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School of Management and Labor Relations
Rutgers University
38:533:590
Fall 2025

COURSE HR Strategy II: Business and Competitive Strategy
Janice Levin Building, 004 (Basement)
Section 01: Tuesday, 4:30-7:10

PROFESSOR
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Office Hours: T, TH 2:00-4:00, or by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

How do some firms gain sustainable competitive advantage over industry rivals while others struggle to simply survive? How do factors such as a firm's internal and external environment impact their selection and implementation of strategy? How do new firms effectively plan and execute strategies that will enable them to successfully compete against established firms? How do some firms align activities in a manner that supports their chosen strategies while others seem to frequently struggle with issues of alignment? These are some examples of the types of questions we will seek to answer in our study of strategic management. This course will encourage you to form and utilize an integrated, cross-functional perspective to develop analytical and decision-making skills needed to cope with organizational uncertainties and business realities. To this end, a balance of theory and practice, lecture and discussion, textbook and cases, will be used to provide a holistic, more well-rounded understanding of strategic management.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As befits a senior- and/or graduate-level course, this section of Strategic Management has multiple objectives aimed at providing you with a comprehensive and broad, yet tailored, understanding of strategic management from an HR perspective. At a general level, this course is designed to expose you to issues that influence the competitive behavior and performance of *entire* organizations. So far in your coursework, you have likely studied business functions (e.g., accounting, finance, marketing) one at a time. Consequently, there is a tendency for such incremental emphasis to lead to narrow functional thinking. This course will help you broaden your perspective, so you are capable of considering business functions from the perspective of the overall organization as well as other stakeholders.

There are several learning objectives for this course. A detailed outline of these learning objectives, how the course achieves the objectives, and measures used to assess student competence across learning objectives is provided at the end of the syllabus. Please note that these are subject to change over the course of the semester, should any assignments or means of assessment be revised. Any changes will be announced in class and noted in an updated syllabus.

COURSE GUIDELINES

This course follows the standard guidelines and policies of the School of Management and Labor Relations and Rutgers University.

MEETING AVAILABILITY & COMMUNICATION

I will offer office hours at least once a week, as noted at the top of the syllabus. These office hours follow a “first come, first serve” format, so I strongly encourage you to email me to schedule a time to meet, so you can ensure that we have time reserved. Should my office hours not be feasible, I can offer flexibility and arrange to meet outside of office hours, either in-person in my office or virtually through Zoom.

I strive to respond to student emails in a timely manner, generally within a few hours of receiving the email. Understand that it may take me one or more days to respond to non-urgent emails. Emails or messages sent after 6pm will not likely be responded to until the following day. If you email me regarding an assignment due after 6pm, understand that a non-response to these emails does not serve as grounds to not submit the assignment or as an automatic extension. While you are able to send me messages through Canvas, do not use this means of communication and, instead, send me an email.

COURSE CONTENT

Textbook

Rothaermel, F.T. 2013. **Strategic Management: Concepts**. McGraw-Hill Publishing.
<https://www.amazon.com/Strategic-Management-Rothaermel-McDonough-Professor/dp/1259420477>

The textbook is NOT required for the course, but you are free to buy/access a new, old, or digital copy of the book, if you prefer to read about the concepts in that format or would like to learn about more concepts than required in the course slides.

Slides

The primary content for the course will be provided in the PowerPoint slides covered during lecture. Slides will be posted prior to the start of class. Some, but not all, videos, discussion questions, and examples will be provided throughout the lecture slides. Slides are subject to change after posting, based on discussions in class. Any substantive changes will be announced during or at the beginning of the following class.

Case Studies

Harvard Business School Case Studies are required for the course. To reduce the cost of the cases, I have created a CoursePack that provides the cases at a discount when purchased together. The CoursePack containing the cases and simulation we will be using this semester can be accessed using the following link:

<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1328420>

Additional Readings

At various points in the semester, we will read and discuss news articles and research reports. All readings that are discussed in class will either be accessible for free by students or accessed and distributed by me.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Your grade for this course will depend on your performance across several different activities. In addition to scoring well on exams, successful performance requires that you participate in class and case discussions, come to class prepared, and perform well on case analyses and class presentations. Final course grades will be computed as follows:

<u>Grade Component</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Grade</u>
Class Participation	25%
Simulation & Reflection	20%
HBR Case Presentations (2-3)	20%
HBR Case Quizzes	15%
<u>Exams (2)</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

1. Class Participation (25% of course grade)

Participation grades will be assessed based on a holistic assessment of your ability to contribute through your presence in the class across three, interconnected facets:

1. *Attendance*
2. *Participation*
3. *Engagement*

While *attendance* is not taken every class, your ability to contribute to the classroom environment through participation and engagement hinges on regularly attending class. Additionally, you will need to attend class to have the opportunity to demonstrate your engagement (i.e., you cannot be engaged in the class if you are not in attendance). Note that I may occasionally take attendance. It is important to also note that outside of presentations, 1-2 absences will not materially negatively impact your grade.

Participation should be made based on full preparation prior to class (i.e., having read the assigned readings and case material, completed assigned questions, and considered how the material relates to course content). It is important to note that participation in this class is a function of both quality and quantity. While class

attendance is not strictly taken on a regular basis, you must attend class to have the ability to offer a form of engagement and participation (e.g., asking questions, answering questions, paying attention, engaging in small group discussions). In other words, regular absences will severely limit your ability to earn a high participation grade.

I judge comments to be of high quality to the extent that they possess one or more of the following attributes:

- a. They bring the conceptual issues from this course and other courses taken in SMLR to the analysis of cases, current events, or other topics covered in class discussions;
- b. They contribute to moving the discussion and analysis forward—they offer a unique, relevant perspective on the issue being discussed;
- c. They transcend the “I feel” syndrome by making an argument and presenting supporting evidence; and
- d. They communicate ideas to the class in a civil, professional way.

In terms of *engagement*, this will be assessed in terms of how active you are in paying attention during lectures and presentations. Engagement is also assessed in terms of your level of active participation with peers during small group discussions in class as well as team meetings. Lastly, distracting others through inappropriate comments, behaviors, or actions will not be tolerated, will significantly detract from your participation grade, and may result in the disciplinary action.

2. Aligning HR and Strategy Simulation (20%)

Towards the end of the semester, you will complete an in-class simulation, without the help or assistance of others. You will need to complete the simulation in-class, rather than remotely, to ensure that no assistance is being used, and so that I am there to provide help should you encounter any issues with the simulation. Your performance on the simulation will serve as 10% of your overall course grade. More detailed information on the scoring and expectations will be shared during class and prior to the simulation.

After the simulation, you are to write and submit a short (one-page, single spaced) reflection on the simulation. More information on this assignment will be provided in class. Your grade on the reflection will constitute 10% of your total course grade.

4. HBR Case Presentations (20% of course grade)

For each case study, two teams will serve as discussion facilitators. The teams designated to present for that case must come prepared to discuss the case and present their analyses and recommendation(s) for the company featured in the case. Other teams not presented are expected to come prepared to discuss the case, ask questions during the Q&A portion of the presentation, and share their thoughts and recommendations during the case “debrief” portion of the class. As such, it is important to note that if your team is not presenting, you still will need to be prepared to discuss the case and your recommendation(s), but you will not be asked to present slides for the case. That is, be prepared to either actively engage in the discussion or be called on to share your views. More information on the expectations for this will be provided during the class dedicated to case analysis.

5. HBR Case Quizzes (15% of course grade)

There will be between three and five short (i.e., 5 questions) multiple-choice quizzes administered at the beginning of a class regarding the content contained within the HBR case study of focus that day. The quizzes will be short and take no more than 5 minutes to complete. If you require extra time or additional accommodations, you will need to discuss the accommodations you require for these quizzes with me (through either email or during office hours) prior to the first class covering a case. Please note that an email from student services is not fully sufficient for student accommodations to be provided, as the exact accommodations needed will vary depending on the context (i.e., accommodations for an exam will likely differ from that of a five-question quiz). Quizzes will be handed out after the beginning of class—so make sure to arrive to class on time. Quizzes cannot be taken once the designated time (first ten minutes of class) has passed. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. As such, if you miss a quiz or are unable to take a given quiz, you will receive a grade of zero, which can be dropped should that be your lowest quiz grade.

6. Exams (20% of course grade)

There will be two exams for this course, which will be equally weighted in terms of content. The exams will consist of approximately 30 multiple-choice questions. The exam will be in-person and assess your ability to recall concepts, themes, and examples discussed in-depth during course lectures and case presentations—with the majority of content derived from course lectures and discussions. If more than 75% of students get a single question wrong and select the same incorrect option, that question will be disregarded and everyone will receive points for that question. If you have any questions, concerns, or specific accommodations that need to be made (contingent on me having received an official notice from student services), please do not hesitate to reach out to me before the exam. I can only help and make accommodations if you talk to me about the issue/accommodation. All tests are designed to be taken well within the designated class time (i.e., 45 minutes), so as to leave you with ample time to check your answers, not feel rushed, etc. As the exams use a multiple-choice format, we will be using scantrons. Only the answers provided on the scantron will be graded (i.e., it doesn't matter what answer you circled or indicated on the exam sheet itself).

COURSE POLICIES

Grading

A = 90%-100%
B+ = 85%-89.9%
B = 80%- 84.9%
C+ = 75%-79.9%
C = 70%-74.9%
D+ = 65%-69.9%
D = 60%-64.9%
F = <60%

Re-Grade Policy

If at any point you believe that the grade earned/received for any assignment,

deliverable, or exam is not accurate or fair, it is your responsibility to contact me within **one week** after the grade is received. Any request for a reevaluation or regrade of an assignment (or a component of the assignment) is only valid once you have both notified me of your request and provided a description (in writing) of the inaccuracy you believe there to be (e.g., miscalculation, unnecessary point reduction). Note that valid requests do not include a desire for a higher grade or that the grade was “harsh”, “lame”, “not what I thought I should receive” or “my friend got a better grade”, but only if there is an inaccuracy in the grade or assessment of work. Once this has been provided and deemed acceptable in terms of what you need to provide to initiate the process, I will reassess the grade and provide my assessment to you in writing. Please note that I am unable to discuss the grades received by other students, so any information regarding another student’s grade should not be reason for, or included in the email regarding, requests to reassess a grade. Any re-grade requests that mention another student’s grade will not be valid and may not be responded to. Re-grade requests made outside the one-week within which the grade was released will also not be accepted.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

Functional Competence

Refers to one’s ability to apply knowledge from the various functional areas of the curriculum to make effective business decisions.

Achievement: Case analyses and exams

Measurement: Case presentation Q&A, case discussions, and HR simulation

Critical Thinking

Refers to one’s ability to identify and solve problems systematically and effectively.

Achievement: Case analysis, group discussions, and exams

Measurement: Case presentations, in-class discussions, and HR simulation

International Dimension of Management

Refers to one’s ability to understand how cultural contexts affect business decisions and how these differences affect organizational processes.

Achievement: Case analysis, presentations, and exams

Measurement: Case analysis and in-class discussions

Social and Organizational Ability

Refers to one’s ability to communicate well in oral and written form as well as understand how interpersonal skills and teamwork can affect business decisions.

Achievement: Business case analyses and group in-class discussions

Measurement: Team case presentations and in-class exercises

Oral Communication

Refers to one’s ability to develop proficiency in oral presentations and ability to improve oral presentations in response to critiques. Also refers to one’s ability to develop skills in listening to and critiquing oral presentations.

Achievement: Oral case presentations

Measurement: Team case presentation and participation in case Q&A portion



ACADEMIC POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

TECHNOLOGY IN CLASS

I expect students to be engaged and not be distracted, or serve as a distraction to others, during the class period. As such, I encourage students to silence and put away their phones during the class period. If you need to take a call or respond to an email or text, I would prefer you leave the room to do so—responding to messages during class is extremely distracting for others around you. Regular and persistent use of your phone or laptop throughout the semester may have a negative impact on your participation grade.

During certain portions of the class (e.g., exams, class exercises, presentations, meetings), I will ask that you put away your phones, laptops, or other similar technology. In some instances, this will be mandatory, as will be the case during examination periods. Failure to adhere to this may result in a penalty—namely, failing the exam and additional action (where merited).

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The University's policy on cheating and use of copyrighted materials is enforced in this class. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy for more detail regarding these policies:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers> All students registered for this course are asked to sign an Academic Integrity Contract (refer to the last two pages of this syllabus). You must return a signed copy to me or the course TAs and keep a copy for yourself. This contract includes detailed explanations of behavior that constitutes plagiarism and cheating. Examples of a breach of this contract with regard to this specific course include, but are not limited to: sharing your answers or copying another student's answers on examinations; sending a fellow student who did not attend class the answers to a poll to falsely indicate their presence; copying material that is not your own without providing proper documentation (in the example of the HRM media extra credit). In the event that this contract is breached, the punishment can range from receiving a failing grade on the assignment, to being placed on disciplinary probation or permanent expulsion from Rutgers.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services to determine his/her Coordinator. The Coordinator will then provide documentation to the student. Upon review and approval, the student must then provide this documentation to the instructor. Please refer to the Office of Disability Services for Students for more detail regarding this policy:

<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>. Students may make requests for accommodations: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

COUNSELING

CAPS is a comprehensive mental health resource center for the campus community. They offer a variety of high-quality counseling services to Rutgers students in order to enhance both academic and personal achievement and progress. Please click on the following link to learn more about their services:

<http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/services/counseling>

COURSE SCHEDULE^a

Date	Topic	Lecture	Case	Class Activity
9/2	Course Introduction & Syllabus Review			
9/9	Intro to Strategy, Strategic Management, & Case Method	Chapter 1		1. Team Intro 2. Building Competition
9/16	External Analysis: Porter, PEST, & SWOT	Chapter 3	Remote Work Policy	
9/23	Internal Analysis: Customers & Stakeholders	Chapter 4		Blue Chip Game (Firm performance is relative)
9/30	Internal Analysis: RBV	Chapter 4	Athletic Brewing	
10/7	Competitive Advantage and Firm Performance	Chapter 5	Nieman Marcus	
10/14	Exam I			
10/21	Business Strategy I: Core Business Strategy	Chapter 6	Sandlands Vineyards	
10/28	Business Strategy II: Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Chapter 7	Movie Pass	
11/11	Business Strategy III: Blue Ocean Strategy	Chapter 7		Strategic Thinking Exercise
11/18	Corporate Strategy: Vertical Integration/Diversification	Chapter 8	Wawa	
11/25	Corporate Strategy: Acquisitions & Alliances	Chapter 9	Eastman-Kodak	
12/2	Exam II			
12/9	In-Class Simulation: Aligning HR and Strategy			HR Management Simulation
12/16	Course Wrap-Up & Discussion			

^a Schedule is subject to likely changes, whereby a revised syllabus will be posted to Canvas.