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### BMGT 499.05: Strategic Managment

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# BMGT 499 S5 39290 3 cr.– STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

## Instructor:

Instructor: Travis Linneman  
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Office Hours: Room 108, Gallagher Business Building  
Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 – 10:50 AM  
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## About this Course:

This is the course on strategy. Over the span of your undergraduate business education, you are being exposed to a wide variety of disciplines (e.g. marketing, finance, management, accounting, MIS, etc.), in the process learning the tools to help you work *in* a business. This course is intended to teach you how to think strategically about business and life. This class has multiple facets to it: readings, case studies, discussions, individual assignments and, finally, a Strategic Plan Project (SP) and presentation. The SP will be a team-based, semester-long project where you will be asked to analysis the strategic environment, current strategy and the optimal strategy of an assigned company. That said, also realize that this course reflects the type of real-world critical thinking and problem solving you'll encounter once you graduate. This is the upper division writing course and so will require that you produce a number of high quality papers.

## Course Purpose and Process:

The purpose of this course is to make you better strategic thinker. What exactly does this mean? As a strategic business thinker, you should be able to look at any business and see profit potential and risks. As we progress through the semester, our aims will be for you to:

- *Create an active and dynamic strategic mindset*
- *Recognize and capitalize on demand-driven opportunities*
- *Hone your pattern recognition abilities*
- *Enhance your problem solving skills*
- *Look forward and reason back*

To help refine these skills, one of the main deliverables in this class will be a Strategic Recommendation. The project throughout the semester, ending with the recommendation, is meant for you to see the business through a strategic lens. You will look at a company and see not the products and services offered but the Operational Effectiveness, Positioning, Trade-offs, Unique Activities and Strategic Fit the company uses to maximize profits. Working in teams, you will have four “mini-presentations” throughout the semester where you deliver your findings. The final Strategic Recommendation asks you to recommend a “pivot” to your company’s strategy – that is, a tweak to the companies strategy that can take the company to the next level (profitably!). In this way, the SP will tie together the diverse parts of the course, as well as integrate the various disciplines you have learned over your time at COB. Lastly, it will provide you with a ‘product’ to take with you when you enter the job market.

## **Gazillionaire**

Each of you will be playing a short game of Gazillionaire. Gazillionaire is a business simulation/game. You will play the leader of a space shipping company. The game is dated in terms of graphics. It does however require you to look at the strategic situation and make decisions that will have actual effects on your business and even the businesses of the other teams. With the free version of this game we can play 20 turns. This will be your primary individual assignment. You will write 3 short papers on your strategic plan, your actions and the results. I am not looking for a high score. I am looking for strategic thought and actions. More information in the Gazillionaire assignment handout.

## **Major Field Test:**

The Major Field Test is a nationally normed exam. Over 400 universities participate. Although this exam is hard and you have been preparing for it throughout your college career. As with all normed exams, it is designed to be able to curve the results into a normal distribution, which requires most of the students to miss many questions. Our students have done very well on this exam in the past, usually scoring on average in the high 80<sup>th</sup> and low 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. Students scoring in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile and above will be honored with special cords for graduation and will have their names posted on the monitors on the first floor of the Gallagher Building.

Here are the details related to the Major Field Test:

- Students **must pass** the Major Field Test assessment to receive a grade in the class. You will see your score after the exam, at the exam you will be told the raw score necessary to pass.
- You **CANNOT** use calculators, laptops, phones, or any electronic devices when you take the Major Field Test. You will be given one page of scratch paper to use for hand calculations. You must leave all cell phones, calculators, and smart watches in your backpack that will be kept in the front of the room.
- Please try to come 10 minutes early to get a computer and start the on-boarding activities, which can take up to 20 minutes. You are allotted 60 minutes for each of the two sections of the exam. Students can move to the second section as soon as the first is finished and are free to leave when the second section is completed.
- Reasonable accommodations for the Major Field Test can be made by contacting Kendall Kihn (Kendall.Hull@mso.umt.edu or 243-4891) or Associate Dean Klaus Uhlenbruck (Klaus.Uhlenbruck@umontana.edu). If you have an emergency that impedes your ability to take the exam, please contact Kendall and Klaus.
- Each time slot for the exam will 2 ½ hours. Student must sign-up for their preferred time slot online via Moodle room titled Major Field Test Registration Spring 2018. **All sessions are in L 26, available times are:**
  - **March 8<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-6:00pm**
  - **March 9<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-11:30am**
  - **March 9<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-3:30pm**
  - **March 16<sup>th</sup> from 10:00-12:30pm**

Course Pre-requisites: Senior standing. Pre-req: COMX 111, ECNS 202, BGEN 220 with grades C or better and completed upper Business core

**NOTE: This syllabus is tentative and subject to change**

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact [Disability Services \(http://www.umt.edu/dss/\)](http://www.umt.edu/dss/) in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification. Please contact me within the first couple of weeks to arrange for accommodations.

### **Students with Learning Disabilities:**

**DSS** Students with disabilities, that are registered with DSS, may request reasonable modifications by contacting me within the first two weeks of class. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). “Reasonable” means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you through DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation. For more information, please consult <http://www.umt.edu/disability>.

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### **Expectations for this Course:**

**SHOW UP, BE ON TIME & COME PREPARED!** This class is based on an on-going, interactive discussion. At a minimum, you need to thoroughly read ALL assigned readings. Try to think through the main points and issues and how they play out in real-world scenarios.

I expect you TO PARTICIPATE (15% of your grade) since the class is much better served through an interchange. Your contributions should be thoughtful and inclusive of the frameworks and themes we have covered. As the course progresses, I expect your presentations to reflect the various articles, case studies, frameworks and class discussions. Included in the 15% participation grade is your contribution to your team’s development of the BMP – dropping below a specific threshold in terms of peer evaluations can erase your other contributions!

It is critical that you get familiar with the course syllabus – it will help set your expectations of the workload for the class. Keep in mind that this syllabus is a rough guide, and that changes may occur during the semester.

### **Objective of the Course:**

1. Learn how strategic managers create opportunities and capture the rewards of their activities (or how they might miss them).
2. Apply and integrate knowledge acquired during your career as a student to real business problems, involving analysis, solution development, and implementation.
3. Sharpen your communication skills by developing and presenting it to an audience.
4. Engage in critical thinking and problem solving.
5. Recognize the interaction between different business areas, e.g. innovation/R&D, production/operations, financing, accounting, management, and marketing.
6. Develop basic managerial skills such as leadership, decision making, and prioritizing.

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7. Perform as part of a group of peers challenged by a demanding project with severe time constraints.
8. Improve skills in achieving group effectiveness.
9. Show integrity, courtesy, reliability, and respect for others through team work.
10. Learn to teach yourself by working independently.

### **Class Materials**

1. **Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success** – Michael R. Braun and Scott F. Latham (ABC-CLIO, LLC: 2014)  
This book is co-authored by a professor at the University of Montana. Please purchase a copy through Amazon.com as soon as possible..
2. **Articles & Cases** – supplementary readings will be posted on Moodle. Please refer to syllabus for when these readings are due.
3. **Podcasts** - As part of your assignments, I will ask you to listen to a few hand-selected podcasts addressing the topics and themes discussed in class. You can access these podcasts either through your smartphone or computer. In addition to being informative, I hope you will also find them inspiring.

### **Grading & Assignments:**

<i>Reading Comprehension Quizzes</i>	<b>20%</b>
<i>Mini-Business Model Plan Presentations</i>	<b>15%</b>
<i>Gazillionaire Papers</i>	<b>25%</b>
<i>Class Participation (incl. peer review)</i>	<b>15%</b>
<i>Final Business Model Presentation (Oral &amp; Written)</i>	<b>25%</b>

Each of the preceding components will be discussed in greater detail as the semester progresses.

Grading scale:	93-100 = A
	90-92 = A-
	87-89 = B+
	83-86 = B
	80-82 = B-
	77-79 = C+
	73-76 = C
	70-72 = C-
	60-69 = D
	59 and below = F

### **Additional comments on Grading & Assignments:**

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- PLEASE DO NOT USE YOUR NOTEBOOK COMPUTER DURING OUR SESSION. This is a *critical thinking* class! If you need to take notes, rely on paper and pen. The use of notebooks is distracting to your fellow students and me.
- For every day an assignment is late, the grade of the paper drops FULL LETTER GRADE, e.g. an “A” paper turned in a day late will become a “B” papers, etc.
- TRY NOT TO MISS THE READING QUIZZES – Make-up quizzes are in essay form.
- NO EXTRA CREDIT. Do the work that is assigned.
- WEEKLY ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN. If you miss MORE THAN 4 CLASSES, your participation grade goes to zero.
- YOU WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EVALUATE YOUR TEAM MEMBERS.
- Disability Svs for Students: [http://life.umt.edu/dss/Faculty/Syllabus\\_Statements.php](http://life.umt.edu/dss/Faculty/Syllabus_Statements.php)).
- RESPECT THE HONOR CODE. Cheating of any form will not be tolerated in this class. All work handed in is to be yours. All work handed in is to be yours. If you don’t know what “cheating” means, please refer to the University Conduct Code at: [http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student\\_conduct.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)

The University of Montana’s School of Business Administration enhances lives and benefits society by providing a world-class business education in a supportive, collegial environment.

We accomplish this mission by acting on our shared core values of creating significant experiences, building relationships, teaching and researching relevant topics, behaving ethically, and inspiring individuals to thrive.

As part of our assessment process and assurance-of-learning standards, the School of Business Administration has adopted the following learning goals for our undergraduate students:

Learning Goal 1: COB graduates will possess fundamental business knowledge.

Learning Goal 2: COB graduates will be able to integrate business knowledge.

Learning Goal 3: COB graduates will be effective communicators.

Learning Goal 4: COB graduates will possess problem-solving skills.

Learning Goal 5: COB graduates will have an ethical awareness.

Learning Goal 6: COB graduates will be proficient users of technology.

Learning Goal 7: COB graduates will understand the global business environment in which they operate.

### **The Strategic Plan Project:**

The SP affords you a unique opportunity to do an in-depth strategic evaluation of a company. In the first few weeks I will assign you into a group – this group will be your group for the remainder of the semester. I will subsequently assign you a company – this company will be your assigned company for the remainder of the semester. PLEASE RECOGNIZE THAT THE STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECT IS YOUR PROJECT – THIS MEANS THAT YOU ARE DOING THE WORK! I will work alongside you, but the calories burnt on this are yours – just like in the real world. I will hand out detailed SP guidelines in a few weeks.

### **Team Work:**

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The business model project will be team-based with groups assigned in the first week. Once assigned, I highly recommend you take into consideration individual strengths and weaknesses: qualitative vs. quantitative; marketing – financial/accounting – technology backgrounds, availabilities throughout the semester, etc. It is critically important that you and your team members learn to manage the various requirements and deadlines of the business plan.

I understand the potential difficulties in team-based projects: some people do more work than others, some teams have better dynamics than others, etc. I recognize that at times it can be challenging and even frustrating, but in my opinion team projects capture the real-world complexity of getting business done. If you find that some team members simply do not contribute, PLEASE APPROACH ME AS A GROUP. I will deal with your collective complaints accordingly. Also, you will have an opportunity to fill out peer evaluation forms at the end of the semester.

## **INTRODUCTION & BASIC STRATEGY – (Week 1 & 2)**

### **Week 1:**

January 23:           **INTRODUCTORY SESSION**  
*Teams Assigned*

January 25:           **What is Strategy?**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 1-10*

### **Week 2:**

January 30:           **Understanding the Business Climate: Which Way Is the Wind Blowing?**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 11-20*

February 1:           **SWOT and Generic Strategies: Starting with a View from the Top**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 21-30*

## **THW FIVE FORCES, GAME THEORY AND THE VALUE SYSTEM – (Week 3 & 4)**

### **Week 3:**

February 6:           **The Five Forces**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 31-46*  
Read: “Know your customers’ ‘Jobs-to-be-Done’” by C. Christensen et al.  
<https://hbr.org/2016/09/know-your-customers-jobs-to-be-done>

February 8:           **Reading Quiz #1**  
(Hand out Individual Assignment #1, due Feb. 27th)  
**Business Model Project Discussion**

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#### **Week 4:**

February 13:           **Game Theory and Business – You’re always in a prisoner’s dilemma**

February 15:           **The Value System: Who’s Kicking---and Kissing---Whom?**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 47-60*

#### **THE VALUE CHAIN & CORE COMPETENCY - (Week 5 & 6)**

#### **Week 5:**

February 20:           **The Value Chain: Ins and Outs of Your Business**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 61-74*

February 22:           \* **TEAM BMP Presentation #1** \*

#### **Week 6:**

February 27:           **Hand in Assignment No. 1**  
Career Development Session

March 1:               **The Core Competency: What’s Your Secret Sauce**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 75-86*

#### **DIVERSIFICATION & INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY- (Week 7 & 8)**

#### **Week 7: (Midpoint)**

March 6:               **Diversifications: Where Do You Go from Here – and How Do You Get There?**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 87-102*

March 8:               **International Strategy: Stepping Out of Your Domestic Market**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 103-116*

#### **Week 8:**

March 13:              **Game Theory Continued**  
Reading TBD

March 15:              \***TEAM BMP Presentation #2**\*

#### **NUMBERS THAT TELL THE STORY (Week 9 & 10)**

#### **Week 9:**

March 20:              \***TEAM BMP Presentation #2**\*

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March 22: *No Class (Meet w/ Teams)*

**Week 10:**

March 27: Spring Break No Class

March 29: Spring Break No Class

**IMPLEMENTATION & FINANCING (Week 11 & 12)**

**Week 11:**

April 3: *Reading Quiz #2:*  
**Measuring Strategic Success: It Ain't a Strategy If You Can't Measure It**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 117-126*  
**(Hand out Individual Assignment #2, due April 12th)**

April 5: **Strategy Implementation: Getting Your Strategic Ducks in a Row**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 127-140*

**Week 12:**

April 10: **\*TEAM BMP Presentation #3\***

April 12: **Hand in Individual Assignment #2**  
Speaker: TBA

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**Week 13:**

April 17: *Reading Quiz #3*  
**Wrap-up: Mastering Strategy ... and Beyond!**  
*Mastering Strategy: Workshops for Business Success, pp. 141-146*

April 19: **Financing New Ventures**

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: BUSINESS MODEL THINKING (Week 14 & 15)**

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**Week 14:**

April 24: **Business Model Project Support Session**

April 26: ***TEAM BMP Presentation #4***

**Week 15:**

May 1: ***In-class Support Session: Business Model Projects***  
**Hand in Assignment #3**

May 3: ***Business Model Project Presentations 1***

May 8: ***Business Model Project Presentations 2***  
**Wrap-up!**

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