

**University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Bryan School of Business and Economics
Department of Management**

**MGT 491 Business Policy and Strategy, Section 01
Course Syllabus**

Fall Semester, 2020

Course Format: Online

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Course Materials

- (1) Lecture slides; developed by instructor; available on Canvas
- (2) Registration to the 2020 Online Edition of The Business Strategy Game: Competing in a Global Marketplace, (instructions available on Canvas)
- (3) 'Strategic Management, Value Creation, Sustainability, and Performance' by Page West, 5th edition, e-text or paperback; accessing instructions available on Canvas.
- (4) Articles from leading practice-oriented management journals and business press; available from library and under Files on Canvas
- (5) Case Studies; instructions available on Canvas

Course Prerequisites

MGT 301, 312, & 330; MKT 309, 320; FIN 315; ISM 280 & 360 plus senior standing and admission to approved major — Note that these are prerequisites, not co-requisites.

Course Description

Business Policy and Strategy (or Strategic Management) is considered the capstone course in your undergraduate business education. It is first and foremost a course about "strategy" and concerned with "managing for organizational success". The central theme of the Business Policy and Strategy (Strategic Management) course is that a company's chances for enjoying *persistent* or *sustained* competitive advantage and/or profitability are greatly enhanced *if and only if* its managers (1) have an astute, timely strategic "game plan" for running the company; and (2) implement and execute the game plan with proficiency. We will explore in depth how and why a well-formulated and well-executed strategy nearly always enhances a company's long-term performance through strategic content analysis and skill building activities.

The content portion of the course would be devoted to explaining what it means to *think strategically* about a company's situation, and it would instruct the student in the formal tools and techniques of strategic analysis, formulating a strategy, and then implementing it successfully. The skill-building portion of the course is built around team assignments, case analysis, and a strategy simulation competition. The purpose of the skill-building portion is to drill students in the application of the key concepts and analytical techniques and is designed to help develop their ability to conduct strategic analysis and exercise business judgment, and to expose them to top management strategic decision-making. Students will spend the semester making decisions in a business simulation – the Online Business Strategy Game (BSG). The simulation provides a realistic competitive experience and gives each student an opportunity to apply strategic management and functional knowledge and experience a top management team decision-making environment and responsibilities.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Understand the strategic issues and policy decisions facing businesses and how current management concepts address these issues.
2. Understand and describe the strategic management process and the difference between strategic analysis, strategy formulation and strategy implementation.
3. Acquire an understanding of how to use new and existing knowledge to analyze "real world" cases

- and by so doing, to understand the complexity of strategic issues.
4. Elaborate on how strategic plans and policies are integrated, implemented and controlled and to comprehend the culture and ethical factors that influence these management activities.
 5. Analyze new knowledge and use existing knowledge to conduct strategic and competitive analysis using various tools (e.g., Five Forces, SWOT, Portfolio matrix models) in a variety of industries.
 6. Evaluate the formulation of business and corporate level strategies, the different business and corporate strategic types, alternative actions, and make sound strategic decisions using what-if analysis.
 7. Discuss the managerial task associated with implementing and executing company strategies, and the action managers can take to promote competent strategy execution.
 8. Assess the role of government policy in creating incentives and disincentives for a variety of competitive condition for both domestic and international competition.
 9. Demonstrate how the various pieces of the knowledge they have acquired in their functional-oriented business courses fit together and discuss why the different parts of a company's business need to be managed in strategic harmony for the company to operate successfully.
 10. Synthesize and apply the concepts and analytical tools exposed to in the course by participating in managing a company through a business simulation game or conduct a strategic and competitive analysis of a company, both individually and as a member of a group.

Course Design

To achieve the student learning outcomes above, the course is designed to help students build knowledge of strategic management and develop skills in performing a strategic management analysis. The course requires extensive student input in the form of online discussion, assignments, analysis, and teamwork. Students are required to review assigned weekly material before participating in online discussions. The course makes use of various learning methods, such as online discussion, case study analysis, readings, team assignments, team presentations, journal article discussions, quizzes, exams, and team decision-making.

Communication

Electronic correspondence can utilize any of the capabilities available through Canvas – email, chat, or video conferencing. Most of the electronic correspondence from me will go to your student email account through Canvas. You should check this email and/or Canvas on a regular basis.

Accommodations

If you need any accommodations, please present documentation at the beginning of the semester. UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, oars.uncg.edu. Contact OARS for more information about accommodations; phone (336) 334-5440; fax (336) 334-4412; email oars@uncg.edu. Students may request accommodations for religious holidays under applicable laws. See <https://catalog.uncg.edu/academic-regulations-policies/university-policies/> for more information. Students should remind the instructor in advance when accommodation affects course activities, e.g., before taking exams, to ensure that the instructor has updated systems accordingly. In the case of exam accommodations (e.g. extended time), the instructor (not OARS) will provide these accommodations through Canvas.

Academic Integrity Policy

Each student is required to comply with the Academic Integrity Policy on all work submitted for the course. Refer to the following URL: <https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/>. All relevant Honor Codes at UNCG are always in force. You are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by these policies. Violations include plagiarizing, copying on an assignment, or helping another with an assignment. Violations may result in failing the course and/or referral to the Honor Council for disciplinary action.

Health and Well-Being

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of

motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu

COVID-19 Spartan Shield Video

UNCG Chancellor Frank Gilliam has challenged us to create a Culture of Care at UNCG where we all wear face coverings and social distance, less to protect ourselves but rather more to protect everyone around us. It shows that you care about the well-being of everyone around you. We have created this video featuring your student body presidents to better explain how and why this is so important.

Please watch this video before the first day of classes.

<https://youtu.be/Mb58551qxEk>

Grading Policy

Having multiple components reduces the negative impact on your final grade from poor performance on a single component. I have also built into the course opportunities to earn **extra credit** through online discussions, exams, the simulation, and article discussion. During the semester, your scores on individual components will be weight-averaged to form a **raw score**, which determines your relative standing in the class. Once you get all your component scores, I can apply a **grade curve** if needed to determine your final grade, but this is not needed in most cases. If you foresee any problems with any aspect of the course, please contact me immediately and I will do all I can to help you! My main goal is to help you learn and earn a passing grade in the course.

Grading

Component	Weight	
Online Discussion	10%	Individual
Exams		
• 3 exams, 12% each	36%	Individual
Case Study	2%	Individual
Article Discussion	6%	Team
Assignments		
• 5 assignments, 2% each	10%	Team
Business Strategy Game:		
• Quiz 1	2%	Individual
• Quiz 2	2%	Individual
• BSG Results	15%	Team
• Team Presentation	5%	Team
• Comprehensive exam	4%	Individual
Peer Evaluation	8%	Individual
Total	100%	

Grading Scale

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+
Score	93.4 – 100	90.0 – 93.3	86.7 – 89.9	83.4 – 86.6	80.0 – 83.3	76.7 – 79.9
Grade	C	C-	D+	D	F	
Score	73.4 – 76.6	70.0 – 73.3	66.7 – 69.9	60.0 – 66.6	Below 60.0	

Journal Article Discussion

A list of articles corresponding to main topics in strategic management, along with their full texts are posted

under Files on Canvas. The articles are also available from the library's website. Each article comes from a recent issue of one of the four leading management journals intended for business practitioners – managers, executives, and entrepreneurs. The journals are Harvard Business Review, California Management Review, MIT Sloan Management Review, and McKinsey Quarterly. Each team (the same as your BSG team) should select one article from the list corresponding to their assigned topic. Some articles are longer and/or more difficult and come with **extra credit** points. The article should not have been picked by another team previously (check the schedule on the google doc, thru a page on Canvas). The team should prepare slides in Power Point or Google Slides summarizing the key points/findings/takeaways from the article, integrating it with other knowledge from class or other classes, and drawing relevant conclusions/implications for managers and businesses. Teams are assigned to topics and weeks at random. **Each team should POST the title of their article of choice on the Google doc set up in Canvas at least ONE WEEK in advance. Once the slides are ready, please SHARE/FORWARD them to me.** I will make these slides available to the class and set up a discussion board devoted to the article. Each team is responsible for moderating their article discussion board. There, your classmates and I can post questions, to which members from the team must answer. Team members can also ask questions to the class or make other comments/observations. Posting on these discussion boards counts toward participation for that week. However, **team members moderating the discussion are not subject to the weekly participation limits with respect to their own discussion board!** It is up to the team to decide how many members will work on the slides and answer questions. If fewer than the total number of members, then the other teammates should reciprocate by undertaking an extra activity in other team activities. Although a single team is responsible for a given article, everyone is expected to read the selected articles (total of 12) and be familiar with their main points. I will provide my own article summaries separately. Exams will incorporate questions pertaining to all discussed articles.

Case Study Quiz

Each student must complete a quiz to prepare for the case study discussion. The assignment requires students to apply knowledge from course material and case. **No late submissions accepted!** You will receive specific instructions and the questions on Canvas.

Assignments

There will be five small team assignments to complement course material and online discussions. Typically, the teams need to prepare 1-page answers (text and graphics) to key questions, which they can either type in electronically or write manually and submit a picture of the completed work. **No late submissions accepted!** You will receive specific instructions and the questions on Canvas.

Exams

There are three non-cumulative exams during the semester that test knowledge and understanding of fundamental strategic management concepts discussed in the course. **Make-up exams will not be given** except in the case of extraordinary and unavoidable circumstances and *must be arranged at least two weeks in advance* of the original exam date. You will be assessed on your ability to **recognize, apply** (not simply state/recite), and **integrate** the tools/concepts/frameworks from learning materials and the knowledge from journal articles, assignments, and case studies discussed online. Exams may incorporate bonus questions for **extra credit**. You will find that online discussions and assignments will greatly assist you in taking exams. Each exam will consist of multiple-choice questions.

Online Discussion

Your participation in online discussions is a required component of this course. You must participate to be successful. Your participation will facilitate a great deal of your learning. Both *quality* and *quantity* of contributions are important. Your participation score will be updated every few weeks on Canvas. Participation is best achieved if you review assigned material and are attentive to other students' and my posts. The formation of the participation score will follow the procedure below.

For each week, I will fill out a participation log based on a points system, where 10 is the maximum. I will determine the quality of your comments based on the value it adds to the discussion. Each week, I will set up several discussion boards with key questions related to core material or to journal articles. **You can post an**

original comment under a regular discussion board, a question/observation under an article discussion board, or reply to a classmate's comment in either. However, you are limited to one original comment per week (pick one discussion board) that cannot exceed 200 words, one question/observation in an article discussion board per week (pick one) that cannot exceed 100 words, and one reply not to exceed 100 words. This means that you must select the discussion boards, where you want to make your contributions. You do not need to participate in all online discussions. **A single original comment or question/observation could be enough to earn maximum credit. A single reply is not enough for maximum credit but can help add points to original comments and/or question/observation.** Team members moderating an article discussion can make multiple contributions on their own board. They receive full participation credit for the week. Their posts outside their own article discussion board are subject to the above limitations and will receive additional weekly participation credit according to the general rules below. This extra participation credit will be applied to a week when the student did not make discussion contributions or to add points to the final participation grade.

Your contributions will be assessed based on a simple scale each week:

- 0 – Lack of online activity
- 6 – Evidence of reviewing content online, but no participation in online discussions
- +1 – Posted something or made clarification, adding marginally to class discussion;
- +2 – Comment demonstrated good understanding or moved discussion ahead;
- +3 – Comment offered personal or professional examples or added substantial value;
- +4 – Made an insightful comment that integrated prior comments and/or connected topics together;

To determine your final online discussion grade, I first combine your weekly participation scores in sets of two, then take the higher score and at the end I average these scores and multiply by 10. The procedure is optimized for each student individually to receive the fairest and highest credit for participation in online discussions. One important implication from this procedure is that you can receive full credit (100 score) by participating half the time (and getting 4 points each time), while showing evidence of reviewing content online in the remaining weeks. Here is a quick scheme to help you understand how this procedure translates in a participation score. If you review online content regularly, but never participate in online discussions, you will get 60. If you review content regularly and get maximum points (+4) in half of the weeks, you will get 100. If you exceed these points, you will get **extra credit** and a participation score above 100. If you review content regularly and participate in online discussions several times with maximum credit or multiple times with average credit, along with participation in the article discussion of your team (answer questions), you are likely to score 80 and above. You also have the opportunity for **extra credit** points for posting questions to teams' final BSG presentations.

Business Strategy Game (BSG), <https://www.bsg-online.com/>

The 2020 Online Edition of The Business Strategy Game (BSG) is an industry simulation, where each team leads a company in the athletic footwear industry. Each student will be assigned to a team based on their major, opting for maximum diversity. Each team submits ten decisions and receives feedback on their achievement after each decision once the simulation runs. You will have a chance to make two practice decisions before the 'real game' begins. Make the most of these to get a better feel for multiple aspects of the game. To begin with, you need to register and download the Player's Guide, which you will make constant use of throughout the course of the game. If you are uncertain about an aspect of the game, you are strongly encouraged to check the Player's Guide and use the extensive online help screens before contacting the instructor, as you should be able to find answers to most or all your questions in the guide or online. You need to meet/collaborate with your teammates quickly after team assignment and start crafting decisions. A decision is a set of selections, there is no 'submit' button, but there is a 'save decision' button, do not forget to hit save. These selections should be made directly online. The simulation is automatically administered on the dates and times specified in the schedule online and in the syllabus and will run with your latest selections. **You must be done on time!** The instructor cannot control when the simulation runs once scheduled. Simulation results will typically be available within 15 minutes.

BSG Quizzes

The two quizzes test your knowledge of the game. It is important to learn how to play the game quickly. Both quizzes are **offered on the BSG website** (<https://www.bsg-online.com/>), not on Canvas. The first quiz tests your knowledge of the Player's Guide and is completed before you begin playing the game, while the second tests your ability to analyze in-game data and make decisions and is completed after you have made several decisions.

Overall Company Performance

The grade for your BSG performance will be determined based on your results during the entire simulation. It will be a weighted average of all ten decisions, not your score in the last year. The simulation objectively determines your BSG performance grade by averaging your score on the Investor Expectations Standard (50%) and your score on the Best-in-Industry Standard (50%). The score on the Investor Expectations Standard shows the percentage of five pre-set annual performance targets that the company met or beat each year. The score on the Best-in-Industry Standard represents a company's weighted average of how a company's performance compared to the industry's best performer on each of the 5 performance measures (EPS, ROE, stock price, credit rating, and image rating). You also have a chance to earn bonus points in the game. Because the Investor Expectations score can go up to 120 and the Best-in-Industry can go up to 100, your total final score could be in the 110-120 range. Anything you earn above 100 will count as **extra credit**. Please think critically and carefully before making each decision for each year. Do not make goofy 'end game' decisions (like a huge dividend) that are just manipulating your results. Instead, your last decision should reflect the future strategic plans that you present in your team presentation.

Team BSG Presentation

Each team will prepare **narrated slides** (or voice-over slides) presenting its accomplishments through the ten decision rounds. You can use Google, Zoom, WebEx, PowerPoint, or other software to prepare the presentation. Make sure you save it and then either submit/share on Canvas or forward/share the file to my email. The presentation should include:

- An update on the goals and strategy you were/are pursuing;
- An explanation of past performance with respect to industry and/or close competitors (please clarify how you determined your close competitors, strategic group, etc.); be sure to be quite honest about what you would have done differently regarding the implementation of your strategy (i.e. did you overreact to competitors' performance, were your decisions consistent with your strategy, etc.);
- A description of current standing, including: distinctive competencies achieved; value created for shareholders; current problems/concerns; and key challenges or opportunities with respect to your close competitors.
- Future strategic plans for competing in the industry; especially how you will position yourself with respect to close competitors, industry demand forecasts, etc. What are you planning to do to improve your strategic positioning? How will you accomplish this?
- Key pro forma Income Statement and financial *Highlights* for the next 5 years, noting key assumptions (market share, pricing, capital expenditures, etc.). This should mirror your description of future strategic plans. For instance, do not plan for doubling market share and yet fail to increase your manufacturing capacity in the future.

Each of the above five sections is equally important for grading purposes. Your presentation is your chance to explain your decisions throughout the semester. It is your opportunity to demonstrate that you can leverage the concepts addressed in the course in a 'real world' setting. In addition:

- Your presentation should be forthcoming. Investors expect to hear truthful explanations for past problems, as well as encouraging reports and projections.
- Your presentation cannot exceed **15 minutes**. Practice to make sure the talk is within 15 minutes. Don't spend lots of time on "fluff." Pictures (i.e. graphs, color, etc.) will help you get your points across clearly and concisely.
- **Every member** of the team must speak during the presentation.
- You will be graded on the *content* of your presentation, not merely the style. However, a poorly presented talk may make it difficult to understand the content.
- I will set up a **BSG presentation discussion board** for each team, like the article discussion boards. There,

students and I can post questions, to which the team members should provide answers.

- I will provide a shared sign-up sheet for the schedule of due dates for the BSG presentations.

BSG Comprehensive Exam

The test is “open book” and administered after the conclusion of the simulation on the BSG website (not on Canvas). The questions concern the relevance of industry statistics, the benchmarking data, the competitive intelligence data, and the strategic and operating issues company managers need to address. To do well, you must have a strong grasp of (1) basic strategy concepts and principles, (2) the strategic thinking and analysis that company managers need to do to craft a strategy and make wise, informed decision entries, and (3) the different strategic actions and initiatives that can be taken to improve one or more aspects of the company’s performance and achieve a competitive advantage over rival companies.

Peer Evaluation

Quality of teamwork is extremely important and highly valued in the workplace! You will complete peer evaluations at the end of the semester **on the BSG website**. The peer evaluation is the primary feedback mechanism concerning group participation. **Peer evaluations cover all team-based activities, including BSG, article discussion, and team assignments.** All students are expected to complete their peer evaluation forms. Individuals failing to complete an evaluation form will be **penalized** by reducing their peer evaluation grade by as much as 50 percent. Your ability to be a good “team player” will be valued in this class and throughout your career. I expect that everyone will receive good peer evaluations. However, this will depend on your contributions to your team. Those students who receive very low evaluations from their teammates will be **penalized** by reducing their BSG results grade, as well as other team-based grades by as much as 50 percent.

Each team should discuss individual expectations and conflict resolution policies early in the term to prevent discouraging team outcomes. If a team member fails to meet team expectations, the other team members are expected to provide periodic feedback to the non-contributing member. It is not fair or useful to keep silent about failed expectations and then severely rate the team member at the end of the term. On the other hand, it is legitimate and expected that you honestly and accurately assess each team member’s contribution, assuming each member has been given a reasonable opportunity to improve his or her participation in the team.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETING DATES, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments
1	Aug 18 – Aug 21	Getting started on Canvas; Strategy, Vision, and Ethics; Online discussion	Form teams; Register for BSG; Read Player’s Guide Meet with teammates
2	Aug 24 – Aug 28	Strategy, Vision, and Ethics Business Level Strategy BSG application; Online discussion	Practice Yr 11, due Aug 27, 11pm Practice Yr 12, due Aug 31, 11pm Assignment 1 due Aug 31; Game re-set Sep 01 at 4 pm
3	Aug 31 – Sep 04	External Environment: Industry and Competitive Analysis; Online discussion	Article discussion 1; Decision Y11 due Sep 04, 11 pm; Quiz 1 due Sep 01 at 11 pm; Assignment 2 due Sep 08
4	Sep 08 – Sep 11	External Environment: Industry and Competitive Analysis Online discussion	Article discussion 2 & 3; Decision Y12 due Sep 11, 11 pm; Assignment 3 due Sep 14
5	Sep 14 – Sep 18	Internal Environment: Resources Online discussion	Article discussion 4; EXAM 1 due Sep 19
6	Sep 21 – Sep 25	Internal Environment: Value Chain Analysis Online discussion	Article discussion 5; Decision Y13 due Sep 22, 11 pm; Quiz 2 due Sep 25 at 11 pm
7	Sep 28 – Oct 02	Internal Environment: Intellectual Capital Online discussion	Article discussion 6; Decision Y14 due Sep 29, 11 pm; Assignment 4 due Oct 05
8	Oct 05 – Oct 09	Internal Environment: Intellectual Capital; Online discussion; BSG Lab, feedback and guidelines to each team	Article discussion 7; Decision Y15 due Oct 06, 11 pm
9	Oct 12 – Oct 16	Corporate Level Strategy, Diversification and Acquisitions; Online discussion	Article discussion 8; Decision Y16 due Oct 13, 11 pm; EXAM 2 due Oct 17
10	Oct 19 – Oct 23	Corporate Level Strategy, Diversification and Acquisitions; Online discussion	Article discussion 9 Decision Y17 due Oct 20, 11 pm;
11	Oct 26 – Oct 30	International Strategy; Online discussion	Article discussion 10; Decision Y18 due Oct 27, 11 pm
12	Nov 02 – Nov 06	International Strategy; Online discussion; Case study discussion	Article discussion 11; Decision Y19 due Nov 03, 11 pm; Quiz due Nov 03; Assignment 5 due Nov 09
13	Nov 09 – Nov 13	Corporate Governance; Online discussion	Article discussion 12; Decision Y20 due Nov 10, 11 pm; EXAM 3 due Nov 14
14	Nov 16 – Nov 20	Team presentations and online discussion	BSG comprehensive exam due Nov 20, 11 pm
15	Nov 23 – Nov 24	Team presentations and online discussion	Peer evaluations: Nov 11, 10 am - Nov 25, 11 pm