



UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MGT. 682: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
TUES. - 5:45-8:35 P.M. - BB-B006
PROF. PAUL MIESING
SPRING, 2015

Prerequisite:	30 credits of graduate coursework; Open only to part-time MBA students
Bulletin Description:	“Development of an overall management viewpoint integrating the specific perspective of various specialized business functions. Comprehensive cases are utilized to provide experience in determining general enterprise objectives and policies, defining related problems, planning programs of action and appraising results.”
Office/Telephone:	BB-347 / 956-8348
Office Hours:	Before and after class; by appointment
E-Mail:	The best way to reach me is at paul.miesing@albany.edu . I generally respond as promptly as possible. (Note: Please type “STUDENT” in the subject line.) Otherwise, you can come by my office whenever my door is open or make an appointment.

TEXT AND MATERIALS

- Dess, Eisner, Lumpkin, & McNamara, *Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages* (7th ed, McGraw-Hill: 2014 ISBN # 9781259195808 includes Prepaid Access Code registration card for Glo-Bus simulation)
- **GLO-BUS** simulation Participant’s Guide at <http://www.glo-bus.com/> (log on using your Access Code and the Company Registration Code provided by instructor)
- Harvard Business School cases are available at <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/27845563>
 - Once you have completed the brief registration process, you will be able to log in. Once logged in you will be able to access the material I have assigned for this course. All PDFs and eLearning content are available to you through your Harvard Business Education library for 6 months from the date of purchase. For subsequent access, you will need to login at <http://hbsp.harvard.edu> and go to My Library-Courses. For technical assistance, please contact Harvard Business Publishing Customer Service at 1-800-810-8858 or 617-783-7700 from 8am-8pm EST. Customer Service can also be reached at techhelp@hbsp.harvard.edu.
- *Supplementary Articles and Misc. Items*: Library Electronic Reserves [ERES] available on Blackboard <https://blackboard.albany.edu/>

COURSE PURPOSE

The strategic management process requires general managers to organize the firm’s resources to accomplish its goals and objectives; it also demands mastering a body of analytical tools and using sound judgment. This course examines organizations from a top-management perspective by making unified, comprehensive, and integrated decisions that attain the organization’s purpose under constantly changing circumstances. As such, it intends to achieve the following **program objectives**:

- Apply a *systems view* of the business enterprise including seeing the organization from different stakeholder perspectives and applying an integrative approach to business issues;
- Able to *think critically* to address business challenges and opportunities including a variety of problem-solving methods, decision-making models, and creative business solutions; and
- Develop business-related *behavioral skills* in order to work with others for a successful career including leadership, organizational, interpersonal, team, and life-long learning skills.

We assume you enter the course with:

- knowledge of the functional business areas of accounting, finance, human resources, information systems, marketing, and operations;
- analytical skills such as statistics and economics, and the use of microcomputers;
- an appreciation for organization theories and behavioral concepts, including leadership, entrepreneurship, structure, and culture; and
- an understanding of the nature of the modern business firm, its roles and responsibilities, and the political, social, and technological environments which it is part of, both domestically and globally.

We expect you will leave the course able to:

- accept your responsibilities as an organization member and leader to develop and share an organizational vision and deal with a multitude of stakeholders;
- appreciate the dynamics of industry competition;
- develop the resources, capabilities, and core competences that make a company successful in earning and sustaining above-average returns;
- analyze and report the impact of change on the strategy of an organization, particularly when integrating strategy with finance, human resources, information technology, marketing, and operations;
- understand the ethical, corporate social responsibilities, sustainability, and corporate governance issues faced by managers within functional areas and propose solutions;
- broaden your perspective, lengthen your horizon, and provide greater self-insight into your management assumptions and personal principles;
- sharpen your skills in presenting analyses and plans of action, both orally and in writing; and
- realize that good decisions are typically a synthesis of the ideas of several people.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT

“The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in war.”

- Attributed to Sun Tsu, *The Art of War*, 453 BCE; General George S. Patton, Jr., U.S. Army; Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, U.S. Navy; Navy Seals Motto

My personal teaching philosophy is that since you have much to offer, I create an environment where you as students can learn in your own unique ways in exchange for your commitment to learn. ***I believe that education is a participant sport, not for spectators!*** The learning process in this course is a result of mutual contributions, where you are responsible for your own learning. My assessment of you will be based on your knowledge of the course materials in the case analyses, class contribution, simulation, and final examination. ***The rationale for selecting the text, cases, and simulation is to achieve the stated objectives.*** Preparing and discussing cases will expose you to the major issues, problems, challenges, frustrations, and (hopefully) realities in formulating and implementing organizational strategy. The text bridges the gap between cutting edge research and practice and should be used for background. While corporate strategies are idiosyncratic, you should be able to apply the text’s concepts to the cases. In addition, you will be part of a team engaged in a simulation to apply your learnings and receive performance feedback. The final examination will contain objective questions and cover only the text.

There is a maximum value of 100 points per student – there will be *no late acceptances, make ups, or extra credit*. Final letter grades will be based on a relative curve of all items, awarded as follows:

	<i>Max. Points</i>
Individual Submitted Case Analyses (any 3 @ 5 points each)	15
Individual Class Contribution	25
Group Simulation	35
Final Examination	25
<i>Total Possible Points</i>	<i>100</i>



TENTATIVE OUTLINE

"Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I'll understand."

- Based on Homer Dubs' *The Works of Hsüntze* (1927, 1966), page 113 from Book 8 of Xunzi (312-230 B.C.), sometimes erroneously attributed to Benjamin Franklin, Confucius, or as a Native American proverb

JAN. 27 – OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

- *Read:* this syllabus (you are responsible for all the information it contains!)
 - ❑ **Assignment:** Send an e-mail message to the instructor stating you have read the syllabus
 - ❑ I will form simulation teams of approximately 3-4 members in each (you may "trade" team membership before the first actual decision as long as every member of both teams agrees, and the instructor retains the prerogative to switch members if necessary)
 - ❑ **Note:** Instructions for connecting your laptop to the UAlbany WiFi are available at <http://library.albany.edu/services/technology/wireless.html>

FEB. 3 – INTRODUCTION TO THE SIMULATION

- *Read:* **GLO-BUS** Participant's Guide (manual) and support items (e.g., key financial ratios, navigating Glo-Bus, recommended decision making procedures, FAQs, etc.) provided on your company's "Corporate Lobby" page; "Business Simulations: The Next Step in Management Training" [ERES]; "Tips from a Global Award Winner" presentation by Chromatix team [ERES]
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* Review simulation requirements; Teams break out for PRACTICE decision #1 (year 6; due 9:00 p.m.); Final team adjustments if necessary
 - ❑ *Note:* See **GLO-BUS** schedule for precise deadlines for all simulation activities (please notify instructor of any discrepancies)

FEB. 10 – SIMULATION (CONT'D.)

- *Read:* Dess Ch. 1, "Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages"
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* Review simulation requirements (continue if necessary); Teams analyze PRACTICE #1 results; Create company name that begins with corresponding company letter; PRACTICE decision #2 (year 7; due 9:00 p.m.); **Quiz #1** (deadline next day at midnight – open book, 20 multiple choice questions, 45 minutes max); Data re-set to Year 6 and practice results are no longer available

FEB. 17 – SIMULATION (CONT'D.)

- *Read:* Dess Ch. 13, "Analyzing Strategic Management Cases"
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* Teams analyze PRACTICE #2 results; Discuss how you want to operate as a team and your "team reflection" assignment before making your next decision; Make Simulation Decision #1 (Year 6)
 - ❑ **Submit Team Reflection:** *Strategic intent* – Meet with your co-managers and discuss where your company is now and the goals you have for the semester. *For instance:* Does your company ap-

appear to be in sound financial condition? What are the 3-4 key elements of the strategy you intend to employ? What do you think will be the most important challenges your team and company will face and how will you respond? State your performance expectations, both personally and as a team – What do you hope to achieve? What would be a good slogan that could be used to help communicate your vision to personnel, shareholders, and other stakeholders?

FEB. 24 – TOPIC #1: INDUSTRY ANALYSIS AND COMPETITIVE DYNAMICS

- *Read:* Dess Ch. 2, “Analyzing the External Environment of the Firm” and Ch. 8, “Entrepreneurial Strategy and Competitive Dynamics”
- *Prepare:* “Netflix in 2011” (9-615-007)
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* Teams make Simulation Decision #2 (Year 7)
 - **Submit Team Reflection:** *Analyze the overall external environment* – What market opportunities for growth and increased profitability exist for your company? What external threats to your company’s future well-being and profitability do you and your co-managers see? What drives the digital camera industry – That is, what are 3-5 key factors for being successful? Which ones affect the intensity of rivalry, and what will your company do to combat any negative impacts of these driving forces? What are the “weapons of competition” that rival companies in this industry can use to gain sales and market share?

MAR. 3 – TOPIC #2: SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND THE RESOURCE-BASED VIEW

- *Read:* Dess Ch. 3, “Analyzing the Internal Environment of the Firm”
- *Prepare:* “Trader Joe’s” (9-714-419)
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* Teams make Simulation Decision #3 (Year 8); **Quiz #2** (deadline next day at midnight – open book, requires a calculator, 20 multiple choice questions, 90 minutes max)
 - **Submit Team Reflection:** *Potential sources of sustainable competitive advantage* – What are your company’s present situation and future prospects? Where does your company’s situation rank on a scale from “exceptionally strong” to “alarmingly weak”? What do you expect your firm’s primary competitive strengths and weaknesses will be in the coming years? What is your candid assessment of your firm’s resources and capabilities? What kind of sustainable competitive advantage over rivals do you intend to build? How will you develop your company’s core competences?

MAR. 10 – TOPIC #3: BUSINESS- AND FUNCTIONAL-LEVEL STRATEGIES

- *Read:* Dess Ch. 5, “Business-Level Strategy: Creating and Sustaining Competitive Advantages”
- *Prepare:* “Revitalizing Dell” (9-710-442) and Stewart & O’Brien, “Execution Without Excuses,” *Harvard Business Review* (March 2005): 102-111 [ERES]
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* **3-Year Strategic Plan** due for Decisions #4-6 (Years 9-11); Teams make Simulation Decision #4 (Year 9)
 - **Submit Team Reflection:** *Competing with generic strategies and along value chain activities* – Which companies appear to be employing a low-cost provider strategy, a broad differentiation strategy, and some type of focus? What are the 5-6 key elements of the value chain in the digital camera industry? How will your finance, human resources, marketing, production, and service contribute to an overall “best value” proposition? Are you and your co-managers able to achieve “operating excellence” and how well does your company benchmark against the competition?

MAR. 24 – TOPIC #4: CORPORATE-LEVEL STRATEGY

- *Read:* Dess Ch. 6, “Corporate-Level Strategy: Creating Value through Diversification”
- *Prepare:* “Virgin Group: Finding New Avenues for Growth” (9-612-070)
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* Teams make Simulation Decision #5 (Year 10)
 - ❑ **Submit Team Reflection:** *Selecting businesses to enter/exit* – Which companies do you believe have the most attractive products and which ones are the most weakly positioned? Are any concentrating more or less attention on entry-level versus multi-level cameras? Which companies do you believe are likely to try to move to a different product position? Should you reposition your businesses or change their scope of operations? Do you have any plans to restructure your product portfolio? If you could collaborate with another firm in your industry, which one would it be and why? What would you expect to achieve?

MAR. 31 – TOPIC #5: INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES

- *Read:* Dess Ch. 7, “International Strategy: Creating Value in Global Markets”
- *Prepare:* “Global Wine War 2009: New World versus Old” (9-910-405); “BRL Hardy: Globalizing an Australian Wine Company” (9-300-018); and “Australian Wine Cluster” (9-703-492)
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* **Special Order Option** activated for all remaining years (*Note:* There will be no Quarterly Updates option); Teams make Simulation Decision #6 (Year 11)
 - ❑ **Submit Team Reflection:** *Selecting regions to enter/exit* – Would you characterize your international strategy as multi-region or global competition? How do you evaluate and explain your performance in the different areas of the world – Are they due to specific strategy differences from region to region? To what extent, if any, have you and your co-managers adapted your company’s strategy to take account of shifting exchange rates and regional competitive differences? Is outsourcing a deliberate or a passive strategy? Which companies do you believe are in the most attractive markets and which ones are the most weakly positioned? Are any concentrating more or less attention on some geographic regions versus other regions? Which companies do you believe are likely to try to move to a different market position?

APR. 7 – TOPIC #6: STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION: ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND CONTROL SYSTEMS

- *Read:* Dess Ch. 9, “Strategic Control and Corporate Governance” and Ch. 10, “Creating Effective Organizational Designs”
- *Prepare:* “LEGO” (9-613-004)
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* **3-Year Strategic Plan** due for Decisions #7-9 (Years 12-14); Teams make Simulation Decision #7 (Year 12)
 - ❑ **Submit Team Reflection:** *Executing through structure, culture, and governance* – How is your firm organized, and why? Are there any planned changes to your decision processes, authority relationships, lines of communications, governance and controls, etc.? Does your team have a shared purpose and way of thinking? Do you and your co-managers deliberately shift resources from one area to another to better support strategy execution efforts?

APR. 14 – TOPIC #7: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP – CORPORATE RENEWAL AND TRANSFORMATION

- *Read:* Dess Ch. 11, “Strategic Leadership: Creating a Learning Organization and an Ethical Organization”
- *Prepare:* “GE’s Talent Machine: The Making of a CEO” (9-304-049); “GE’s Imagination Breakthroughs: The Evo Project” (9-907-048); and Immelt, Govindarajan, & Trimble, “How GE Is Disrupting Itself,” *Harvard Business Review* (Oct 2009): 56-65 [ERES]
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* Teams make Simulation Decision #8 (Year 13)

- ❑ **Submit Team Reflection:** *Leading the competition* – Overall, what issues were most critical for your firm’s success or failure? Did your company seize any options for being a first-mover? What are the 5-6 most important elements of your company’s product and country strategy? Have you fine-tuned or radically changed any of your strategy elements since your co-managers first took over the company and assumed strategy-making responsibility? Which do you expect to be most important in the future? If you could do it over again, how would you reposition your firm and reformulate your strategy? Realistically, what would your performance expectations now be if you were to start over again?

APR. 21 – TOPIC #8: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- *Prepare:* “Patagonia” (9-711-020), “Patagonia” (B) (9-714-465), and Chouinard, Ellison, & Ridgeway, “The Sustainable Economy,” *Harvard Business Review* (Oct 2011): 56-62 [ERES]
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* Teams make Simulation Decision #9 (Year 14)
 - ❑ **Submit Team Reflection:** *Doing the right thing* – Cite at least *three* convincing reasons why your shareholders should be pleased with your company’s social responsibility strategy and the amount of resources you are devoting to this effort. Is it “unethical” or at least socially irresponsible for a company to conduct its business in an environmentally unsustainable manner? What is your company’s “social strategy” for being a good corporate citizen? Would your company be responsible if there was no payoff in the form of a higher image rating? Is there anything that you or any of your competitors are doing that you consider as “shady” or “unethical”?

APR. 28 – TOPIC #9: CORPORATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

- *Read:* Dess and Ch. 4, “Recognizing a Firm’s Intellectual Assets: Moving Beyond a Firm’s Tangible Resources” and Ch. 12, “Managing Innovation and Fostering Corporate Entrepreneurship”
- *Prepare:* “McKinsey & Company” (9-413-109) and Christensen, Wang, & van Bever, “Consulting on the Cusp of Disruption,” *Harvard Business Review* (Oct 2013): 106-114 [ERES]
- *Simulation Activities and Decision Making:* Teams make Simulation Decision #10 (Year 15)
 - ❑ **Submit Team Reflection:** *Innovation strategy* – What hard evidence is there that indicates your company’s strategy is working fairly well (or not)? What did you learn individually and organizationally from this “experiment” in running a business? If you could do things over again, what would you do to be truly different – That is, what strategic changes (if any) should you have made in the beginning, or later when market growth slowed?

MAY 5 – MAKE-UP

- Reserved for missed class – If a class is cancelled (e.g., snow day, emergency, etc.), the schedule will continue one week later.

MAY 12 – WRAP-UP

- Final examination (one hour)
 - ❑ *Note:* Practice quiz questions are available at the text Web site <http://www.mhhe.com/dess7e>
- *Simulation:* Open discussion of experiences, learnings, and feedback
 - ❑ *Note:* You have the option of submitting confidential peer evaluations and a self-evaluation (available on The Corporate Lobby)

CASES

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

- George Santayana, *Life of Reason* (1905-06)

We will have nine (9) case “sets” (some have multiple parts/readings), one for each class session and covering the relevant text chapter when applicable. Cases are rich in detail yet open-ended, ambiguous, and incomplete at the same time. A common reaction to a case is “I don’t have enough information.” While this predicament will also be true for many of your “real-world” business decisions, you must still select a course of action. This requires you to make reasonable assumptions, conduct the analysis accordingly, and act based on the available information. Re-stating the case facts is not enough (and often not even necessary). The readings, discussions with classmates, prior courses, work experience, overall knowledge, and a lot of thought should provide additional information, insights, and ideas for your analysis.

A typical student request at the end of a case discussion is “What’s the answer?” The case method does not provide the correct answer (as if there is ever a “correct” answer); rather, various participants in the discussion will have developed and supported several viable “answers”. If I know the outcome of the case I will share it with you at the end of the discussion (and you should feel free to do the same with the class!). But while it might be fascinating to learn how things actually turned out, the outcome is simply one more answer which you may feel is better or worse than your answer. And while it is interesting to know subsequent events, the purpose of case analysis is not to update the case. Remember, you will learn from rigorous discussion and controversy. Each of us assumes responsibility for preparing the case and for contributing ideas to the class discussion. The rewards for these responsibilities are a series of highly-exciting, practically-oriented educational experiences that bring out a wide range of topics and viewpoints.

INDIVIDUAL SUBMITTED CASE ANALYSES

Submit any *three* case analyses (out of the *nine* cases assigned). Each one you submit is due on the day that we discuss it in class. Because unexpected work, school responsibilities, family obligations, or other personal and professional factors may force you to miss an assignment, I offer you a great deal of flexibility as to which ones you choose. Hence, *late submissions will not be accepted*; it simply isn’t fair to those who do turn in assignments on time. Nor do I accept any “extra credit,” so if you submit an extra case I will count only the *worse* three. (You wouldn’t expect to compensate for a mistake on the job by offering to work overtime, would you?) Each analysis must be in the form of a brief memo and consist of the following:

1. **Assessment: Fact-Finding** – What is the primary issue in the case? How is the company doing financially? What is its existing strategy and “business model”? That is, on what competitive dimensions does it compete to add value for its customers and stockholders in its business design, operations, and delivery? (Include attachments if possible.)
2. **Analysis: Applications** – What qualitative and quantitative concepts, tools, and frameworks can you use from the text and outside readings?
3. **Actions: Decisions** – State the options and alternatives. What is your final recommendation and why? How would you implement this given organizational, human, financial, and other resource requirements? What issues must be addressed to help assure success? Are there additional implications of your actions?
4. **Appreciation: Learning** – What are your takeaways from this case? How would you de-brief the class? Do you have any remaining questions or issues you would like to discuss or present in class?

Please limit each of these four “As” to one paragraph. If you have more to say or a lengthy list, include it as an attachment. Also, do not summarize the case as you may safely assume I have already read it! Only repeat history if you have a timeline with critical events you want to highlight or a point you want to make. Finally, feel free to be critical and creative; some cases are exemplars whereas others are disguised disasters. These are opportunities to apply all of your course concepts in a variety of situations. Here are some tips:

- *Do not offer large pieces of factual information.* The executive team does not need it. Why would managers read a generic background on their own company? Don't waste the CEO's (or instructor's) time! Similarly, don't extract lengthy quotes from the case and especially don't hit the "print" key too quickly when viewing articles on the Internet. Instead, summarize, synthesize, and integrate all available information.
- *Do not offer your gut feelings* (unless you have a successful track record in business). While your opinions are valued, they must be substantiated with thorough analysis and critical thinking. Avoid superficial or obvious statements.
- *Do not update the case unnecessarily.* The biggest mistake you can make is to avoid analyzing the available information in the case and instead search for additional company information. I expect you to conduct your own analysis and not find what others have done; similarly, I expect you to draw conclusions about the case and not to extend or update it.
- *Do demonstrate your understanding of the reading materials.* The purpose of cases is to learn **concepts**, so it is critical you apply information from the text.
- *Do be creative.* Here is your opportunity to communicate your view of the case and topic in your own special way – be original, but remain grounded in the facts.
- *Do attach supporting documents.* Appendixes or exhibits can be tables and charts, graphs and graphics, pro formas and data analyses, Web sites, etc. that reinforce, support, substantiate, and clarify your analysis. They are not opportunities to elaborate your memo and need not be in prose! Please, please, please do not attach complete articles of any sort.

Based on these criteria, each written case analysis will be graded on the following scale:

- **5** = outstanding, very thorough, shows unusual insight
- **4** = solid work, capably done
- **3** = marginally adequate, somewhat flawed analysis
- **2** = poor analysis, sloppy
- **0** = why bother?

Be forewarned: Cases will be ranked, with the average grade a **4** (depending on number submitted) and very few **5s** ... and **0s** are options! Effort does count, but the following are examples of wasted time and energy:

- Doing a Google search of the case (here's a News Flash: If it's on the 'Net, it's no longer unique and hence not valuable)
- Copying pages and information from the company's Web site
- Not reading the materials fully, instead trying to apply the case abstract, tables, conclusions, etc.

INDIVIDUAL CLASS CONTRIBUTION

"Eighty percent of success is showing up."

- Woody Allen

To achieve our course objectives and for our learning to be effective, it is critical you commit to the "4 Ps" of class involvement for the course to be successful: preparation, presence, promptness, and participation. Your classmates deserve your thoughtful opinions, analyses, and reasoning – you can contribute these (and in turn understand those of others) only if you are present in class, adequately prepared, and involved. Due to the complex nature of the materials, the real value from this course depends on your intelligent, active, and meaningful contributions – hence, *attendance is necessary but not sufficient*. **It is also critical you diligently prepare for and actively participate** in meaningful case discussions and debates, exchange points of views, and make mutual contributions. We do not engage in these to provide a definite answer but rather to be aware of the issues and the various perspectives on them. Please do not read a case as you would a book chapter or a magazine article; rather, put yourself in the role of the decision maker.

In order to derive maximum benefit from the case method, come to class equipped with the knowledge of the readings and with a written outline on how to tackle the case. Students who only skim the readings are not only doing themselves a disservice, they are also free-riding on the efforts of their classmates. Appropriate classroom etiquette is also part of your participation grade. This means being respectful of others, constructive in our comments, and open to alternative points of view. It also means providing your undivided attention; ***please do not turn on any electronic devices of any sort while in class.*** (Laptops may be used only for the simulation.) Specific behaviors that contribute to effective class discussion are characterized by the following *content* and *process* elements:

- obviously has analyzed the case and synthesizes it with the course material
- brings up questions, initiates a new idea or suggestion, or eagerly offers information
- adds to our collective understanding by being succinct yet is relevant to and builds on other comments
- elaborates, extends, enhances, and/or expands a classmate's or instructor's idea or clarifies points that others may not understand
- offers or seeks facts, data, and information, or draws upon personal experiences, values, beliefs, or opinions, even if contrary or controversial
- demonstrates leadership in encouraging others to contribute, sets high standards of performance, or is a class role model

In case discussions, instructors will challenge you and your fellow participants to defend your arguments and analyses. Because case studies cut across a range of organizations and situations, they will hone both your problem-solving and reasoning ability. In class discussions, participants bring to bear their expertise, experience, observations, analyses, and rules of thumb. How each class member identifies the central problems in a case, analyzes them, and proposes solutions is as important as the content of the case itself. Your classmates and you will differ significantly on what's important and how to deal with common problems, interdependencies, organizational needs, and the impact that decisions in one part of an organization have on other parts.

My job is to facilitate the discussion and engage you by posing questions, prodding, drawing out your reasoning, playing the devil's advocate, and highlighting issues. A healthy debate and discussion should ensue and you will benefit most if you participate actively. Sometimes I will present conceptual frameworks and invite you to use them to organize your thoughts to create new insights; other times I might generalize, summarize, or tell about relevant situations in other companies. All the while, I will try to keep the discussion on track and moving forward. To do this, I will organize and document the on-going discussion on the blackboard. While I may suggest the pros and cons of a particular action, I will resist giving my own views. My job is not to help the class reach a consensus; in fact, often the thought process will be far more important than the conclusions. Near the end, I will call on a student to summarize the discussion and draw out the useful lessons and observations which are inherent in the case situation and which emerged from the class discussion.

I will also try to record individual class contributions for each session. Everyone starts at "ground zero" and has an equal opportunity to work up to the maximum points available. Remember, it is the *quality* of your participation, not the *quantity* (or "air time"), that will lead to a good evaluation of class discussion. The following guideline will determine your final contribution for class participation:

- **A** students "make things happen" by always seizing the initiative (21-25 points)
- **B** students "know what happened" and frequently provide insight (16-20 points)
- **C** students "watch things happen" and occasionally participate (11-15 points)
- **D** students, while appearing observant, typically ask: "what happened?" (6-10 points)
- **F** students don't care if anything happened (0-5 points)

Be forewarned: Class contributions will be ranked, with the average grade a **20** and very few **25s** ... and **Fs** are options! (Let me know if you feel uncomfortable participating fully in class and we will devise an appropriate alternative.)

SIMULATION

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and everyone was asked to do it.

Everybody was sure Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

- Origin unknown (Somebody forwarded this to Everybody. Anybody claiming copyright, please let us know and Nobody will publish this without permission.)

The **Glo-Bus** simulation is an important aspect of this strategic management class as it will give you the opportunity to achieve the course objectives through hands-on experience. In this project, you will examine strategy in a “real-world” context by making decisions for your own simulated firm that will provide the opportunity to:

- 1) learn about the effects of making strategic choices in competitive markets;
- 2) understand the interrelationships between functional areas within the firm, the business decisions they make, and the implications of their actions within the firm and the industry;
- 3) practice analysis and application of the strategic management concepts you learn in class to your own simulated firm; and
- 4) develop your communication skills, particularly your ability to convey business recommendations concisely, accurately, and persuasively.

The simulation will involve numerous class activities and assignments. For each decision, you must further develop your overall strategic plan by relating the session's text and/or case to the simulation as well as their implications for your decision. Submit a “**Team Reflection**” for each decision before leaving class; *none will be accepted after results for that decision are posted*. Each one should be in the form of a one-page memo. Their intent are as follows:

- Prod you in your role as company co-manager to do some quality strategic thinking about your company's situation and the industry circumstances in which your company operates;
- Point your management team directly to ways of using specific concepts and tools of strategic analysis to improve your decision-making to improve your company's performance; and
- Speed the process whereby you bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Your final simulation grade will be based on the following:

- Quizzes (5 points for 20 multiple choice questions measuring your grasp of the “Participant's Guide”; 5 points for 20 multiple choice questions measuring your grasp of the annual Company Operating Reports)
- Team Reflections (5 points cumulative) that apply the course materials to the simulation and are the bases for your decisions
- 3-Year Strategic Plans (5 points each) for Decisions #4-6 (Years 9-11) and #7-9 (Years 12-14)
- Overall company performance consisting of meeting investors' expectations both absolute (5 points) and compared to the rest of the industry (5 points), each based equally on EPS, ROE, stock price, credit rating, and image rating (the simulation also has a “Bull's Eye Award” and a “Leap Frog Award”)
- Self-evaluation and peer evaluation (used to make final individual adjustments)

FINAL EXAMINATION

“Examinations are formidable even to the best prepared, for the greatest fool may ask more than the wisest man can answer.”

- Charles Caleb Colton (1780–1832), English cleric, writer, and collector well known for his eccentricities

There will be a comprehensive examination on the final class session. The primary purpose is to have you read the text. The questions are what any MBA should know about the subject, so select questions are reported to the AACSB for accreditation purposes as part of our “assessment of learning.” It will last one hour, cover only the material in the text, consist of objective questions, and must be taken on the assigned date and class time: *no make-up will be offered* unless a clear and urgent situation presents itself, and you must obtain prior approval from the instructor. We will review the results immediately afterward. The raw scores will be curved. *You will need your 9-digit myUAlbany ID!*

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

“This is your captain speaking. This class airplane will depart on time. The class doors are shut, please turn off all electronic devices. This is a no smoking flight. Please do not attempt to deplane while we are in flight (unless you must go to the rest room). We will do our best to arrive at our destination safely, together, and on time. Have a safe and enjoyable flight!”

I apologize in advance to the majority of MBAs who are mature, thoughtful, and diligent. As a precaution to the others, I am compelled to make this statement.

- 1) You are expected to exhibit the highest level of professional discipline, responsibilities, and courtesy in and out of class. The following University policies apply:
 - attendance by all graduate students must be regular;
 - the University reserves the right to exclude from a graduate program, course, or final examination students whose attendance is unsatisfactory to their instructors;
 - permission to make up missed work is not automatic; and
 - regulations concerning attendance in a particular course are at the discretion of the instructor.

Examples of disruptive classroom behavior that may be considered as a disciplinary offense as defined by *Community Rights and Responsibilities* (CRR), UAlbany’s Code of Student Conduct (available at <http://www.albany.edu/judicial/standardsofconduct.html>) include refusal to comply with reasonable faculty directions, repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom without authorization, making loud or distracting noises, posting inappropriate messages electronically, persisting in speaking without being recognized, repeatedly interrupting others, audio or video recording of classroom activities or the use of electronic devices (cell phones and beepers) without the permission of the instructor, or resorting to physical/verbal threats or personal insults or insulting gestures.

To avoid any misunderstandings, here are Miesing’s rules:

- attendance for the entire session at every class is mandatory (I round down partial attendance);
- should an emergency situation arise, students must notify me as soon as possible;
- attendance problems do not exempt you from turning in work on the due date; and
- absences, early departures, or persistent tardiness will require handing in a make-up assignment.

[*Note:* Should the campus close (snow emergency is at <http://www.albany.edu/emergency/weather.php> or 442-SNOW), please prepare *both* the assignment due for the canceled session and the assignment for the following session. You can also sign up for the NY-Alert at <http://www.albany.edu/sunynyalert/>, which will notify you about class cancellations.]

- 2) Late arrivals (and early departures) are disrespectful to fellow classmates and disrupt the class. So is “side-talking” during class (you have no idea how your voice carries in the classroom). Please refrain from writing and passing notes or participating in other distractive behaviors. And do not pack up preparing to leave towards the end of the class until it is clear the session is over and we are through.
- 3) According to University policy, *you may not eat, drink, or smoke in classrooms*. Smoking is not permitted in this building, and you may not bring food or drinks (except water) into this room.
- 4) Please disable all electronic and mobile devices (e.g., laptops, cellular telephones, audible pagers, iPods) while in attendance; do not open your laptop, use your cell phone, or wear headphones or pods.
- 5) Established grammar, punctuation, clarity, and organization are expected. Substandard work, including excessive spelling errors, will be rejected.
- 6) Ethical behavior is an important part of the course not only as it relates to professional conduct but also for your personal development. Consequently, I expect you to conduct yourselves in an honest, dignified, and professional manner. *Academic dishonesty of any sort will not be tolerated*, including plagiarism, sabotage, falsification of material or information, bribery, as well as theft, damage, or misuse of University resources. Plagiarism, either intentional or “unintentional,” will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Cheating will result in being dropped from the course with a letter grade of “F.” Violations can also result in University sanctions, including being expelled.
- 7) Additional considerations:
 - ❑ an atmosphere of mutual respect is in order for the rights of others and the diversity of other cultures, nationalities, and beliefs;
 - ❑ work submitted for other classes or other purposes may not be re-submitted (in part or whole) for credit in this class; and
 - ❑ you will be held responsible for complete and active participation in *all* group meetings, assignments, and projects – academic and professional integrity means contributing your fair share.
- 8) Your enrollment in this class acknowledges your accepting *personal responsibility* for fulfilling its requirements and attaining its objectives. You are responsible for knowing what others expect of you as well as what you must contribute to further our shared learnings.
- 9) An incomplete (“I”) grade is defined as “A temporary grade requested by the student and assigned by the instructor only when the student has nearly completed the course requirements but because of circumstances beyond the student’s control the work is not completed. The date for the completion of work is specified by the instructor, but may not be longer than one month before the end of the semester following that in which the incomplete is received.” (*Note: “Nearly completed” means that the circumstances beyond your control happen near the end of the course.*)

☺☺☺ *Have a pleasant semester!* ☺☺☺