



Course Syllabus BUS264G

Scenario Thinking

Number of ECTS credits: 6

1 Contact Details for Professor

Tel:

E-mail:

Office hours: to be confirmed

2 Course Description

In this interdisciplinary course students will use scenario thinking and planning as the main vehicle to understand global business. It is focused on the macro-environmental context of global business, at a variety of levels- local, national, regional and global. Despite half a century of trade liberalisation and the acceleration of globalising processes since the early 1990s, we witness the re-emergence of populism in politics, rapid increases in migration, creeping protectionism, and world free trade zones in difficulty. Global business environments are highly complex and uncertain. These 'surprises' are present across many domains, including the economic, the social and culture, and the political, legal and ecological. Organisations and management decisions and actions do not exist in a vacuum; they are situated in this complex, dynamic and often turbulent environment. Participants will work in groups to recognise, understand and reflect upon the challenges and opportunities that various contextual aspects present. Due to the interdisciplinary approach students from all majors are welcome. This course is offered in a module format.

3 Course Prerequisites (if any)

BUS 101G, MTH 140G or STA 101G

4 Learning Objectives

- To develop students' understanding of the many dimensions of the global business environment (e.g., economic, financial, political, legal, social, cultural).

- understanding of major global organizations, institutions, countries and societies.
- To encourage students to recognise, understand and reflect upon the challenges and opportunities that various aspects of the macro environment present for managerial decision-making in a global context.
- To introduce students to a range of theories, concepts, tools and information sources that help make sense of the global environment and give them an opportunity to apply these to building **scenarios for the future**.

Major Learning Objectives	Course Learning objectives addressing the Major Objectives (testable learning objectives)	Methods used to Teach Course Objectives	Methods (and numbers/types of assignments) used to test these learning objectives	Type, Timing and Instances of Feedback given to Student
The bachelor has a broad knowledge of the different functional fields of business management. S/he is able to apply this knowledge in the analysis of business-oriented problems and is able to propose solution to specific business problems.				
The bachelor has an understanding of the interrelatedness of the different functional fields of business and understands the impact of this on decision-making.				
The bachelor has insight into the broad societal context of businesses and is able to take it into account in the analysis of business-oriented problems.	Yes	Continuous workshop coaching (CWC), lectures in form of workshops	Group based project report	Personal feedback given at the outlined dates, also individual skype sessions are planned
The bachelor knows and is able to apply common qualitative and quantitative research methods and is able to apply these in the field of business studies	Yes	Workshop and project based research	Group based project report	CWC, Report Marking Schedule, Essay Feedback
The bachelor has an open and academic attitude characterized by accuracy, critical reflection and academic curiosity.	Yes	Data analysis, critical reflection essay and self directed reading	Group based project report AND reflective essay	See above

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The bachelor is able to identify the international dimension in business-related problems and knows how to handle these problems in an effective way.	Yes	I teach how to write a client based report on an international business project	Group based project report	CWC and Report Marking
The bachelor is able to work in a multi-cultural team.	Yes, Group based team work accounts for 80% of the course	How to work in a group is discussed and addressed during lectures.	Group based project	CWC
The bachelor recognizes the importance of life-long learning.				
The bachelor is able to communicate clearly, fluently and accurately; as well in a written report as in an oral presentation.	Yes	As part of the project students are taught how to write and present (workshops and individual skype meetings)	Written report and essay plus presentations in class	CWC and critical reflective essay
The bachelor is able to combine ethical and business-oriented judgments in the analysis of business problems and takes these ethical considerations explicitly into account in the solutions proposed for business problems				
The bachelor has a broad knowledge of the different functional fields of business management. S/he is able to apply this knowledge in the analysis of business-oriented problems and is able to propose solution to specific business problems.				

Any other Comments related to your course:

Unlike traditional lecture based course, this course is based upon Reading-Learning-Doing-Reflecting. These are the main features of the 'reflective manager'. The workshop focus can be intense for students but their learning and enjoyment become obvious as they achieve their

stage based goals and emerge with a new-found confidence in grappling with the complex issues that organisations face in their future landscapes.

5 Course Schedule

This course is a project based course and so is taught in an intensive workshop form. Hence, it is unlike your normal week to week lecture-based programmes. The emphasis is on **reading-thinking-doing-reflecting**:

5.1 READING AND THINKING

This will take place from weeks 2 to 10 of the semester.

5.1.1 Books

1) The Sixth Sense: Accelerating organisational learning with scenarios, Kees van der Heijden (**KVDH**), John Wiley (2002)- a classic text on the subject and, despite its age, still the best one on scenario development.

2) Scenario Thinking: A practical approach to the future, George Wright and George Cairns, Palgrave MacMillan, 2011 (Second Edition due in 2017)- a good to use text that draws more on practical aspects of van der Heijden's book above, distilled by the extensive experience of both authors in the field.

3) Scenario Planning, Bradley MacKay and Peter McKiernan, Cambridge University Press (due electronically after October 2017)- a commissioned book in the brand new CUP 'Elements' series on "Strategy". The authors take a historical and cognitive approach to scenarios and move the subject from planning to thinking.

5.1.2 Journals

These sources cover scenario planning and strategy.

- 1) Journal of Technological Forecasting and Social Change
- 2) Futures Journal
- 3) Long Range Planning Journal
- 4) 'Futuribles' website
- 5) RAND Corporation website

5.1.3 Articles

1 R. Bradfield, G. Wright, G. Burt, G. Cairns, K. van der Heijden, The origins and evolution of scenario techniques in long range planning. *Futures*, 37 (8) (2005) 795–812.

2 P. Wack, Scenarios: Uncharted waters ahead. *Harvard Business Review* 63 (5) (1985a) 73–89.

3 P. Wack, Scenarios: Shooting the rapids. Harvard Business Review 63 (6) (1985b) 139–150.

4 R. Bradfield, J. Derbyshire, G. Wright, The critical role of history in scenario thinking: Augmenting causal analysis within the intuitive logics scenario development methodology. Futures, 77 (2016) 56-66.

5 G. Bowman, B.R. MacKay, S. Masrani, P. McKiernan, Storytelling and the scenario process: Understanding success and failure. Technological Forecasting & Social Change, 80 (2013) 735–748.

6 P. McKiernan, Prospective Thinking; Scenario planning meets neuroscience, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, March 2017

7. M.Amer, T.U. Daim, A. Jetter; A review of scenario planning, Futures, 46 (2013), 23-40

5.1.4 Reading and Thinking Schedule

Week	KVDH Chapter	Question	Article
2	1 and 2	Why do managers have thinking flaws?	1
3	3	Why do organisations have thinking flaws?	2
4	4	How can culture strangle creative thinking?	3
5	5	How can scenarios help creative thinking?	4
6	6	Why do we surface mental models?	5
7	7	Think about the scenario process deeply	6
8	8	How are scenarios useful?	7

5.2 DOING

There will be two formal workshop sessions for one full day each. During these workshops, groups will play the role of consultants and provide the client with a consultancy report on a specific topic. The client should be able to take strategy action based upon the report. The **first** workshop will involve a comprehensive analysis of environmental drivers of change-political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal and ecological and will result in the building of a deep data base of these factors as they pertain to the client project. The **second** workshop will involve groups building scenarios of the future for the client's project. The technique used will be the 'intuitive-logics' method as described in KVDH Chapter 7. The result will be a set of draft scenarios. After the workshop, groups will work to test their scenarios and produce a polished set for the client in a consultancy report of 10000 words plus appendices. This report will account for 80% of the marks.

5.3 REFLECTING

Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned and achieved on the programme. This will be done through the reflective writing of a critical essay. This essay will count for 20% of the marks.

6 Course Assessment

Students are assessed on a combination of a group work and individual work, with the assessment weighted 80% for the group assignment and 20% for the individual assignment.

- 1) Group work is based on the application of the theories and frameworks to case studies and to the development of scenarios.
 - (i) Project scoping, data gathering, data analysis and modelling of future drivers of change (40%)
 - (ii) Scenario stories, scenario testing and scenarios to strategy (40%)

- 2) Individual assessment is based on self-reflection of the student's experience (20%). Students are asked to appraise critically:
 - (i) One new skill or tool identified and/or practised for the first time during the class;
 - (ii) One new idea that they have drawn from the class which has challenged their thinking

7 Grading Scale of Vesalius College

Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as stated follows:

Letter grade	Scale of 20	Scale of 100
A	17.0-20.0	85-100
A-	16.1-16.9	81-84
B+	15.3-16.0	77-80
B	14.5-15.2	73-76
B-	13.7-14.4	69-72
C+	13.1-13.6	66-68
C	12.3-13.0	62-65
C-	11.5-12.2	58-61
D+	10.7-11.4	54-57
D	10.0-10.6	50-53
F	0-9.9	0-49

8 Grading form for written assignments (more than 10% of the final grade)

	Grade Range (e.g. 0-1/20) FAIL	Grade Range (e.g. 2-3/20)	Grade Range (e.g. 4-5/20) – B to A
Criterion 1 Critical thinking	<i>Very Limited</i>	<i>Some evidence</i>	<i>Fully developed</i>
Criterion 2 Literature critique	<i>No attempt</i>	<i>Compare and contrast</i>	<i>New additions</i>
Criterion 3 Analytical ability	<i>Descriptive</i>	<i>Some analysis</i>	<i>High level analysis</i>
Criterion 4 Clarity	Confused & foggy	Misty	Crystal clear
Total			

Below further description of the expectations for written work. These are based on those used at the Strathclyde Business School, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland. Strathclyde is the top technological university in Scotland and the business school is number one in the UK (2016/2017).

Category	Check List	Description
Very Good <i>Pass</i>	<p>High level of reflective learning</p> <p>Good knowledge of subject area</p> <p>Uses a range of texts not just text books and including refereed journals</p> <p>Evidence of appropriate data collection and analysis</p> <p>Logically structured and argued</p> <p>Demonstrates learning from the project.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates proficient understanding of the subject gained from working with key sources. Major themes and debates in the extant literature are recognised and are at least referred to if not taken up completely throughout the project.</p>
Acceptable <i>Pass</i>	<p>Achieves reflective learning</p> <p>Shows understanding of most of the issues relating to the subject</p> <p>Uses texts and some journals</p> <p>Evidence of appropriate data collection and analysis but these are both basic</p> <p>Both the arguments developed in the project and the writing style are basic and somewhat incomplete in places.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates a basic competence in the subject. It draws on relevant literature, but provides only a limited critical analysis of this material. Examples are used, but without a critical, analytical context. The argument presented has some gaps. Work of this grade is characterised by sufficient coverage of the subject, but unsophisticated understanding and analysis.</p>
Just Acceptable <i>Pass</i>	<p>There is a credible, if poor, attempt at all components of the project</p> <p>Achieves reflective learning but does not grasp any wider perspective of the subject</p> <p>Has read some texts but not really understood the academic debate in the area</p> <p>Carried out basic investigation and analysis</p> <p>Arguments developed and writing style are limited and basic.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates a basic and limited degree of competence in the subject. It draws on sufficient literature to have some sense of academic debate. There is a tendency towards reportage rather than any form of interpretation. Work of this grade is characterised by just acceptable comprehension in all elements.</p>
Unacceptable <i>Fail</i>	<p>Fails to achieve reflective learning</p> <p>A major problem in one or more significant areas: literature, methodology etc.</p> <p>Lack of intensive reading</p> <p>Fails to extend beyond concepts and readings already taught and examined elsewhere on the MBA (e.g. simply applies tools from the strategy element of the MBA to a different context)</p> <p>No evidence of appropriate data collection and analysis: poorly designed and superficial analysis</p> <p>Argument is incoherent and inconsistent.</p>	<p>The work demonstrates a lack of understanding of the subject. There are significant gaps in the interpretation of literature and relevant concepts, and the reasoning presented is flawed, inconsistent, contradictory, or incoherent. Unacceptable work is characterised by incompleteness and inadequate comprehension.</p>

9 Vesalius College Attendance Policy

As the College is committed to providing students with high-quality classes and ample opportunity for teacher-student interaction, it is imperative that students regularly attend class. As such, Vesalius College has a strict attendance policy. Participation in class meetings is mandatory, except in case of a medical emergency (e.g. sickness). Students will need to provide evidence for missing class (doctor's note). If evidence is provided, the missed class is considered as an excused class. If no evidence is provided immediately before or after the class, the missed class is counted as an absence.

Participation implies that students are on time: as a general rule, the College advises that students should be punctual in this regard, but it is up to the professor to decide whether to count late arrivals as absences, or not.

If students are absent for too many classes for a single course, they receive a penalty on their overall grade for that course.

- If students are absent for five 1,5 hour class sessions of a course, they receive a penalty of 5 points on their overall grade (out of 100) for that course.
- For each additional absence (over five) for a 1,5 hour class session, an additional penalty of 1 point is applied to the reduced course grade.

Example 1: at the end of the semester, a student has a course grade of 75/100. Over the course of the semester, s/he missed 4 unexcused sessions of 1,5 hours for the course. No penalty is applied.

Example 2: at the end of the semester, a student has an overall grade of 75/100. Over the course of the semester, s/he missed 5 unexcused sessions of 1,5 hours for the course. S/he receives a penalty of 5 points (out of a hundred), and his/her final course grade is 70/100.

Example 3: at the end of the semester, a student has an overall grade of 75/100. Over the course of the semester, s/he missed 7 sessions of 1,5 hours for the course. S/He receives a penalty of 7 points, and his/her final course grade is 68/100.

Additional Course Policies

- 1) Late papers will not be accepted unless there are serious legitimate reasons. Provision of a signed medical note is required, and notice must be given prior to the deadline.
- 2) Lateness will not be tolerated.

10 Academic Honesty Statement

Academic dishonesty is **NOT** tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.

Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else's work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments