Syllabus Template – Business Studies

Course Syllabus

BUS 216 Strategic Management

Number of ECTS credits: 6

Time and Place: Mondays 8.30-11.30

Contact Details for Professor

Name of Professor: Sven Van Kerckhoven and Jean Bellemans

E-mail: Sven.van.kerckhoven@vub.be/ Belleman@bu.edu

Office hours:

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Course Prerequisites (if any)
Course Description
This course focuses on business strategies that entrepreneurs and management develop to secure resources and develop capabilities needed to gain or sustain competitive advantages in traditional and emerging markets. Developing such competitive advantage is at the core of strategic management. This course thus focuses on strategy formulation, implementation and performance, and deals with the identification and analysis of external opportunities as well as constraints faced by companies. This course focuses on value creation through strategic management and decision making based on financial information. The main functions of the corporation are investigated by means of theory and case-studies, products and services, research and development; manufacturing, logistics, marketing, finance/accounting, and human resources.

Further Detail on Course Content (if needed)
This course has a unique approach as it builds on theory and relates them directly to cases the week afterwards. Students thus needs to focus on both the theoretical and practical considerations equally.

Course Learning Objectives (CLO)

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

In terms of knowledge:
➢ Demonstrate their understanding of comparative advantages and how it relates to the survival of businesses by analysing cases and financial statements.
➢ Demonstrate their knowledge of strategic actions employed by companies by analysing cases.
➢ Demonstrate their ability of using financial statements to assess a company’s strategy.

In terms of skills
➢ Use financial statements to assess the performance of companies.
➢ Assess a company’s performance and strategy.
➢ Use information technologies to analyse companies’ strategies

In terms of attitudes, students should develop in this course:
➢ Be critical in terms of companies’ strategies
➢ Be able to assess and enquiring so as to assess the impact of a company’s strategy on its profitability


## LINK BETWEEN MAJOR OBJECTIVES, COURSE OBJECTIVES, TEACHING METHODS, ASSIGNMENTS AND FEEDBACK

*(BA in Business Studies)*

### Summary:
- Number of assignments used in this course: 4
- Number of Feedback occasions in this course (either written or oral): 3
- Number and Types of Teaching Methods: Lectures, guest lectures, practical applications, cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Course Objectives addressing the Major Objectives (testable learning objectives)</th>
<th>Methods used to Teach Course Objectives</th>
<th>Methods (and numbers/types of assignments) used to test these learning objectives</th>
<th>Type, Timing and Instances of Feedback given to Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-Case studies</td>
<td>-Case study analysis -Course project -Examination</td>
<td>Written and/or oral after assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bachelor has an understanding of the interrelatedness of the different functional fields of business and understands the impact of this on decision-making.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-Lectures -Case Studies</td>
<td>-Case study analysis -Course project -Examination</td>
<td>Written and/or oral after assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-Lectures -Case Studies</td>
<td>-Case study analysis -Course project -Examination</td>
<td>Written and/or oral after assignments</td>
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<td>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.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-Lectures -Case Studies</td>
<td>-Case study analysis -Course project -Examination</td>
<td>Written and/or oral after assignments</td>
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<td>The bachelor has an open and academic attitude characterized by accuracy, critical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Objectives</td>
<td>Learning Objectives Addressing the Major Objectives (testable learning objectives)</td>
<td>Methods used to Teach Course Objectives</td>
<td>Methods (and numbers/types of assignments) used to test these learning objectives</td>
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<td>reflection and academic curiosity.</td>
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<td>The bachelor is able to identify the international dimension in business-related problems and knows how to handle these problems in an effective way.</td>
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<td>The bachelor is able to work in a multi-cultural team.</td>
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<td>The bachelor recognizes the importance of life-long learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The bachelor is able to communicate clearly, fluently and accurately; as well in a written report as in an oral presentation.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-Course project</td>
<td>-Course project</td>
<td>Written and/or oral after assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>-Examinations -Course project</td>
<td>Written and/or oral after assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>
Main Course Materials (please note that you can find the readings for each week and session in the Course Schedule section below):

The course material consists of powerpoint presentations, lecture notes and readings from the textbook. Powerpoint presentations will be made available after the respective classes have taken place. A week-by-week overview of the course readings can be found in the section below.

The syllabus, powerpoint presentations and important messages will be uploaded to the Vesalius portal ‘Pointcarré’. Students are expected to visit this site regularly to keep abreast of course evolutions. The professor is expected to upload relevant material in a timely manner.

Course material marked as ‘suggested readings’ and ‘additional sources’ is helpful for research and to gain an increased understanding, but is not mandatory. This material can be found online or will be made available upon individual request.

Textbook:

Recommended References books:

Active Learning and Intensive ‘Reading around the Subject’: Additional Sources, Recommended Journals and Websites:

Learning should be an active and self-motivated experience. Students who passively listen to lectures, copy someone else’s notes, and limit their readings to required chapters are unlikely to develop their critical thinking and expand their personal knowledge system. At the exam, these students often fail to demonstrate a critical approach. Students are strongly recommended to have an updated understanding of developments related to this course and related to their wider Major. Active and engaged learning will turn out to be enriching to the overall course and class discussions. Students are invited to deepen their understanding of both theoretical and current issues from a variety of sources. Please find a list of suggestions compassing the entire course below. You are encouraged to read and browse in the leading journals of your discipline.

Leading Journals in Business Studies

Further Journals Relevant for this Course:
Strategic Management Journal

Websites of Interest:
www.bplans.com

Work Load Calculation for this Course:

This course counts for 6 ECTS, which translates into 150 – 180 hours for the entire semester for this course. This means that you are expected to spend roughly 10 hours per week on this course. This includes 3 hours of lectures or seminars per week and 7 hours ‘out of class’ time spent on preparatory readings, studying time for exams as well as time spent on preparing your assignments. Please see below the estimated breakdown of your work-load for this course.

Time spent in class: 3 hours per week / 45 hours per semester
Time allocated for course readings: hours per week / hours per semester: 2.5 hours per week/ 37.5 hours per semester
Time allocated for preparing course project: 32.5 hours
Time allocated for preparing in-depth analysis: 5 hours
Time allocated for preparing/revising for written Mid-term Exam: 15 hours
Time allocated preparing/revising for written Final Exam: 15 hours

Total hours for this Course: 150 hours

Course Assessment: Assignments Overview

The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance in the following assignments:

- Midterm examination 25%
- Final examination 25%
- In-depth case analysis 20%
- Course project 30%
Grading Scale of Vesalius College

Vesalius College grading policy follows the American system of letter grades, which correspond to a point scale from 0 – 100. All assignments (including exams) must be graded on the scale of 0-100. To comply with the Flemish Educational norms, professors should on request also provide the conversion of the grade on the Flemish scale of 0-20. The conversion table below outlines the grade equivalents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Scale of 100 (VeCo Grading Scale)</th>
<th>Scale of 20 (Flemish System)</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>17.0-20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>81-84</td>
<td>16.1-16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-80</td>
<td>15.3-16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>14.5-15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>69-72</td>
<td>13.7-14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>66-68</td>
<td>13.1-13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>62-65</td>
<td>12.3-13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>58-61</td>
<td>11.5-12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>54-57</td>
<td>10.7-11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-53</td>
<td>10.0-10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>0-9.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of Activities, Grading Criteria and Deadlines:

Course Project
The course project requires students to individually analyse different companies’ strategic approach. Students are given the information in week 3 and have to submit the project after the Easter break.

Mid-Term Exam and final exams (written): Written mid-term and final examination (week 7 and week 15).
The written mid-term exam and the final examination consist of open, short questions and a brief medium essay question (max 500 words length) on lectures of week 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 (for week 7) and week 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (for week 15). The exams test both the knowledge of the students (about 50%), as well as their ability to apply their knowledge (about 50%).

In-depth case analysis
Students are given a case. During the session of week 12, they have to answer a few questions regarding the case.

**Additional Course Policies**

**Submitting assignments**
All assignments need to be submitted via turnitin. If you need to contact us via email, please always indicate the course title in the email heading. If you save your file, please use your name and the assignment in the subject line, BUS216-'Your name'-Assignment ‘1’., and save as such. All assignments also need to be submitted in hard copy to the instructors (sven.van.kerckhoven@vub.be / Belleman@bu.edu)

**Use of Electronics**

Computers are permitted to take notes. However, if you use your laptop for something unrelated to the course, you will not be allowed to bring it to any of the future classes.

**Mobile phones** are to be turned off! If your mobile phone rings in class, please turn it off immediately. If you are caught talking on your mobile or texting during class you will be asked to leave the class immediately.

**Preparation**

Students are requested to read the chapters in advance, as well as prepare the additional texts/ business classes. This will give the students a clear idea about the concepts exposed during class and makes them benefit from the course to the maximum degree. Grammar, spelling, lay-out and punctuation are important during your career. Please do use the appropriate tools before submitting any assignment.

**Late assignments**

Late assignments are not allowed. For each day passed the deadline, you will only be able to get 1/(n+1) of the total points (n being the number of days to late, with a maximum of 5). You must be in attendance on the day assignments are due. Late assignments without penalty can only be accepted with a medical statement or after formal prior approval of the instructor.

**Writing Style**

APA formatting is required on all work.

**Rubrics: Transparent Grading Criteria For Each Assignment**

The following criteria will be applied in assessing your written work:
A. Grading criteria give students the possibility to understand the rationale of the grading and to prepare at best for all assignments.

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.

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 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.

Please consult the Section “Avoiding Plagiarism” in the College Catalogue for further guidance.

**Course Schedule (Overview)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>22 January</th>
<th>Introduction to the Course and Overview of Course and Requirements // An economic primer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>29 January</td>
<td>The Horizontal and Vertical Boundaries of the Firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>5 February</td>
<td>The Horizontal and Vertical Boundaries of the Firm: Cases and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>12 February</td>
<td>Competitors and competition: entry and exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>19 February</td>
<td>Competitors and competition: entry and exit: Cases and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>26 February</td>
<td>Revision Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>5 March</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>12 March</td>
<td>Competition and Industry Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>19 March</td>
<td>Competition and Industry Analysis: Cases and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>26 March</td>
<td>Strategic Positioning for Competitive Advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>2/9 April</td>
<td>Spring Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>16 April</td>
<td>Strategic Positioning for Competitive Advantage: Cases and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>SUBMIT Course Project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>23 April</td>
<td>In-Depth Case Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>30 April</td>
<td>Sustaining Competitive Advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>7 May</td>
<td>Revision and Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>14 May</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAMS</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Detailed Session-by-Session Course Outline

Week 1

*Introduction to the Course and Overview of Core Requirements*

*Economic Primer: A review* (Van Kerckhoven and Bellemans)

*Reading:*

*Compulsory:*

Besanko et al., p.8-37.

*Guiding Questions:*

1. What are the different types of costs?
2. What are the different types of revenues?
3. How can we use game theory to explain companies’ decisions?

Week 2

*The Horizontal and Vertical Boundaries of the Firm* (Van Kerckhoven)

*Reading:*

*Compulsory:*

Besanko et al., p. 55-124

*Recommended:*

*Guiding Questions:*

1. What are economics of scale?
2. What are economics of scope?
3. Why would you diversify?
4. What is the learning curve?
5. When would you make or buy something?
6. How can you mitigate the issues that come with making/buying something?

Week 3

*The Horizontal and Vertical Boundaries of the Firm: Applications and Cases* (Prof. Bellemans)

*Reading:*
Compulsory:

Guiding questions:

Week 4
Competitors and competition/ Entry and Exit (Van Kerckhoven)
Readings:

Compulsory:
Besanko et al., p. 153-212

Guiding questions:
1. What are the different types of market structures?
2. What is the difference between price and quantity competition?
3. How can one deter entry?
4. How can one enter a market?
5. How can one push other companies to exit?

Week 5
Competitors and Competition: Applications and Cases (Prof. Bellemans)
Readings:

Compulsory:

Guiding questions:

Week 6
Revision session

Week 7: Midterm

Week 8
Competition and Industry analysis (Prof. Bellemans and Van Kerckhoven)

Dynamics: Competition across time (Prof. Van Kerckhoven)

Readings:

Compulsory:
Besanko et al., p. 214-244

Guiding questions:
1. What is the benefit of commitment?
2. How can one commit?
3. How can firms coordinate?

Industry analysis (Prof. Bellemans)
Readings:

Compulsory:

Guiding questions:
1. What are the five forces?
2. How can we apply these?

Week 9
Dynamics of competition, industry analysis: cases and Applications (Prof. Bellemans)

Week 10
Strategic positioning for competitive advantage (Prof. Van Kerckhoven)
Readings:

Compulsory:
Besanko et al., p. 277-318

Guiding questions:
1. How do businesses create value?
2. How can a firm position itself strategically?

Week 11
Strategic positioning for competitive advantage: Cases and Applications (Prof. Bellemans)
Readings:

Compulsory:

Guiding questions:

Week 12
In depth case analysis in class (Prof. Bellemans and Van Kerckhoven)

Week 13
Sustaining competitive advantage (Van Kerckhoven)
Readings:
Compulsory:
Besanko et al, p. 349-381.

Guiding questions:
1. How can one survive in a market place?
2. What are the advantages of being first?
3. How does innovation change the market?

Week 14
Cases and revision

Week 15
Final