer questions about costs of the proposed strategy, revenue impacts and rough payback periods. *A lack of financials will result in a 20% grade penalty.*
4. **Professionalism.** Presentations should be professional which includes appropriate attire, clarity of presentation, and well answered questions. Stronger presentations pay attention to client branding including current logos and appropriate firm colours.

*Please submit presentations files and any other material through Avenue prior to the start of class on the day of presentation.*

ACTIVITY	DELIVERY	DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
<b>Live Lecture and Case Discussion</b>	Synch	Lecture content taught in conjunction of assigned cases.  Core content available in PowerPoint	Lecture PowerPoint available in Avenue
<b>Readings</b>	Asynch	Tied to weekly discussion prompts, lecture content, and case learning	Reading links in Avenue, assigned case readings from coursepack, and textbook reading
<b>Quizzes</b>	Synch/Asynch	Quizzes / games to reinforce core content learning and drive student engagement. Top Hat quizzes available asynchronously for completion. Some will be live conducted in class	TopHat
<b>Simulation</b>	Synch/Asynch	Strategy simulation games to be conducted asynchronously in practice and synchronously for #simulationfestsaturday	Interpretive Solutions

### ***Grade Conversion***

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme.

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	POINTS
A+	90 - 100	12
A	85 - 89	11
A-	80 - 84	10
B+	75 - 79	9
B	70 - 74	8
B-	60 – 69	7
F	00 - 59	0

## ***Communication and Feedback***

Students that are uncomfortable in directly approaching an instructor regarding a course concern may send a confidential and anonymous email to the respective Area Chair or Associate Dean:

<http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/>

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Administrative Assistant.

Instructors are encouraged to conduct an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery. Instructors should provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #8 in the term.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at:

[www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.  
Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

## **AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION**

*Some courses may* use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## **COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT**

*Some courses may* use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **MISSED ACADEMIC WORK**

### ***Missed Mid-Term Examinations / Tests / Class Participation***

Please do not use the online McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) as this is for Undergraduate students only. The MBA program will not accept an MSAF.

When students miss regularly scheduled term work which contributes 10% or more to the final grade, for legitimate reasons as determined by the Student Experience – Academic Office (SEAO), the activity necessary to compensate for the missed work will be determined by the course instructor. The compensatory activities assigned will vary with the nature of the course and the missed requirement. They include, but are not restricted to, an alternative assignment, a rescheduled midterm exam, or re-weighting the marks for the missed component to other mark components. Documentation explaining such missed work must be provided to the SEAO within five (5) working days of the scheduled date for completion of the work.

Acceptable reasons for missed work, along with the [Petition for Missed Term Work](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#), can be found on the DeGroot MBA Student website ([mbastudent.degroot.mcmaster.ca](http://mbastudent.degroot.mcmaster.ca)). Please direct any questions about acceptable documentation to the MBA Academic Advisors ([askmba@mcmaster.ca](mailto:askmba@mcmaster.ca)).

University policy states that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) Petition for Missed Term Work per academic year, after which the student must meet with the Director of the program.

If term work is missed without an approved reason, students will receive a grade of zero (0) for that component.

### **Missed Final Examinations**

Students must be available for the duration of the posted exam period regardless of their personal exam schedule. This is to ensure student availability throughout the entire exam period in the event that an exam must be rescheduled due to unforeseen circumstances (university closure, power outage, storm policy, etc.). A student who misses a final examination without valid reason will receive a mark of 0 on the examination.

Students who have missed a final exam for a valid reason can apply to the SEAO to write a deferred examination by submitting an [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) with supporting documentation. The application must be made within five days of the scheduled exam.

The [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#) can be found on the DeGroote MBA Current Student website ([mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca](http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca))

Deferred examination privileges, if granted, are normally satisfied during the examination period at the end of the following semester. In select cases, the deferred examination may be written at a time facilitated by the SEAO and agreed to by the course instructor.

Requests for a second deferral or rescheduling of a deferred examination will not be considered.

### **STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES**

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructor. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

Students who are leveraging accommodation for tests and exams are supported by the SEAO. These exams are written at the Ron Joyce Centre and do not take place in the Tim Nolan Testing Centre. Correspondence for accommodations is managed via the [DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca](mailto:DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca) email address. Students must communicate their intent to leverage accommodations on a test or exam a minimum of 10 business days prior to the assessment.

### **ON-LINE PROCTORING**

**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to the SEAO **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO THE COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment

on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES**

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of MBA P720 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

## MBA P720

### Strategic Management

Date	Overview and Learning Goals	Readings and Cases	Dates and Deadlines
1-Week of Sep 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Introduction to Strategic Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is strategy?</li> <li>Vision, mission, and values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Porter, <u>What is strategy?</u> available in Courseware</li> <li><u>Class 1 Readings</u> available through Avenue</li> <li>Live Case Presentation in Class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Multiple Choice Question Due Friday September 15<sup>th</sup> 11:59pm</i></li> </ul>
2-Week of Sep 18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Analysis of External Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Porter's 5 forces</li> <li>PESTEL</li> <li>Strategic Groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Class 2 Readings</u> available through Avenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Multiple Choice Question Due Friday September 22<sup>nd</sup> 11:59pm</i></li> </ul>
3-Week of Sep 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Analysis of Internal Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource Based View (VRIO)</li> <li>Capabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>CASE: Kombi Sports Inc.: Staying Ahead of the Curve</i></li> <li><u>Class 3 Readings</u> available through Avenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Multiple Choice Question Due Friday September 29<sup>th</sup> 11:59pm</i></li> <li><i>Simulation Practice Round 1 due Thurs September 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm</i></li> </ul>
4-Week of Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Competitive Advantage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value Chain</li> <li>Understand drivers of firm profitability</li> <li>Shared Value</li> <li>Organizational Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>CASE: Lego (A): The Crisis</i></li> <li><u>Class 4 Readings</u> available through Avenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Multiple Choice Question Due Friday October 6<sup>th</sup> 11:59pm</i></li> <li><i>Simulation Practice Round 2 due Mon October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:59pm</i></li> <li><i>Simulation Practice Round 3 due Thurs October 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm</i></li> </ul>
5-Week of Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>	Midterm Recess – Feel free to Meet for the Live Case		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Simulation Dashboard due Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm</i></li> </ul>
6-Week of Oct 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Business Level Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generic business level strategies</li> <li>Value price and cost Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>CASE: Husky Injection molding</i></li> <li><u>Class 6 Readings</u> available through Avenue</li> <li>Discussing Live Case Analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Multiple Choice Question Due Fri October 20<sup>th</sup> 11:59pm</i></li> <li><i>Live Case Questions Due Mon October 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm</i></li> </ul>
7-Week of Oct 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Corporate Strategy – Global and Vertical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vertical and horizontal integration</li> <li>National Competitive advantage – Porter's diamond framework</li> <li>Foreign market entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>CASE: Ikea's Global Sourcing Challenge: Indian Rugs and Child Labor</i></li> <li><u>Class 7 Readings</u> available through Avenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Multiple Choice Question Due Friday October 27<sup>th</sup> 11:59pm</i></li> <li><i>Live Case Group Analysis due Sun October 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm</i></li> </ul>



<b>8-Week of Oct 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Corporate Strategy - Diversification</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horizontal Integration</li> <li>• Mergers and acquisitions</li> <li>• Alliances and joint ventures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>CASE: The Walt Disney Company: The Entertainment King</i></li> <li>• <u>Class 8 Readings</u> available through Avenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Multiple Choice Question Due Friday November 3<sup>rd</sup> 11:59pm</i></li> </ul>
<b>9-Week of Nov 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>In Class Multiple Choice Midterm</b>		
<b>10-Week of Nov 13<sup>th</sup></b>	Working Week for Live Case  Professor available during class for consultation and idea development.		
<b>11-Week of Nov 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Organizational Design: Structure, Culture,</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realized and emergent strategy</li> <li>• Organizational design and structure</li> <li>• Strategy and structure</li> <li>• Organizational culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>CASE: Corporate Strategy at Berkshire Partners</i></li> <li>• <u>Class 11 Readings</u> available through Avenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Live Case – Strategy (Individual) due Fri November 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm</i></li> </ul>
<b>12-Week of Nov 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Sustainability, Innovation and Strategic Change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic change initiatives</li> <li>• Sustainability and business</li> <li>• Innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>CASE: Interface: The Journey Towards Carbon Negative</i></li> <li>• <u>Class 12 Readings</u> available through Avenue</li> </ul>	
<b>13-Week of Dec 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Final Case Presentations</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Live Case – Presentation (group) will take place on the final day of class.</i></li> </ul>

September						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Class Starts - Live Case Presentation					MC Due	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
					MC Due	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
				Simulation Practice #1	MC Due	

October						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Simulation Practice #2			Simulation Practice #3	MC Due	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Midterm Recess						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Simulation Dashboard due	Live Case Strategy - Questions				MC Due	Simulation Fest Saturday!!
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
					MC Due	
29	30	31				
Live Case Group Analysis						

November						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
					MC Due	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
In Class Midterm						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
					Live Case Strategy - Individual	
26	27	28	29	30		

December						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Presentation Slides on Avenue		Live Case Presentations In Class				

## Learning Objectives and Readings

### *Class 1 - Introduction to Strategy*

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Be able to articulate what strategy is and is not
2. Understand the key elements of mission, vision and values
3. Articulate a strategic management process

#### REQUIRED READING

- Ketchen and Short Chapter 1 and 2 **OR** Rothaermel - Sections 1.1 and 1.2 and Chapter 2
- Porter's What is Strategy from your courseware

#### FURTHER READING

- <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/eight-shifts-that-will-take-your-strategy-into-high-gear> (about the strategy process)
- <https://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/strategic-planning-a-roadmap-to-success/> (might be interesting – gets at a process of options and options assessment that I would need to read)
- <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/inspiring-company-mission-statements> (Some top mission/vision statements and some discussion)

### *Class 2 - External environment*

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Provide an assessment of industry attractiveness and what drives that attractiveness (using Porter's 5 Forces)
2. Analyze the role industry dynamics (ie PESTEL) play with respect to changing competitive conditions (Porter)
3. Generate a strategic group model to reveal performance differences between clusters of firms in the same industry

#### REQUIRED READING

- Ketchen and Short - Chapter 3 **OR** Rothaermel, Chapter 3
- Porter's 5 Forces <https://hbr.org/video/3590615226001/the-explainer-porters-five-forces>

#### FURTHER READING

- A strategy for thriving in uncertainty <https://www.bain.com/insights/a-strategy-for-thriving-in-uncertainty/>

- Confronting Uncertainty in Strategy <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-to-confront-uncertainty-in-your-strategy>
- The Uncertainty Advantage <https://www.strategy-business.com/article/The-Uncertainty-Advantage?gko=6b60b>

### ***Class 3 - Internal Environment***

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Articulate the critical assumptions of the resource-based view
2. Apply the VRIO framework to assess the competitive implications of a firm's resources
3. Understand the mechanisms of first mover advantage
4. Understand how resource-based competitive advantages are developed

#### **REQUIRED READING**

- Ketchen and Short Chapter 4 **OR** Rothaermel Chapter 4
- Beating the Odds in Market Entry” McKinsey Quarterly <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/beating-the-odds-in-market-entry>

#### **FURTHER READING**

- VRIO Model <https://www.strategicmanagementinsight.com/tools/vrio.html>
- Capability Driven Strategy [https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/CDS-Gain-the-right-to-win\\_infographic.pdf](https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/CDS-Gain-the-right-to-win_infographic.pdf)
- The Half-Truth of First-Mover Advantage Harvard Business Review, Harvard Business Review 2005 vol 83 (4). This can be found on our University Library website.

### ***Class 4 - Competitive Advantage***

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Conduct a firm profitability analysis using accounting data to assess and evaluate competitive advantage
2. Describe the shared value creation framework and its relationship to competitive advantage
3. Apply a value chain analysis to understand which of the firm's activities generate differentiation and which drive costs.

#### **REQUIRED READING**

- Rothaermel Chapter 5 (if purchased)
- Measuring Long term Performance <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/measuring-long-term-performance>
- Triple Bottom Line <https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-the-triple-bottom-line-22798>

- Creating Shared Value <https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL85B3155A0F0B30D0&v=1vK3cxnP6I4>

#### **FURTHER READING**

- <https://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/three-rules-for-exceptional-performance/>
- <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-to-build-an-alliance-against-corporate-short-termism> (on short term vs long term)
- Creating Shared Value <https://www.sharedvalue.org/about-shared-value>
- Financial Ratios <https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/money-finance/manage-finances/pages/financial-ratios-4-ways-assess-business.aspx>
- Organizational health <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/organizational-health-a-fast-track-to-performance-improvement>
- Balanced Scorecard <https://hbr.org/video/3633937148001/the-explainer-the-balanced-scorecard>

### ***Class 6 - Business Level Strategies***

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Define business level strategy and strategic positioning.
2. Explain what it means to be “stuck in the middle” and its implications for firm performance.
3. Use the Value, Price, and Cost framework to explain sources of competitive advantage.

#### **REQUIRED READING**

- Ketchen and Short Chapter 5 and 6
- Rothaermel Chapter 6 (alternative)
- Value Price Cost Framework <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQboj3NpG-k>
- Generic Strategies Mini-Lecture <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V14kuqYEsxE>

### ***Class 7 - Corporate Strategy – Global and Vertical***

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Explain the factors that drive firms to make vs buy.
2. Compare and contrast the different options firms have to enter foreign markets.

#### **REQUIRED READING**

- Ketchen and Short Chapter 7
- Rothaermel Chapter 10 (alternative)

- Corporate Growing Pains: Build, Borrow or Buy? <https://knowledge.insead.edu/strategy/corporate-growing-pains-build-borrow-or-buy-2318>
- Make or Buy Decisions in Context [https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Strategyand\\_Make-or-buy-sound-decision-making.pdf](https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Strategyand_Make-or-buy-sound-decision-making.pdf)

#### **FURTHER READING**

- CAGE Distance Framework [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CAGE\\_Distance\\_Framework](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CAGE_Distance_Framework)
- CAGE Distance Framework <http://enrichwise.com/2011/12/10/the-cage-framework-distance-matters-in-globalization/>
- Porter's Diamond of National Advantage <http://www.quickmba.com/strategy/global/diamond>

### ***Class 8 - Corporate Strategy – Diversification***

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Understand motivations for firms engaging in horizontal (M&A) and vertical integration.
2. Explain when diversification strategies create competitive advantage and when they do not.

#### **REQUIRED READING**

- Ketchen and Short Chapter 8
- Rothaermel Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 (alternative)
- When Bigger Isn't Always Better – McKinsey <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/when-bigger-isnt-always-better>

#### **FURTHER READING**

- Blog on Economic Thought about Coases theory of the firm <http://www.economicthought.net/blog/2013/02/coases-firm/>
- Mastering Organic Growth <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/mastering-three-strategies-of-organic-growth>

### ***Class 11 - Organization Design***

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Applying agency theory, explain how companies use governance mechanisms to align principals and agents. Offer a critical view of these methods.
2. Explain how organizational structure can support strategy.
3. Students should understand the critical importance of culture to strategy (“culture eats strategy for breakfast”).

**REQUIRED READING**

- Ketchen and Short Chapter 9 and Chapter 10
- Rothaermel Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 (alternative)
- What is Corporate Culture? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gficoigz1xs> (2:31)

**FURTHER READING**

- The Business of Culture <https://iveybusinessjournal.com/the-business-of-culture/>
- 8 Types of Company Culture <https://hbr.org/video/5686668254001/the-8-types-of-company-culture>

***Class 12 – Sustainability, Innovation and Strategic Change***

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Distinguish different types of innovation and implications for strategy.
2. Derive strategic implications from the crossing-the-chasm framework.
3. Explain what a business model is and its role in strategy.
4. Understand the interconnection of sustainability and strategy.

**REQUIRED READING**

- Rothaermel Chapter 7 (alternative)
- Kotter, J. January 2007 “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail”, Harvard Business Review. This can be found on our University Library website (9 pages)
- Disruptive Innovation <https://hbr.org/video/2688242135001/the-explainer-disruptive-innovation> (2 minute video)
- Crossing the Chasm <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-97AXOPzJo> (5 minute video)

**FURTHER READING**

- Business Models for an Era of Innovation Glut <https://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/business-models-for-an-era-of-innovation-glut/>
- Examples of Business Models <https://articles.bplans.com/what-is-a-business-model-business-models-explained/>
- Why business models fail: Pipes vs Platforms <https://www.wired.com/insights/2013/10/why-business-models-fail-pipes-vs-platforms/>