COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to expose doctoral students to a broad foundation in strategic management research. The course will offer an introduction to the range of research on strategic management, from the theoretical to the empirical, and from the classic to the current. At the heart of the course will be our ability to explain performance differences (both temporary and permanent) between firms within and across industries. The course begins with an introduction to the core concepts of strategy and the various factors that may influence performance. Then we will briefly cover a number of topics that are central to research in strategic management. Each session is meant to introduce you to some classic and current pieces on the topic, and to point out some additional research that would be valuable to students with a greater interest in the topic. These topics include general areas such as the resource-based view of the firm, industry evolution and dynamics, strategy-related theories of the firm, and diversification and vertical integration, as well as specific areas such as technology management and information and agency. Some other key areas of research in strategic management will not be covered here. This is not because these topics are less important, but merely due to time constraints and the fact that you will cover some of these topics in other courses.

Readings in each section are arranged in a logical (as opposed to a chronological) manner, but the range in dates of the articles in each session allows students to understand how thinking in each area has evolved over time. The articles within each topic incorporate a variety of theoretical and empirical approaches, giving us an opportunity to explore different ways of pursuing answers to some of the same questions, and also helping you to develop a portfolio of theories and methods with which you are familiar.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class Participation. This is not a lecture course. Class discussion and interaction are a crucial part of our synthesis of the material and learning. It is therefore vital that you come to every class, prepared and ready to contribute. Good participation includes asking questions, raising original ideas, making constructive comments, and having a positive attitude toward learning. Each student is expected to read all of the required readings for the week. In addition, there may be one or more optional homework assignments during the semester that will count towards class participation.
2. Article Summaries. Additionally, each week, one student will present one of the recommended but not mandatory readings (that is, those without a *) listed in the syllabus. You should bring enough hard copies of your summary for each student in the class, and you will be given time (5’ to 10’) to present your summary in class. These summaries should include (but are not limited to):

1. Complete reference of the article
2. Very brief synopsis of the purpose of study or argument of paper
3. An explanation of the primary hypotheses/propositions and constructs in the paper.
4. The methods used in the paper (if empirical)
5. Key findings/conclusions
6. Your assessment of strengths/weaknesses of the study or arguments.

3. Work-in-progress presentation. On the last day of class (December 14th), each student will present the key elements of the Final Paper (see 4 below) in a well structured research presentation.

4. Final Paper. Each student will write the front end of an individual research paper, consisting of a clear research question, a theoretical framing for investigating that question, and a carefully considered research design. Students are free to choose any idea from the syllabus, and will discuss a brief outline (no longer than one page, typed) with one of the instructors of their choice in an individual meeting no later than November 9th to receive guidance in developing an excellent project. Students should view the meeting with the instructor and the work-in-progress presentation as opportunities to improve their understanding of what makes a good research project. The deadline for the Final Paper is Tuesday, December 22nd, at noon (by email).

COURSE GRADING

Grades will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Summaries</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-in-progress presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
READING LIST
(*=mandatory readings.)

Class 1: Introduction (9/14)


Class 2: Strategy and the Locus of Performance (9/21)


No class on Monday, September 28
Class 3: Competitive and Cooperative Interactions (10/5)


Class 4: The Resource-Based View and Firm Capabilities (10/12)


Class 5: Organizational Learning and Adaptation (10/19)


**Class 6: Industry Evolution (10/26)**


Class 7: Technological Change (11/2)


Class 8: Strategy as People and Processes (11/9)


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**Class 9: Strategy and Theories of the Firm (11/16)**


**Class 10: Corporate-level strategy: Diversification, M&As (11/23)**


Class 11: Corporate-level strategy: Vertical integration (11/30)


Class 12: Designing and Managing the Multibusiness Firm (12/7)


Bloom, N., R. Sadun, and J. Van Reenen, 2007, Americans do IT better: US multinationals and the productivity miracle, NBER working paper.

Class 13: Student work-in-progress presentations (12/14)