

Course Syllabus

University of North Carolina at Greensboro


Bryan School of Business and Economics

Department of Management

MGT 491-05: Business Policy and Strategy, Fall 2023

Instructor:	Dr. Soheil Hooshangi
Office:	371 Bryan Building
Telephone:	(336) 256-0388 (Office)
Email Address:	s_hoosha@uncg.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:15-12:45pm, or by appointment

REQUIRED TEXT & MATERIALS

1. Textbook: **Connect** version of Dess, G. G., McNamara, G., Eisner, A. B., and S.H. Lee. *Strategic Management: Text and Cases*, 10th Edition, 2020. (ISBN10: 1260706567, ISBN13: 9781260706567)
 - **Do not buy the print, ebook, or rental version of the textbook.** You need to have access to 'Connect' version of the textbook for this course. Instructions for how to purchase Connect version is available in Canvas.
2. Simulation: *Business Strategy Game (BSG): Competing in Global Marketplace* (Every student needs to register an account at [bsg-online.com](http://www.bsg-online.com)  (<http://www.bsg-online.com>). Account registration requires a company registration code which will be provided by the instructor.)
3. Lectures and slides which will be available in Canvas.
4. Additional articles and case studies which will be available in Canvas

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR

The best ways to contact me is by email ([s_hoosha@uncg.edu \(mailto:s_hoosha@uncg.edu\)](mailto:s_hoosha@uncg.edu)) or Canvas message. Please do not use Connect or BSG messages as they will not be seen and thus will

remain unanswered. If you want to schedule a one-by-one Zoom meeting, just email me (or send me a message in Canvas) with a few times that work best for you.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

MGT 301, MGT 312; MKT 309, MKT 320; FIN 315; ISM 280; senior standing; 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 shall explore in some 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 exercises. 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 case analysis and simulation game. 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, force them to exercise business judgment, and provide them with experiential contact with strategic decision-making.

As such, the course focuses on the development of a general understanding of the management of an organization, primarily from the perspective of the top management. Our point of view will therefore be strategic, broader than the functional orientation of the specialist. We will be integrating the knowledge you have already acquired from other disciplines such as Accounting, Economics, Finance, Human Resource Management, Marketing, Management Information Systems and Operations Management to provide a 'macro' or broader view of how each functional area affects the other parts of the organization and the company as a whole. In addition, we will be examining the organization in its environment and how each is influenced by the other. The problems and issues surrounding the tasks of crafting and implementing a strategy cover the whole spectrum of business and management. Many variables and situational factors must be dealt with at once. Evaluating the pros and cons of one strategy option against another entails a *total company perspective* and good judgement about how all the relevant factors combine to shape what actions need to be taken.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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 model, SWOT analysis, 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.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

The workload in this course is **heavy**. We will therefore be, very busy. As such, you should plan to spend at least five (5) hours per week outside of class (e.g., reading the textbook and/or articles, preparing the case analyses, gathering information and preparing your group projects and presentations, preparing for exams, doing the simulation, etc.). It is, therefore, important that each of us work consistently and diligently to complete the objectives of the course. If you **invest the right amount of time** in the course, it will not only be one of the most demanding, but also the most enjoyable course.

COURSE GRADING POLICY

Your course grade will be based on the following criteria:

Evaluation criteria	Individual/ Group	Points
Mini case studies (in Connect)	Individual	18.2
Chapter quizzes (in Connect)	Individual	20.4
Video cases and quizzes	Individual	3.6
Business Simulation Game (BSG):		21.8
BSG Quiz 1 (0.7 points)	Individual	
BSG Quiz 2 (0.7 points)	Individual	
BSG Video Recording Assignment 1 (1.4 points)	Individual	
BSG Video Recording Assignment 2 (1.5 points)	Individual	
Strategic Plan performance (1.5 points)	Group	
Company performance (8 points)	Group	
Reflection paper (4 points)	Group	
BSG Assignments (4 points)	Group	
Course concepts assignments	Individual	8
Case study analysis (last week):		4

Discussions board contribution (4 points)	Individual	
Exams (Three exams, 8 points each)	Individual	24
Peer evaluation (read related section in syllabus)		
Extra credit (read below)		
Total		100

Extra credit: Students may be able to earn extra credit during the semester in a number of ways:

- Participating in “Getting Acquainted” Discussions board.
- Participation in BSG Public Discussions Board.
- Students will have the opportunity to earn more than full mark (up to 30% extra) in most assignments (other than Connect assignments). Students who submit assignments/papers which include generally correct answers and analyses that reflect a very good understanding and application of course concepts will receive full mark in that assignment/paper even if there are some minor flaws in their analyses/responses. Students who submit assignments/papers that reflect an excellent and flawless understanding and application of course concepts to provide complete answers to all aspect of the questions may receive up to 30% extra points (130% of full mark).
- There may be, at my discretion, other ways to earn extra credit. All students will be informed if the possibility exists.

Grading scale:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+
Score	93 and up	90-92.99	87 - 89.99	83 - 86.99	80 - 82.99	77 -79.99

Grade	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
Score	73- 76.99	70 - 72.99	67 - 69.99	63 - 66.99	60-62.99	Below 60

EXAMINATION

Students take three non-cumulative exams during the semester that test their knowledge and understanding of concepts discussed in the class. 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 apply (not simply state/recite) the tools/concepts/frameworks discussed in class. Besides reading the textbook, you will find that taking quizzes, doing your best in assignments, and active participation in discussions will greatly assist you in taking the exams. Each exam will consist of multiple choice and/or true false questions. All exams will be given online using LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor. You must remain visible in camera during the entire time an exam is administered using Respondus Monitor.

BSG SIMULATION EXERCISES

BSG simulation exercises heavily relies on teamwork. Students are required to form or join a group. Each team must include 5 students. If the class size does not permit to include five students in every team, some (as few as possible) teams can be formed by four students. Each team will manage a company, which will be required to make a set of decisions relating to the various functional areas in a company in a simulation game. To learn the mechanics of playing the simulation, you will need to **read the Player's Guide thoroughly**. To register for the BSG simulation, I will provide each student with his/her industry/company registration code in class after the formation of teams. You will then have to go to www.bsg-online.com and register for the simulation exercise. You will need to complete the registration process by paying with a credit card.

Before you start the game, you will have the opportunity to try out two practice rounds. These practice rounds along with two quizzes are intended to help you familiarize yourself with the dynamics of the game. If you don't use the opportunities to completely familiarize yourself with the game before the main game starts, you will be destined to confusion, frustration, and making uninformed decisions which will lower the performance of your company.

In BSG exercises you will be evaluated on the following activities:

1. **Two quizzes** (open-book, to be completed online by the due date).
2. **BSG** : After BSG starts, some weekly modules will include a BSG assignment. These assignments include questions which are intended to help you apply course concepts to making decisions for your athletic footwear company and improve its performance. These assignments are auto-graded. Your main motive to work on these assignments should NOT be earning the small number of points that they have. The small number of points are intended to be a nudge that reminds you to complete these assignments. You should see these assignments as an opportunity to deeply think about how you are managing your athletic footwear company and how you can improve its performance by

improving your strategic decisions. If you achieve this goal, in addition to the knowledge you gain, you are likely to earn a much better grade in BSG.

3. Developing a 3-year **Strategic Plan**. The Strategic Plan should:
 - Briefly articulate your team's company's strategic vision (in a couple of sentences);
 - Set performance targets for EPS, ROE, Stock price appreciation, credit rating, and image rating for each of the next three years; How well you do, determines your grade. This is calculated by BSG!
 - Develop a projected income statement that lays out projections of unit sales, revenues, costs, and profits for each of the four geographic regions and for the company as a whole for each of the next three years. How well you do, determines your grade. This is calculated by BSG!
4. **Company performance**: You will be awarded points based on how well your company met its different performance objectives in comparison with other companies in the same Your company's performance will be based on five performance measures, with weights in parentheses: (a) earnings per share (20%); (b) return on stockholders' equity (ROE) (20%); (c) stock price appreciation (20%); (d) the company's credit rating (20%); and (e) corporate/brand image (20%). How well you do determines your grade. This is calculated directly by BSG. Some groups receive over 100% of BSG grade when they do very well.
5. **Reflection paper**: This is a written report and review of your company's strategy and performance. The written report must be EXACTLY 6 pages EXCLUDING appendices, single-spaced, font size 11 (Times New Roman), 1 inch margin, and page numbered. All exhibits, graphs, and tables must be placed in the appendices at the end of paper. In each page of the reflection paper you should thoroughly clarify, explain, and/or analyze one topic (as described below). Do not include questions in your paper. Each page of your paper should be written as one integrated coherent essay covering everything requested regarding that topic. (which means that you should not merely provide bunch of unintegrated answers to separate questions, but you need to think about and write one integrated essay which covers everything requested from you regarding that topic.) You should not write more than one page about each topic. If what you have written about a topic is less than one page (which should not happen frequently), leave rest of that page blank, and start next topic in the next page.

What should be included in in each page your reflection paper:

- Page 1: Discussion of strategic vision:
 - What was your strategic vision? (Include the exact wording.)
 - How did you define your strategic vision? (i.e. what were the tools, data, analytical methods that you used? How did you discuss, evaluate alternatives, and eventually agreed upon one vision in your group?
 - Why did you define your company's strategic vision the way that you did? (i.e. what were your strategic justifications for appropriateness of your strategic vision?)
- Page 2: Discussion of competitive strategy
 - Among generic strategies discussed in Chapter 5 (cost leadership, differentiation, cost focus, differentiation focus, and combination), which strategy(ies) did you initially select for your

company? Did you initially select different generic strategies for different brands or geographical markets?

- Explain why did you initially select the specific strategy(ies) for your company? (i.e. what were the tools, data, analytical methods that you used? How did you discuss, evaluate alternatives, and eventually agreed upon strategies in your group?
- Did you ever set (either by defining them specifically or by discussing them verbally, or by other means) strategic objectives for your company? Provide a few examples of strategic objectives that you set, and whether or not your company achieved them.
- Comparison of actual competitive strategies with intended competitive strategy
 - Page 3: Explain whether co-managers ever explicitly changed, or started to make decisions that were implicitly inconsistent with, company's initial strategy? If this happened, explain: 1) why it happened? 2) whether and how it affected your group decision making processes? 3) whether and how it affected your company's performance. If this did not happen, explain 1) whether you believe it was a good thing to happen, 2) why it did not happen, 3) what are some of the most advantageous strategy changes that comanagers could have considered in your company?
 - Page 4: Examination of top management team decision-making processes: Discuss how did co-managers take into account company's strategy(ies) in their decisions regarding marketing, production, supply chain, human resource, finance, corporate citizenship, etc. (This is called strategic alignment which means all of your decisions must be consistent with, and help realize, your strategy. Provide a full picture of your decisions illustrating existence of alignment between your strategy(ies) and your decisions. If alignment was occasionally or frequently absent, explain 1) why was it absent? 2) how did its absence affect your company performance?
- Page 5: Presentation of the strategy(ies) you would use if the game was to continue for five more years into the future
 - Among generic strategies discussed in Chapter 5 (cost leadership, differentiation, cost focus, differentiation focus, and combination), which strategy(ies) will you select for your company? Will you select different generic strategies for different brands or geographical markets?
 - Explain why will you select the specific strategy(ies) for your company? (i.e. what were the tools, data, analytical methods that you used to come up with your proposed future strategies? How did you discuss, evaluate alternatives, and eventually agreed upon future strategies in your group?
- Page 6: Discussion of what you learned from BSG
 - Each comanager should include a short paragraph explaining her/his main learning takeout from BSG.
 - If comanagers have any comment or feedback on BSG, they can summarize it here.

RESUBMISSION AND LATE SUBMISSION POLICY

Resubmission and late submissions are accepted with penalty for course concept assignments, BSG assignments, BSG video recording assignments, and BSG reflection paper. Other assignment under most circumstances cannot be submitted, and will not be accepted, later than their due date.

For assignment that can be submitted after the due date, resubmissions and late submissions will be treated similarly. Purpose of a resubmission is providing an opportunity for students to resubmit assignments/papers in which they received a low grade. Late submission penalty is 10% for assignment that are late 48 hours or less and 20% for assignments that are more than 48hours late. Although resubmissions will be subject to penalty, they will be still eligible for extra credit (up to 30%) if your resubmission meets the excellence criteria explained in Grading Policy/Extra Credit section. Therefore, it is possible to receive an almost full mark on resubmissions despite the penalty. The goal of this policy is to give students who received a low grade an opportunity to improve not only their knowledge but also their grades. Don't forget that you have this this opportunity!

Last day to submit a late assignment is specified for each assignment by its "Available Until" date in Canvas. A late assignment or resubmission must be submitted in Canvas by the specified "Available Until" date for that assignment. Assignments that are submitted after the "Available Until" date or using methods other than Canvas will not be considered and/or graded.

PEER EVALUATION

Every student in a BSG team will be required to individually complete peer evaluations on each of his/her teammates at the conclusion of the semester. These evaluations will be used to assess students' contribution to the teamwork. I expect honest, professional assessments. If a team member receives inferior average ratings from teammates, all of her/his grades in BSG group assignments and exercises may be reduced up to 50%. Additionally, team members who fail to participate in and submit Peer Evaluations will be penalized by reducing their peer evaluation ratings by as much as 20% percent. If a student receives uniquely excellent ratings from her/his teammates, her/his grades on group assignments and exercises may be increased up to 30%.

Preventing or handling free riding and underperformance: 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 nor useful to keep silent about failed expectations and then penalize the team member at the end of the term. If a team member consistently underperforms during the semester, his/her team can take following action(s) in sequential steps (underperformance includes but is not limited to missing scheduled meetings, not completing agreed-upon assignments in the time required, etc.):

1. Team members meet with, or otherwise contact, the underperformer(s) to discuss the issues and clearly delineate the expectations of the team. This communication must be documented and shared with the instructor.
2. If, after a reasonable time period, determined by the team, performance does not improve, the team can contact the instructor to discuss the issues at hand. At that time, the instructor will request a meeting with, or otherwise contact, the underperformer(s).

3. After completion of steps 1 and 2 and once a reasonable amount of time to correct the issues has passed, the team will be given the authority to “fire” the under-performer(s), with the approval of the instructor. If a student is fired from a team, s/he will receive a score of 0 (zero) for all group assignments and activities. No make-up work will be available to counteract this matter.

STATEMENT OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a student in this class, you have explicit rights and responsibilities. Your full understanding and acceptance of the following rights and responsibilities can lead to more useful time in the class and more effective learning.


You have the right to expect:

1. Your professor to be prepared for each class, to start the class promptly at the designated time and to end the class at the designated time.
2. Your professor to teach all scheduled classes or to arrange for a qualified substitute if it is necessary to miss class because of University or departmental approved commitments.
3. Clear statements of course expectations, policies, testing, and grading practices and student performance.
4. Your professor to hold a reasonable number of office hours to discuss assignments or to assist you with course matters.
5. Knowledgeable assistance from you professor regarding class assignments and course contents.
6. Your professor's behavior to reflect equitable treatment, ethical practices, and respect for human rights.
7. Opportunities to challenge ideas and defend your beliefs in a professional manner.
8. To be challenged so as to grow both academically and professionally.
9. Your professor to abide by University policies and to have fairness and clarity in the evaluation of your performance.
10. Adequate opportunity to appeal any perceived violations of the above rights.

You have specific responsibilities to:

1. Plan your study and work schedule appropriately to allow sufficient time to do quality work in the course. (Please review "Suggested Academic Workload Guidelines" for the Bryan School of Business and Economics published in the UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin)
2. Attend each class on time and be prepared to discuss readings and participate in discussions.
3. Complete assignments by due date and submit quality work.
4. Understand and follow course policies as explained in class and in the syllabus.
5. Commit yourself to grow academically and professionally.
6. Work effectively and cooperatively as a team member on group projects as assigned.


7. Practice ethical behaviors and display respect for the rights of others. Please refrain from eating, drinking, and wearing hats or caps in the classroom.
8. Contact your professor and discuss circumstances that may prevent you from achieving acceptable performance and to make contact on a timely basis.
9. Fully understand and abide by the UNCG Honor Policy and other University policies on student conduct.
10. Report observed violations of the UNCG Honor Policy.

You are encouraged to read the Bryan School Guidelines for Ethical and Professional Behavior at <https://bryan.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Faculty-and-Student-Guidelines-2018-2019.pdf>  [_ \(https://bryan.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Faculty-and-Student-Guidelines-2018-2019.pdf\) _](https://bryan.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Faculty-and-Student-Guidelines-2018-2019.pdf).

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity, which includes race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, age, and socioeconomic status. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of this course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES

UNCG seeks to comply fully with The Americans with Disabilities Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Disability Services in 215 Elliott University center, 334- 5440, www.uncg.edu/ods  [_ \(http://www.uncg.edu/ods\) _](http://www.uncg.edu/ods).



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Your health impacts your learning. Throughout your time in college, you may experience a range of health issues that can cause barriers to your learning. These might include physical ailments, illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may be experiencing. 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. Help is always available

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic integrity is important to success at UNCG and beyond. Academic integrity is based on five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. If you are to fully benefit from this class and be properly evaluated for your contributions, we must work together in an environment that affirms these values. Work that violates these values is incompatible with the goals of this class and will not be tolerated. Every member of the class is expected to foster the spirit of academic honesty at all times and to encourage that spirit among others.

Note on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of purposefully using the work of another without appropriately citing or giving credit to the rightful person. This includes exact words, paraphrasing, and summary of opinions and/or information. **All resources must be used in the appropriate manner, giving full credit when credit is due, or else one will be considered in violation of UNCG policy of plagiarism.** Such behavior will not be tolerated in this class. For more information on the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy go to: <https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/>  [\(https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/\)](https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/). Any person or group of individuals found plagiarizing will be given a zero on that assignment and will be referred to UNCG Office of Student Conduct. UNCG provides a tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism: <http://library.uncg.edu/tutorials/index.aspx?m=8>  [.\(http://library.uncg.edu/tutorials/index.aspx?m=8\)](http://library.uncg.edu/tutorials/index.aspx?m=8).

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND ETIQUETTE

Technology requirements: You will need reliable high-speed internet access and a laptop (Windows or Mac) with functional camera and microphone to complete the exercises and assignment, take the exams, and participate in Zoom meetings. Your laptop must let you install required software packages (such as Adobe Acrobat Reader, LockDown Browser, and Zoom Desktop app, among others.) You are welcome to use Chromebooks, tablets, and smartphones if they happen to work for a specific purpose, but they are not completely functional for all purposes in this course. If you require technology assistance, please go to <https://its.uncg.edu/Help/>  [\(https://its.uncg.edu/Help/\)](https://its.uncg.edu/Help/).

Technology Etiquette: Online – as in person – honor the dignity of each person and respect the diverse ideas of others. Write as if you are speaking directly to a person in front of you. In other words, if you would not say something to someone's face, avoid writing it online. Have courageous – and respectful – conversations online as you would in person.