GBUS / MBA 815: Business Policy & Strategy

COURSE OUTLINE

Semester: Winter 2019
Class Time: 8:30 am – 4:50 pm
   March 29th and 30th
   April 4th, 5th, and 6th
Room #: TBD
Instructors: Val Sluth, MBA, FCMC, ICD.D
            Scott Langen, MBA, CMC, PMP
Office: 2 Research Drive – Suite 170
Email: vsluth@praxis-consulting.ca and/or slangen@praxis-consulting.ca
Office hours: Please contact me by email or in person to set up a meeting time.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
GBUS / MBA 815 is intended to be delivered in the final stage of the MBA degree so that, acting as leaders, students can draw upon knowledge from various functional areas (e.g., marketing, operations, management, accounting, finance) to develop a more integrative and sophisticated assessment of an organization’s internal and external environment and its impact on competitive advantage. Viewing the organization from a strategic level, students will face the challenge of applying tools and techniques required to make optimal decisions.

Through the analysis and discussion of case studies, current affairs, and academic literature, students will be exposed to highly complex and real business situations and be expected to shift their focus of analysis from the functional to the strategic level. Students will be exposed to not-for-profit, public sector, for-profit, and First Nations organizations and will develop an appreciation for the similarities and differences across sectors as it pertains to strategic decision making and implementation. The course also includes a business press element that attempts to raise awareness about the constantly changing business environment and the relevance of strategic management in the real world. Students will also engage with the academic literature on strategic management and surface the links between theory and practice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
1. Introduce students to the concepts of strategic management and provide tools and techniques that allow students to competently analyze the competitive situations of organizations and markets.
2. Apply analytical techniques from finance, accounting, organizational theory, organization behaviour, marketing, economics, and related business disciplines.
3. Develop an ability to view the organization as a whole and understand the interdependence of organizational functions and in strategic management.
4. Critically analyze the organizational world and the field of strategic management.
5. Develop / improve communication skills, both written and verbal, through cases analyses and presentations and case writing.
6. Encourage business press reading habits and provide a forum to establish a link between classroom learning and outside world.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. In verbal and written formats, students will be able to identify, distinguish between and assess alignment of corporate, business, global and functional level strategies.
2. Given a written case study and/or article, individually and in teams, students will be able to present an internal and external analysis, identify key strategic issues and alternatives, generate solutions, and describe an implementation plan, using assigned format guidelines.
3. In formative and summative course work, students will be able to negotiate team responsibilities and collaborate to present case analyses within defined time periods.
4. During classes, students will be able to verbally contribute to discussions on course concepts in the larger group.
5. In interactions with team members and the instructor, students will be able to communicate (verbal and written) in a professional manner.
6. Through a take-home final exam format, students will be able to draw upon, list, describe, and apply course concepts in response to case and essay-style questions and demonstrate critical thinking.
7. In lectures, seminars, case analyses, and exams, students will be able to identify and discuss (verbal and written) similarities and differences in the theory and application of strategy concepts across different sectors (e.g., health care versus manufacturing) and types of organizations (e.g., non-profits versus for profits versus First Nations).

**TEXT / MATERIALS**

2. Readings & Cases – provided by instructor, accessed through library resources, & posted on UR Courses. *(Student accounts will be charged for the cases purchased through Ivey and Harvard Publishing).*
3. Class slides will be posted in advance of class on UR Courses.

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

If there is any learner who, because of a disability, may have a need for accommodation(s), please discuss this with the instructor and / or contact the Coordinator of Special Needs Services at 585-4631.

**WRITING ASSISTANCE**

The Student Success Centre ([www.uregina.ca/ssc](http://www.uregina.ca/ssc)) offers both on-line resources and in-person tutoring on writing skills.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
This course includes lectures, case discussions, videos, guest speakers, and experiential group exercises. As a result, regular attendance in class and active participation in classroom activities are required. **Students are expected to be comfortable with ALL material discussed in class** (not just textbook content). Lecture content will go beyond the coverage in the textbook. It is expected that students will read and prepare appropriately for every class. If a student is **unprepared for a class, 1 mark will be taken off** her participation grade for the course (this will occur in every class that the student is not prepared). Please read each section of the course outline for expectations on all components of the course.

Throughout the course linking theory and practice discussions will occur. Students are expected to read local, national, and/or international newspapers and discuss in class how the newsworthy event relates (or not) to content discussed in class. This will serve as an important aspect of participation grades. In this course you will be encouraged and expected to engage in **critical thinking**. This will surface in class discussions and the assigned readings. You will be rewarded for demonstrating critical thinking in your informal and formal assessment exercises throughout the course. For this course, critical thinking is defined as an ongoing process of active and reflective learning. It involves surfacing our underlying beliefs about concepts and experiences and questioning why we ‘see’ it in this way. It also involves exploring how other individuals, groups and disciplines might ‘see’ these concepts. Through this process we develop an appreciation for multiplicity, difference, ambiguity, contradiction, and new ways of understanding and being.

Students will be required to work in groups for a formal case presentation. The whole team will be held responsible for the team’s success or failure. Group size will be a function of final course enrolment (likely 4-5 people). Students must sign up for groups by Day 1, **March 29**th. **Teams must be diverse. Diverse teams would be those that have a mix of men and women members, international and domestic members, and includes a ‘numbers’ person (e.g., accounting, finance, economics), ‘marketing’ person, AND management or general person.**

The instructor will attempt to accommodate the students’ preferences; however, **we reserve the right to select teams if necessary (for a variety of reasons).**

**Use of laptops, cell phones, recording devices in class.**
- Laptops can be used UNTIL misuse is suspected in class. If it is suspected that any one individual is using a laptop to check email, search the web, etc. instead of taking notes, ALL laptop use could be banned from class.
- No cell phones in class – no ringing or playing with phones.
- Recording devices – no recording of class lectures. Slides will be available to students in advance of class – listen and engage with the material being presented and take notes based upon that. Exceptions to this will be considered if the student makes an appointment and meets with the instructor to discuss the reasons.
**Academic Ethics.** Students are reminded that they must adhere to the standards of ethics of the university (see Section on *Academic Conduct and Misconduct Regulations Governing Discipline for Academic and Non-academic Misconduct* in the Academic Calendar). Students must appropriately reference material and must submit their own work. If unethical behaviour is suspected, all individuals involved will receive zero on this component of the course.

**GRADING**
The following grading system will be used in assigning marks. For additional information, please refer to: [http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/current-students/grad-calendar/grading-system.html#gradingsystem](http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/current-students/grad-calendar/grading-system.html#gradingsystem).

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>A+</td>
<td>90% +</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>85 – 89%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>80 – 84%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>75 – 79%</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>70 – 74.99%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-69 %</td>
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**Grade Allocation**
Individual Article & Guest Speaker Review – 15%
Team Case Submission (Team Presentation & Final Report) – 35%
Final Exam (take home) 40%
Participation 10%
Total 100%

**COURSE COMPONENTS**
**Individual Strategy Topic & Guest Speaker Review – 15%**
Individually, students are required to review, explain, and assess one of the several topics and themes covered in class (and/or within the required reading), as well as incorporate learnings from one of the Guest Speakers and class discussions. Students are to submit a 3-4 single-spaced page submission that covers the following:

1. Provide a description and explanation of the strategic theory or theme being chosen.
2. Provide an assessment of the theory and strategy tools being discussed in relation to one of the Guest Speakers and material covered in-class.
3. Offer an overall critique and analysis.

**NOTE: This is an individual submission and no collaboration among students is permitted.**
- The submission is due no later than **Sunday April 7th by 5 pm in pdf format**.
- It is to be type-written Times Roman 12 font & single spaced.
- Submit with course name / number, instructor name and student ID only.
- All late submissions will be deducted 10% for every day late.
Team Case Analysis (Presentation & Report) 35%

Each team will be asked to identify two organizations or companies that they have decided to review and analyze for this Case Analysis at or prior to the beginning of class. The two identified must represent different sectors and/or types of organizations (e.g. one small private sector firm and one non-profit human services organization). Please contact one of the Instructors if you need assistance in deciding.

Throughout the course, in-class exercises as well as Team and class discussions will occur that facilitates and allows each Team to review material covered and reflect this learning towards the two chosen organizations.

In teams of 4 - 5, students will present (to the full class) a strategic and comparative analysis with key findings and recommendations regarding the two organizations they chose. Teams will present on either Mar. 22nd or 23rd. Each Team must submit a written report as well as conduct a one-hour in-class presentation. The total presentation time is to be 25 – 35 minutes, leaving enough time for class discussion and Q&A.

It is expected that every member of the team plays a significant role in the analysis, preparation, and execution of the written report and in-class presentation in order to receive a grade. The analysis must demonstrate sound case analyses skills and creativity. It is expected that the case analysis be of high quality and appropriate for a professional audience (executives).

**Presenting teams will assume the role of the consultant.**

**FINAL EXAM 40%**

There will be a take-home final exam in this course. It will be comprehensive in nature and could include some combination of case analysis and theory / practice essay style questions. Additional details will be provided in class (formatting, structure). It is due **Saturday April 20th at 5 pm.**

**PARTICIPATION 10%**

Participation will be graded on the value of the contribution to class, rather than solely on the number of times one participates. It is essential that students are present for all classes, however, it is not enough to simply come to class, students must be active participants in class. To receive enough points to get a passing participation grade a student must participate regularly in class discussion. To do this one must come to class having prepared for the topic under discussion. In addition, there will be times throughout the course that informal team presentations will occur and will form part of the participation grade.

An automatic grade reduction may be applied if you are not prepared to discuss the assigned topic for the day. Attendance and participation is the responsibility of the student, if you expect to miss class, etc. it is your job to inform the instructor. This will form 10% of the final
grade. You are expected to be present and engaged in class. High levels of participation would include active participation in class discussions, drawing others into the discussions, demonstration of critical thinking (e.g., constructively criticizing articles discussed in class), and bringing in outside materials from popular press / current events and personal experiences / observations.

The following guide will be used in assessing participation grades:

- **Exceeds Expectations 8.5-10.** Students in this category provide leadership in and out of the classroom and work toward enhancing the interpersonal dynamics of the class. Their level of engagement is high and consistent, and contributions are thoughtful and relevant. Rather than dominating the setting, they act as facilitators, bringing others into the discussion.

- **Meets Expectations 7 – 8.4.** For showing an active interest in class activities and participating in classroom discussions; for regularly making insightful comments which help others to understand course material; for being a positive group member, etc.

- **Does not Meet Expectations 5 – 6.9:** For attending class on a regular basis but only occasionally contributing to classroom experience.

- **Less than 5:** For failing on all the previously identified ways of contributing and / or missing several classes.

**Tentative SCHEDULE**
It should be noted that the schedule may be altered slightly to accommodate current events or incorporate interesting material deemed relevant by the instructor that might come up later.

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING/CASES</th>
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| March 29th (AM) | - Course Introduction & Establishing Case Analysis Teams  
- Strategic Management Overview / Defining Strategy  
- Conducting Strategic Analysis (environmental ecology)  
  - PEST  
  - Porter’s Five Forces  
  - SWOT / TOWS  
  - Etc.  
- Team “In-Class” Exercise | Readings:  
- Text Chptrs 1 to 4  
- “What is Strategy”. Porter  
- “Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy”. Porter  
- In-Class Handouts |
| (PM)      | - Team “In-Class” Roundtable  
- Conducting Strategic Analysis (competitive positioning)  
- Guest Speaker #1  
- Wrap-Up | |

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| March 30th (AM) | - Conducting Strategic Analysis (Competitive Positioning)  
  - VRIO Analysis  
  - Differentiation  
  - Etc. | Readings:  
- Text Chptrs 5 to 7  
- “Are you sure you have a Strategy”. Hambrick and |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 4th</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Corporate Level Strategies &amp; Industry/Lifecycle Considerations</td>
<td>Text Chptr 8, “Blue Ocean Strategy”. Kim &amp; Christensen</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>- Team “In-Class” Exercise &amp; Roundtable Discussion</td>
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<td>- Corporate Level Strategies / Approaches / Tools</td>
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<td>- Guest Speaker #2</td>
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<td>- Wrap-Up</td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
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<td>- Balanced Scorecard Methodology</td>
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<td>- Hoshin Kanri</td>
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<td>- Guest Speaker #3</td>
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<td>- Wrap-Up</td>
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<td>April 5th</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Strategy Evaluation, Control, &amp; Governance</td>
<td>In-Class Handouts</td>
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<td>- Strategy Management Office</td>
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<td>- Measuring Progress (KPIs)</td>
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<td>- Team &amp; In-Class Exercise</td>
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<td>April 6th</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Leadership, Project, &amp; Change Management</td>
<td>In-Class Handouts</td>
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<td>- Risk Mitigation</td>
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<td>- “Best Practices” &amp; Key Trends in Strategic Planning</td>
<td>CASE: Hillberg + Burke</td>
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<td>- Team &amp; In-Class Discussion</td>
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<td>- “Final Exam” Guest Speaker #4</td>
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<td>- Wrap-Up</td>
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<td>April 20th</td>
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<td>Take-Home FINAL EXAM – Due Date</td>
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