



MGT 682:  
**Strategic Management**  
2012  
Wednesday 2:45 – 5:35 PM  
Room: BA 227  
Professor: Ray Van Ness

**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY**  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Prerequisite: 3 Credits of graduate course work

Bulletin

Description: “Develop an overall management viewpoint integrating the specific perspective of various specialized business functions. Comprehensive cases are used to provide experience in determining general enterprise objectives and policies, defining related problems, planning programs of action and appraising results.”

Office/Telephone: BA-341 / 442-5087

E-Mail: [VanNessR@nycap.rr.com](mailto:VanNessR@nycap.rr.com)

Web page: <http://www.albany.edu/faculty/vanness>

### COURSE FORMAT

The course is taught ***experientially*** in a workshop format including: (1) short student presentations of strategy concepts and (2) student analysis, discussion, and presentation of strategic issues related to specific publicly traded corporations (case studies). The course will also involve structured student debates. Since class activities will focus on assigned readings of strategic concepts and related case studies – **it is essential that these readings be completed before the class period where they will be discussed.** Core focus will include: strategic theory, crafting and executing strategy, analysis of the external environment, assessing resources and competitive positioning, generic strategies, strategies for foreign markets, strategies for specific industries and companies, strategic diversification, ethical decision-making, social responsibilities, corporate culture, and strategic leadership.

### TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- *Crafting and Executing Strategy: The Quest for Competitive Advantage*, 18e (McGraw-Hill: 2010-12) <http://www.mhhe.com/thompson> (ISBN 978-0-07-811272-0) Text available in campus bookstore
- *A Guide to Case Analysis* (Located on 682 course web page)
- *Course web page:* <http://www.albany.edu/faculty/vanness/682/682index.pdf>
- *Cases as assigned by the professor*

## **COURSE PURPOSES**

Strategic management considers an integrative set of issues that determine the future directions of organizations. The purposes of this course include:

To provide the student with the opportunity to participate in an environment where the real world of business is replicated to every extent possible and challenges and opportunities are identified and faced in a creative and effective manner.

To provide an opportunity to ***experience*** an environment of differences of opinion and observe how tensions from this environment can be healthy and creative.

To introduce and employ strategic concepts, and analytical frameworks that enhance abilities for identifying key issues, planning alternative courses of action, measuring progress, and setting the stage for achieving corporate goals.

To encourage students to **learn from peers** by encouraging free and open expression of ideas. The real world is not one of certainty, therefore, within the classroom; reasonable people (with different experiences) will view management differently. This creates a healthy and creative tension. Management, whether discussed in the classroom or discussed within a firm involves “making sense together.” The very idea of *making* sense involves a creative process and is personal (subjective). Conjectures and (subjective) knowledge based on your personal experiences are highly valued within the conversation of this class.

## **KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS/COMPETENCIES**

It is expected that students will learn to: link theory and practice; develop an understanding of how to use strategic management tools to initiate and implement problem processes and to capitalize on opportunities; identify management strategies which are appropriate to various scenarios and evaluate alternatives; implement strategic research activities; evaluate and analyze facts to identify opportunities and threats in the external environment and strengths and weaknesses within the organization; develop financial projections for strategic assumptions; and understand and explain the importance of ethical reasoning and ethical decision-making

## **PROFICIENCY MEASUREMENT (OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT)**

Students will demonstrate their expertise by:

- Identifying crucial factors that impact strategic decision-making, implementation, and evaluation.
- Conducting an organizational resource-based situational analysis
- Assessing the environment and evaluating the volatility of the industrial position of a specific company.
- Developing comprehensive business strategies through a scenario planning process
- Evaluating corporate competitive positions
- Evaluating alternative strategic actions
- Communicating conclusions clearly through both written and oral presentations.

**Ethics:**

Concepts of ethics and ethical reasoning will be integrated throughout the course. Since a primary emphasis within this course is business ethics and ethical behavior it seems only appropriate that we discuss class behavior in an ethical context. Quite simply, you should author your own work, give credit when quoting the work of others, and **NEVER** copy anything that is copyright protected without appropriate approval. Of course you understand that test taking means **NEVER** seeking unauthorized assistance. If there is ever a situation in which you find yourself unsure of the correct course of action, please **ASK** your professor for guidance.

**Reflection of Diversity:**

Many classes will begin with a discussion of current events. You are encouraged to participate by expressing your opinion of the issues. Our classes are multi-racial and multi-cultural thus you will find this to be a perfect opportunity to observe reactions to current events from different perspectives. This course will be rich with new ideas and each session will be a unique learning experience as well as a model for human respect.

**ATTENDANCE:**



**Absences, late arrivals to class, and/or early departures will affect your course performance.**

Attendance at every scheduled class for the entire class time is very, very important. A significant amount of work for this course will be done within small groups and then presented to the entire class. It is essential that each student attempt to attend every session since this is the primary opportunity to contribute to the group and the class. Obviously, if you are not in class you cannot participate.

Also, arriving late or leaving early is disruptive and **your ability to contribute to and learn from the class activities will be hampered**. Arriving late and leaving before a class is ended will be counted as time absent from class. Absences hurt everyone. Of course, there may be instances where absence is necessary but since the quality of learning is associated with classroom involvement, any student who misses 4 hours of class time for any reason (late arrival, early departure, or missed classes) will be required to demonstrate course competency by taking a comprehensive final exam.

**ALL ABSENCES ARE CONSIDERED NECESSARY SO NO DOCTOR'S EXCUSES, PLEASE.** The required final exam is not meant as a disciplinary action, it is intended to ensure academic integrity. **If you are required to take the final exam and do not do so, a zero [0] will be averaged into your exam grades.**

If there is any part of this policy that you do not understand, please ask your professor immediately.

# Graded Activities

**Classes are structured to maximize student involvement.  
Teams will TAKE OVER.**



There are a series of activities that requires the involvement of everyone:

1. Strategic Management Concepts Presentations (Each team will present twice)
2. Case Study Presentation (Each team will present twice)
3. Team to Team Debate (Two debates for each team)
4. Quizzes (Two – NOT TAKEN AS A TEAM)
5. Peer evaluations (individual team members evaluate the contribution of each other)

## **Concepts: Presentations & Follow-up Questions**

### **1. → Concepts Presentation/Discussion:**

Each class will have a “Concepts Segment” presented by an assigned Team(s). There will be two (2) concepts presentations for each team. The first will be presented by your team only and the second will be presented by your team in cooperation with another other teams.

The quality of the presentations will be evaluated and graded by the non-presenting class members and by the professor. The grade will be assigned to each member of the team.

### **1a. → Concepts Questions by non-presenting students: (Bonus Opportunity)**

The presentation will be followed by a Questions and Answers segment.

The Professor will assign bonus points to individual students who ask thought-provoking, graduate-level questions of the presenters. This grade will be awarded ONLY to the individual student not to entire teams.

## **Case Studies: Presentations & Follow-up Questions**

### **2. → Case Presentation/Discussion:**

Eight (8) classes will involve a “Case Presentation/Discussion.” Each individual team will be assigned one case to present and discuss. Additionally, a second case will be assigned to teams as a cooperative effort. Teams 2, 3, & 5 will jointly present a case and Teams 1, 4, & 6 will jointly present a case.

Everyone in the class **MUST READ THE ASSIGNED CASE BEFORE** the CLASS BEGINS. You will be graded on your knowledge of the case.

The quality of the presentations will be evaluated and graded by the non-presenting class members and by the professor. The grade will be assigned to each member of the team.

### **2a. → Case Questions by non-presenting students: (Bonus Opportunity)**

The presentation will be followed by a Questions and Answers segment.

The Professor will assign bonus points to individual students who ask thought-provoking, graduate-level questions of the presenters. This grade will be awarded **ONLY** to the individual student not to entire teams.

### **3. → Debates:**

Two classes have been designated as debate classes and it is expected that these will be exciting and alive with energy.

The debates will occur back-to-back i.e. two teams will debate and then graded followed by two more teams and then the final two teams. Each member of the non-debating teams will grade the performance of the debating teams.

Individual teams will compute the average grade assigned by their members to each debating team and provide the Professor with the average grade for each of the two debating teams.

#### **Debate 1:**

**Teams 1 vs 6**

**Teams 3 vs 5**

**Teams 2 vs 4**

#### **Debate 2:**

**Teams 1 vs 5**

**Teams 3 vs 2**

**Teams 6 vs 4**

Debate topics: See Items 3 & 4 in next section.

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4. → **Quizzes:** One midterm and one final. Obviously, these are taken individually.

5. → **Peer Evaluations:** Each team member will evaluate the contribution of each other team member.

# Maximum Points possible for individual assignments

**Important note about points for each activity – See below<sup>1</sup>**

## **1. Strategic Concepts Segment:**

**Single Team presentation to class**

800 Total possible

- (1) Class assesses percentage of 400 earned
- (2) Professor assesses percentage of 400 earned

**Double Team presentation to class (class & Professor evaluates)**

- (1) Class assesses percentage of 400 earned
- (2) Professor assesses percentage of 400 earned

800 Total possible

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## **2. Case Study Segment:**

**Team presentation to class**

800 Total possible

- (1) Class assesses percentage of 400 earned
- (2) Professor assesses percentage of 400 earned

**Three (3)-Team presentation to class**

800 Total possible

- (1) Class assesses percentage of 400 earned
- (2) Professor assesses percentage of 400 earned

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<sup>1</sup> All points are for perfect performance. Since it is unlikely that every performance will be perfect, points will be awarded as a percentage of perfect.

### 3. Debates:

(1) **Debate one** (class evaluates)

400 Total possible

#### *Rules & Requirements:*

- (1) Select a publicly traded company that you wish to defend at least two weeks before your debate
- (2) **Immediately** provide the name of the company you are defending to the team you are debating **AND** get the name of the company they are defending.
- (3) Once teams have been informed of company names those companies cannot be changed
- (4) You will compare and contrast your company with the other company and explain why your company is **more socially responsible**.

(2) **Debate two** (class evaluates)

400 Total possible

#### *Rules & Requirements:*

- (1) Select a publicly traded company that you wish to defend at least two weeks before your debate
- (2) **Immediately** provide the name of the company you are defending to the team you are debating **AND** get the name of the company they are defending.
- (3) Once teams have been informed of company names those companies cannot be changed
- (4) You will compare and contrast your company with the other company and explain why your company is **a better financial investment**.

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### 4. Quizzes:

(1) Test one (Computer scored)

50 x 40 = 2000

2000 Total possible

(2) Test two (Computer scored)

2000 Total possible

### 5. Peer Evaluation:

Evaluations by your team (members evaluate each other):

100 Total possible

# Method of computing points awarded for activities

## **CAUTION!**

NO POINTS will be awarded to any team member who does not participate in a classroom activity. If you miss class you cannot participate. If you cannot attend a class and wish to earn credit you may petition the professor to assign a case study to you. Whether your request is granted is solely the option of the professor. If it is granted you will be assigned a case study and you will then write a five to seven page summary paper. If the paper submitted is acceptable to the professor it will be assigned the same grade achieved by the team for the exercise missed by the paper's author.

**Achievement numbers as shown in Table 1 will be assigned to each activity.**

<i>Achievement # for student activities</i>	
Achievement will be assessed on a scale of 1 to 10	<b>Table 1</b>
1 – 5 = Completely unacceptable	
6= Contributions were poorly considered or sloppily expressed	
7 =Contributions were adequate (met the low end of minimum expectations)	
8= Contributions met the high end of expectations. They were carefully considered and clearly focused.	
9= Contributions significantly exceeded expectations. They were carefully considered, clearly focused, and thought provoking. Excellent!	
10 =Contributions were shockingly profound and insightful. They reflected surprisingly creative (out of the box) thinking – (Fantastic!!!)	

**Achievement numbers will then be converted using Table 2 to a percentage to be multiplied by the full value of the activity.**

**For example, if a 400-point activity were rated as an "8" the conversion table would result in – [400 x .85 = 340]. In other words, the total points awarded for a specific activity to the individual team or student would be 340. If you have any questions about the grading format please ask the Professor.**

10 = 1.00 x exercise value	<b>Table 2</b>
9 = .95 x exercise value	
8 = .85 x exercise value	
7 = .74 x exercise value	
6 = .64 x exercise value	
5-1 = .50 x exercise value	

**Final letter grades will be determined as a percentage of points earned divided by the total possible points.**

**Percentage Scale:**

**A = 96-100    A- = 90-95    B+ = 87-89    B = 83-86    B- = 80-82**

**C+ = 77-79    C = 73-76    C- = 70-72    D = 61-69    E = < 61**

**Assignments include BUT ARE NOT LIMITED to the following:**

**CONCEPTS – Team assignments:**

**TEAM 6: Class 2 – Charting A Company's Direction (*Chapter 2*)**

**TEAM 5: Class 3 – External Environment (*Chapter 3*)**

**TEAM 4: Class 4 – Resources, Capabilities, & Competitiveness (*Chapter 4*)**

**TEAM 3: Class 5 – Generic Competitive Strategies (*Chapter 5*)**

**TEAM 2: Class 6 – Strengthening Competitive Position (*Chapter 6*)**

**TEAM 1: Class 7 – Competing in International Markets (*Chapter 7*)**

**TEAMS: 2 & 5: Class 8 – Diversification (*Chapter 8*)**

**TEAMS: 3 & 6: Class 9 – Strategy, Ethics, & Social Responsibility (*Chapter 9*)**

**TEAMS: 1 & 4: Class 12 – Strategic Execution (*Chapter 10*)**

**TEAMS: 2-3-5: Class 13 – Managing Internal Operations (*Chapter 11*)**

**TEAMS: 1-4-6: Class 14 – Corporate Culture & Leadership (*Chapter 12*)**

**CASES – Team assignments:**

**TEAM 1: Class 2 – *Silver Ships' Strategy*..... (Case 14 pg C-213 in textbook)**

**TEAM 2: Class 3 – *Whole Foods Market*..... (Case 2 pg C-6)**

**TEAM 3: Class 4 – *Google's Strategy*..... (Case 12 pg C-174)**

**TEAM 4: Class 5 – *Norton Lilly International*..... (Case 24 pg C-368)**

**TEAM 5: Class 6 – *Gap Inc*..... (Case 11 pg C-155)**

**TEAM 6: Class 8 – *Netflix's Business Model*..... (Case 6 pg C-88)**

**TEAMS: 2, 3, & 5: Class 12 – *Redbox's Strategy*..... (Case 7 pg C-104)**

**TEAMS: 1, 4, & 6: Class 13 – *Apple Inc*..... (Case 10 pg C-141)**

**Debate 1: Class 11**

**Teams 1 vs 6**

**Teams 3 vs 5**

**Teams 2 vs 4**

**Debate 2: Class 15**

**Teams 1 vs 5**

**Teams 3 vs 2**

**Teams 6 vs 4**

**Quiz 1: Class 7**

**Quiz 2: Class 14**

## CASES

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). While the reading materials will provide you with a framework, *there are no simple formulas*. (Please remember: Not every case must – or even should – have a SWOT analysis!) Begin with the general assignment question and conclude with recommendations as to what the company should do in the future or generalize your learning to similar situations. Hence, while the assignment question for each case serves to open up your analysis and the class discussion, it is just the starting point. 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. And while it is interesting to know subsequent events, the purpose of case analysis is *not* to update the case. (Indeed, the course Web site contains sufficient additional information.) Besides, recent actions taken are not necessarily the correct ones, as if there is ever a “correct” answer.

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? You 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. Superficial or obvious statements are not welcome.

Do demonstrate your understanding of the reading materials. The purpose of cases is to learn and apply concepts, so it is critical you integrate information from the text and assigned articles, a Web site that discusses the topic (not the case), the company Web site or other update that informs your analysis, and/or a self-assessment or exercise that applies the topic to you personally.

Provide your analysis. Conduct financial, organizational, and environmental analysis as necessary. Again, do not repeat do not repeat do not repeat the case. Instead, you should gather relevant information and cite the source(s). Or, identify potential problems and areas for further study when information is insufficient, inadequate, and unavailable. Or, offer your insights (without repeating repeating repeating the case).

Be creative. Here is your opportunity to communicate your view of the case and topic in your own special way. You should not feel obligated to follow a specific approach, but you should address the requirements covered here.

Do not update the case unnecessarily. The biggest mistake you can make is to avoid analyzing the available information (case and readings), 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.

Make your recommendations. You might be used to analyzing cases to identify and discuss “What Happened To Our Previous Strategy?” (“Aha – That’s what went wrong!”) Since strategy requires actions about the future, your recommendations should examine what to do at the end of the case and not what they should have done in the past.






Lessons learned. What additional thing(s) do you now know about strategic management? Can you advance the topic or the field? Here is an opportunity to be creative, use personal experiences, synthesize and integrate the readings, and generalize your findings.

Attach supporting documents as Appendixes or Exhibits. The most important part is the tables and charts, graphs and graphics, pro formas and data analyses, WWW sites, etc. that reinforce, support, substantiate, and clarify your outline. They are not opportunities to elaborate your written discussion and should not be in prose! (For instance, do not discuss an outline topic “In greater detail”!) Please, please, please do not attach complete articles of any sort or use this as an opportunity to continue any aspect of your outline.

Case analyses must demonstrate the following:

- Insight (identify key issues)
- Analysis (avoid mere summaries of the case)
- Originality (be creative, innovative, imaginative)
- Effort (appearance, organization, overall style)
- Clarity (consistent writing style, format)
- Integration (incorporate other information and knowledge)
- Application of theory (ability to apply the reading materials)
- Thoroughness (comprehensiveness)
- Recommendations (strength and support; internal consistency)
- Practicality (recognize organizational realities; e.g., politics, culture, informal rewards)
- Generalize learning to the session topic (synthesize lessons from the case, Web sites, & readings)
- General interest (persuasiveness, stimulation)

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Class Date	1st segment of Class Session	Teams	Ref	2nd segment of Class Session	Team	Ref
1 1/18	[a] Introductions, [b] Course Overview,			[c] Assignments, & [d] Strategic Theory	Everyone	Discussion
2 1/25	Charting A Company's Direction	Team 6	Ch 2	Case Study -- Silver Ships' Strategy	Team 1	Case 14, pg C-213
3 2/1	External Environment	Team 5	Ch 3	Case Study -- Whole Foods Market	Team 2	Case 2, pg C-6
4 2/8	Resources, Capabilities, & Competitive	Team 4	Ch 4	Case Study -- Google's Strategy	Team 3	Case 12, pg C-174
5 2/15	Generic Competitive Strategies	Team 3	Ch 5	Case Study -- Norton Lilly International	Team 4	Case 24, pg C-368
6 2/22	Strengthening Competitive Position	Team 2	Ch 6	Case Study -- Gap Inc.	Team 5	Case 11, pg C-155
7 2/29	Competing in International Markets	Team 1	Ch 7	<b>QUIZ 1</b>		
8 3/7	Diversification	Teams 2 & 5	Ch 8	Case Study -- Netflix's Business Model	Team 6	Case 6, pg C-88
9 3/21	Strategy, Ethics, & Social Responsibility	Teams 3 & 6	Ch 9	<b>GUEST Lecturer</b>		
10 3/28	Meet in Individual teams			Prepare for Debate		Meet in Library
11 4/4	<b>Strategy Debate #1:</b>			1 vs 6; 3 vs 5; and 2 vs 4	All Teams	
12 4/11	Strategic Execution	Teams 1 & 4	Ch 10	Case Study -- Redbox's Strategy	Teams 2-3-5	Case 7, p C-104
13 4/18	Managing Internal Operations	Teams 2-3-5	Ch 11	Case Study -- Apple Inc.	Teams 1-4-6	Case 10, p C-141
14 4/25	Corporate Culture & Leadership	Teams 1-4-6	Ch 12	<b>GUEST Lecturer &amp; QUIZ 2</b>		
15 5/2	<b>Strategy Debate #2:</b>			1 vs 5; 3 vs 2; and 6 vs 4	All Teams	Course Finale