**January 17, 2020 – subject to revision**

**BUS 497 – Strategic Management Seminar**

* **Class #13395 - Monday and Wednesday 9:30 am, Bookstein Hall 1103**
* **Class #13393 – Monday and Wednesday 11:00 am, Bookstein Hall 1103**
* **Class #13388 – Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 am, Bookstein Hall 1236**

Instructor: Phil Gorman

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Office: BB 4221   
Office hours:

* Tuesday 10:45 am – 12:15 pm
* Wednesday 12:15 pm – 1:45 pm
* And by appointment

**OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW**

Learning objectives for this course are:

1. Given a broad set of information—pieces of which may vary considerably in relevance—students can identify critical issues the organization is facing.
2. In identifying critical issues, students draw on and synthesize concepts from a variety of functional areas of business.
3. Given a broad set of information—pieces of which may vary considerably in relevance—students can make relevant, valuable, and reasonable strategic recommendations for the organization.
4. In making strategic recommendations, students draw on and synthesize concepts from a variety of functional areas of business.
5. In making strategic recommendations, students display significant understanding of the resulting implementation issues that managers need to deal with.
6. Students use appropriate strategic management concepts and language in effectively communicating about their analyses, including when identifying critical issues and making recommendations.

The focus of this course will be on “firm strategy,” which results from “strategic management.” Firm strategy is the persistent, difficult-to-change path that a business organization follows in the pursuit of superior economic returns. Theories that can be used in forming or analyzing firm strategy also can be used in searching for the keys to success, or in identifying the causes of failure. Usage of strategic management principles often requires knowledge you have gained in other business courses, such as accounting, marketing, management information systems, operations management, etc. Strategic management is an integrative view. Moreover, theories of firm strategy are often applicable to many situations that you personally encounter every day; if you truly understand the theories then you will be able to analyze such situations by using the theories we will study in this class.

**GRADING**

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| **Assignment** | **Value** |
| Written case analysis #1 (individual)\* | 30% |
| Written case analysis #2 (individual)\* | 30% |
| Business Strategy Game performance | 30% |
| Class participation and commitment\* | 10% |
| **TOTAL ------>** | **100%** |

**\*In addition to being worth 10% of the overall grade, your “class participation and commitment grade” affects scores for both written analysis #1 and written analysis #2. The raw score for written analysis #1 will be multiplied by the “class participation and commitment” score (on a 0-100% scale), and the same is true for written analysis #2. So: Arrive at class meetings on time, and arrive prepared for the topic of discussion that day.**

Written case analyses

Your written case analyses will be evaluated in much the same way as a report handed to a boss or analyst in the business environment would be evaluated. Do a full analysis and reach your conclusion. State and describe your analysis and conclusions clearly, completely, and concisely, and support your analysis using models from the textbook, lectures, and material covered in class meetings. See the “class schedule” portion of the syllabus for the approximate dates of the written case analyses; those dates may change and any such changes will be announced in class well in advance. Both written case analyses will be discussed in class well in advance of the due dates of the assignments.

*Business Strategy Game (BSG)*  
  
Each group of around three or four students will be assigned in a non-democratic process, and will be the management team of one company in the global footwear industry. Your management team should thoroughly understand the way the industry works and the way a company in the industry works. Read and understand the BSG Player’s Manual, which is available on my www site right now; details will be discussed in class. You should thoroughly understand the components of each yearly decision and the interrelatedness and consequences of those decisions. The game will move fast, so it is best to invest plenty of time and effort very early in the course in order to give your company the best chance to succeed. In making your decisions, you will need to recall and integrate much of what you have learned during your education in business administration at CSUN, and much of what you can learn by understanding the Player’s Manual up-front. Be especially alert in the first years of the BSG: As in real-world competition, a company that digs itself into an early hole may still be paying the consequences many years later!   
  
Each group member will receive a grade that will be determined mainly by his/her company’s performance in the industry. *Your grade for the BSG also depends on your group members’ perceptions of each team member’s performance and contribution*, relayed to me in a confidential survey near the end of the semester; each student is required to fill out and turn in this survey. Your individual score may suffer substantially if you have not made a sufficient contribution to your group's effort toward managing your company.  **In the BSG, all forms of collusion are illegal, and members of one team may not communicate with members of other teams to discuss any companies’ strategies or decisions in any way.** When you log into the BSGonline.com www site (which you will not be able to due until the second week of class at the earliest), you should review the schedule of assignments that are due.  
  
Each team's decisions must be completed online by the appointed time each week; THE APPOINTED TIME IS THE DECISION SCHEDULE THAT YOU WILL SEE WHEN LOGGED INTO THE BSG; the BSG decision due dates in the “class schedule” portion of this syllabus are only a guideline/expectation as of the beginning of the semester. The industry will run through at least Year 15 and perhaps through Year 18; within those bounds, the final year will be identified by random chance only after that year has run. Note that this is not a lot of years, and there is little margin for error if your company gets off on the wrong foot. Thus, I very strongly recommend that you budget time early to become very familiar with the Player’s Manual well before the Practice Round starts, and that you budget plenty of time for Year 11 and Year 12 especially, to be sure every team member is ready to contribute and to give your company the best chance to succeed. There will be a practice round, and everyone should use that practice round to understand how the BSG works and how your team works.

**MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES**

Any instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and I will deal with them under the guidelines stated in the University Catalog (<http://catalog.csun.edu/policies/academic-dishonesty/>).  All sources used in performing research for assignments in this course must be properly cited. The plus/minus system may be used when final grades are assigned.

The David Nazarian College of Business and Economics at California State University, Northridge prepares students to be ethical decision makers. The college maintains high standards of ethical conduct that students are expected to maintain throughout their academic and professional careers.  Please view the “core values” (<http://catalog.csun.edu/about/colleges/cobae/>)

**COURSE MATERIALS**

* Gregory Dess, Gerry McNamara, Alan Eisner, Seung-Hyun Lee (2018, 9th edition). Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages
  + Publisher: Irwin/McGraw-Hill
  + ISBN-13: 978-1259900457
  + the paperback volume without cases
* **IMPORTANT MONEY-SAVING NOTE: If you can find another similar textbook for a favorable price, feel free to do so. No matter what textbook you use among those listed on this syllabus, the class schedule below should provide sufficient information to pinpoint the chapters for the topics listed.**
* Below is a list of textbooks similar to the one listed above. The reason I offer these alternatives is to give students the ability to save substantial money. Feel free to ask me if you have questions about which chapters in the alternate textbook relate to which topics are listed in the syllabus “class schedule” portion of this syllabus. Make sure the publication date of the textbook you choose is within the past five years or so.

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| **Title** | **Author(s)** |
| Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages | Dess, McNamara, Eisner (8th ed, 2015) |
| Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages | Dess, Eisner, Lumpkin, McNamara (7th ed., 2013) |
| Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages | Dess, Lumpkin |
| Strategic Management | Thompson & Strickland |
| Strategic Management: Formulation, Implementation & Control | Pearce & Robinson |
| Strategic Management: Competitiveness & Globalization | Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson |
| Strategic Management: An Integrated Approach | Hill & Jones |
| Contemporary Strategy Analysis | Grant |

* Packet of case studies (cases are listed below in the “class schedule” section of this syllabus); published by Harvard Business School Publishing. (approximately $45)
  + See link on [my www site](http://www.csun.edu/~pcg24892)
* The Business Strategy Game: Competing in a Global Marketplace (approximately $40)
  + Player’s Program
  + Register online; registration details will be provided during the second week of class.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Note that in the “textbook readings” section below, I recognize that students will be using a number of different textbooks, and the titles of the chapters may vary somewhat. But by using the hints I’ve given below, you should be able to easily determine which chapter or chapters are the relevant ones for each assigned reading. While all strategy textbooks are arranged differently and use different chapter headings, they all contain the key chapter topics I have assigned below. If you have any questions about which chapter in your textbook is the best fit, please come talk with me and I will take a look at your textbook. It also is helpful to look at the index in the textbook for the key phrases I have listed below.

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| **Week** | **Week start date (Monday)** | **Topic** | **Textbook readings** | **Assignment due** |
| 1 | Jan. 20 | Sir Richard Branson game  Introduction to class; overview of syllabus  Characteristics of strategic decisions | **Read BSG Player’s Manual (it is on my www site)**  In textbook: review a chapter that will be titled something like “The concept of strategy” (almost always chapter 1) | Review BSG Player’s Manual (it is on my www site, and on Canvas) |
| 2 | Jan. 27 | BSG overview  Form BSG teams; practice round begins |  | Start thinking about what kind of company you want to build in the BSG |
| 3 | Feb. 3 | Analyzing the general environment  Case – Wal-Mart (day 1) | In the textbook, review the chapter that seems most focused on (according to the table of contents) the phrase “general environment” or the “external environment” |  |
| 4 | Feb. 10 | Case - Wal-Mart (days 2 & 3) |  |  |
| 5 | Feb. 17 | Review BSG practice round results  Analyzing the industry environment | In the textbook, review the chapter that seems most focused on (according to the table of contents) the phrase “industry environment” or “industry analysis” | BSG Practice decisions due, midnight Sunday, Feb. 16  BSG re-set midnight Thursday, Feb. 20 |
| 6 | Feb. 24 | Case – Nintendo  Business/competitive strategy | In the textbook, review the chapter that seems most focused on (according to the index or chapter titles) key words such as “competitive advantage” or “competitive strategy” or “business strategy” |  |
| 7 | March 2 | Case – Apple (days 1 & 2) |  | BSG Year 11 decisions due, midnight Tuesday, March 3 |
| 8 | March 9 | Corporate strategy  Strategy implementation and organizational control | In the textbook, there will be a chapter titled “corporate strategy,” or something similar to that. Review that chapter. | BSG Year 12 decisions due, midnight Tuesday  **Written case analysis #1 due at the beginning of our class meeting Wednesday or Thursday (depending on which section you are enrolled in). The due date of this assignment is estimated and might be moved.** |
| 9 | March 16 | SPRING BREAK |  |  |  |
| 10 | March 23 | Business ethics and corporate social responsibility (both days) |  | BSG Year 13 decisions due, midnight Tuesday |  |
| 11 | March 30 | Case - Coors in the Brewing Industry (day1, day 2) |  | BSG Year 14 decisions due, midnight Tuesday |
| 12 | April 6 | Case - Coors in the Brewing Industry (day 3)  Case – Breakfast Cereal Industry |  | BSG Year 15 decisions due, midnight Tuesday |
| 13 | April 13 | Case – Calyx & Corolla  Case – Banc One | In the textbook, review the chapter that focuses on global/international business | BSG Year 16 decisions due, midnight Tuesday |
| 14 | April 20 | Case – The Founding of Nike  Case – Tesla |  | BSG Year 17 decisions due, midnight Tuesday |
| 15 | April 27 | Case – Blue Origin  BSG team presentations |  | BSG Year 18 decisions due, midnight Tuesday |
| 16 | May 4 | TBA |  |  |
| 17 | May 11 | Final exam week |  |  |