

## **EMBA 805 General Management and Strategy**



**Spring 2019**

**Instructor:** Mahka Moeen, PhD.  
**Office:** McColl 4611  
**Email:** mahka\_moeen@kenan-flagler.unc.edu  
**Office Hours:** by appointment

Welcome to the Strategic Management class! The objective of this course is to introduce you to the role of the “strategic manager,” someone who is concerned with the problems of and/or responsible for the overall and long-term performance of the organization. The course is an integrative course emphasizing a “general management” as opposed to a functional viewpoint (accounting, finance, marketing, etc.). Every firm must define the scope of its business operations and, within the chosen scope, how the firm will compete against rivals. Decisions about the scope of business (i.e. in what markets or industries a firm wants to compete) constitute the firm’s corporate strategy. Decisions about how to compete (e.g. cost leadership or differentiation) within the chosen market(s) reflect the firm’s business-level strategy. This course focuses on how a firm can both formulate and implement effective business-level strategies to achieve competitive advantage and earn above average profits. A follow-up class (EMBA 805A) will focus on corporate-level strategies.

### **Course Objectives**

The primary objectives of this course are:

- Provide you with an overview of key strategic management conceptual frameworks and enhance your ability to apply these tools to real strategic decisions facing managers
- Provide you with the opportunity to enhance individual and team analytical, communication, and decision-making skills in addressing strategic issues

### **Teaching Method**

Our class consists of three elements:

- The video lectures primarily involve introduction to strategic management frameworks. These theoretical frameworks provide the starting point for analysis and problem-solving of real-world strategic challenges.
- The case and current events discussions primarily focus on application of strategic management frameworks to real-world phenomena.
- The final team projects primarily focus on developing skills necessary to understand the complexities of a strategic manager role.

### **Required Readings**

The customized text for this class, available via a link on Canvas, includes all the required readings and cases. Additional suggested readings may be posted on Canvas, as necessary.

## Grading

### Individual Components (65% of final grade)

Class and Virtual Participation	35%
Case Write-ups 2X	20%
Value Champion Simulation	10%

### Team Project (35% of final grade)

Strategic Challenge	10%
Strategic Analysis Report	25%

All assignments should be submitted via the University of North Carolina Canvas system.

You should expect to receive grade/feedback within a week from each submission deadline on Canvas.

## Class and Virtual Participation

Class and virtual participation accounts for 35% of the course grade.

Virtual modules are marked on the Canvas website. I expect all students to not only watch video lectures, but also to synthesize the key constructs so that they can come to our live classes ready to ask follow-up questions. Responding to reflection questions at the end of video lectures is an essential part of virtual requirements. The deadline for completion of virtual modules is 8am on the day of class.

Because this is not a traditional lecture-based course, rigorous discussions of current business events and reading assignments are major components of the class. I expect all students to be well prepared for each class, having read the required materials and analyzed any assigned articles or cases before class. Students who make consistent, meaningful contributions to class discussions will receive better class contribution grades. The quality of comments is evaluated based on the clarity and coherence of arguments, application of theoretical frameworks, and the ability to support claims with evidence from the material. Participation in class group activities also counts toward your grade, whereas disruptive class activities including web surfing and distraction by cell phones will negatively impact your grade.

Please bring and use your name tents in every session.

Regular class attendance is your obligation. No right or privilege exists that permits you to be absent from any class meetings except for excused absences for authorized University activities or religious observances required by your faith. If you have to miss one session due unexpected circumstances, you will need to submit a make-up case write-up for the missed session. The deadline for completion of a make-up case write-up is three days after the missed class. There is no need to email me about the missed class or ask for permission. If you have to miss more than one session, I will assess the situation in a case-by-case manner and in consultation with the evening MBA office.

## **Case Write-ups**

Case write-ups account for 20% of the course grade.

You are responsible for submitting two case write-ups. Case write-ups are individual assignments. While you should feel free to discuss the case as group, the final submission must be your own work. Out of the six cases in the course packet, you can pick the two cases that you regard more interesting or relevant. The deadline for completion of case write-ups is prior to class. There will be no credit for late or emailed submissions.

You must be prepared to discuss all cases in class, regardless of whether you chose to submit a write-up.

Each case write-up must consist of your analysis of the strategic position of the firm as well as specific recommendations for the case challenge. There will be orienting questions posted on Canvas to help with each case write-up. As we progress through the semester, it is expected to incorporate strategic frameworks in your case write-up in a cumulative manner.

Case write-ups should not be longer than three pages (double-spaced, 11-point font).

## **Value Champion Simulation**

The value Champion Simulation accounts for 10% of the course grade.

This is an individual assignment. Detailed instructions will be available about this online simulation on Canvas. You are required to participate in the simulation before 8am March 25.

## **Strategic Challenge**

The strategic challenge submission accounts for 10% of the course grade.

This is a team submission, based on your pre-assigned EMBA teams. The instructor will assign a firm currently facing a strategic challenge to your team. In your final project, you are required to submit a complete strategic analysis of this firm. The strategic challenge submission is an interim deliverable.

The objective is to learn more about the assigned firm and identify a set of strategic challenges facing the firm. After conducting preliminary research about this firm, your team is required to submit a 5-minute voiceover on PowerPoint. The deadline for completion of this assignment is April 8 prior to class.

This audio-visual submission should include the following components:

- A brief introduction of the firm's business
- Overall assessment of the firm's current performance and future trajectory
- Identification of 1-3 strategic challenges facing the firm and an explicit statement of the most significant strategic challenge facing the firm.

## **Strategic Analysis Report**

The strategic analysis report accounts for 25% of the course grade.

This is a team submission, based on your pre-assigned EMBA teams. This final report is a continuation of the strategic challenge interim report. For this report, you will be expected to not only analyze the firm, but also to make recommendations for future action. The fundamental purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity to apply the theoretical frameworks discussed in class to a real firm.

Your team is required to submit a 12-minute voiceover on PowerPoint. The deadline for completion of this assignment is April 27.

The report should include the following components:

- A brief introduction of the firm's business
- Identification of the firm's industry and its major competitors
- An external analysis
- Assessment of the firm's competitive advantage or lack thereof
- Assessment of the sustainability of the firm's advantage, or how to build a sustainable advantage
- Overall assessment of the firm's current performance and future trajectory, and whether the has a competitive advantage.
- Identification of 1-3 strategic challenges facing the firm and an explicit statement of the most significant strategic challenge facing the firm. These will form the basis for the recommendations that follow.
- Development of 1-3 recommendations to address the most significant strategic challenge, including the pros and cons of each and an explicit statement of your recommended solution.
- Development of an implementation plan for your team's recommendation. This should include an overview of how the firm implements the plan and how it will address the strategic challenge.

The report will be graded for: depth and soundness of the analysis; conciseness and clarity; use of strategic management tools and techniques of analysis; creativity and originality.

You are encouraged to use raw data available in the University of North Carolina library resources, business press, and company websites.

## **Peer Assessment**

Good teamwork is essential if your team is to perform effectively. In order to ensure full participation of all team members in the process, students will have the opportunity to complete a peer assessment form at the end of the semester. At instructor's discretion, your peers' assessments of your contributions to the team project may influence your individual class participation grade. In order to maintain your team member's privacy under such circumstances, I won't discuss components of your individual class participation grade with you.

### **University of North Carolina Honor Code**

Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. If you have questions about your responsibility under the Honor Code, please bring them to me, or consult with the office of the Dean of Students or the information outlines in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. More information is available at:

<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/>

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The University of North Carolina facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. In order to ascertain what accommodations may need to be provided, we ask that students with disabilities inform their instructor of their needs within two weeks of the start of the semester. Please visit <http://accessibility.unc.edu> , call 919-962-8300 or email [accessibility@unc.edu](mailto:accessibility@unc.edu)

### **Electronics Policy**

No cell phone use is allowed in class. Please turn them off before entering the classroom and put them out of sight. Laptops or other electronic devices may be only used for taking notes or reviewing class materials.

**Class Schedule:**

During the semester, it may prove necessary to adjust the schedule. You will be notified in advance of any changes.

Session	Topic	Readings	Cases	Project
Session 1 February 25	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinventing Your Business Model</li> <li>Bringing Science Back to the Art of Strategy</li> <li>Your Strategy Needs a Strategy</li> </ul>		
Session 2 March 4	External Analysis – Five Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy</li> </ul>		Project firms announced.
Session 3 March 11	External Analysis – Extensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building the Right Ecosystem for Innovation</li> <li>How Industries Change?</li> </ul>	Tesla Motors	
Session 4 March 25	Creating Competitive Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue Ocean Strategy</li> </ul>	Trader Joe's	
Session 5 April 1	Sustaining Competitive Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competing on Resources</li> <li>Finding the Right Path</li> </ul>	Strategy in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Pharmaceutical Industry	
Session 6 April 8	Strategy Under Uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The New Psychology of Strategic Leadership</li> <li>Leading Your Team into the Unknown</li> </ul>	HTC and Virtual Reality	Strategic challenge submission is due.
Session 7 April 15	Strategic Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transient Advantage</li> <li>You Need an Innovation Strategy</li> </ul>	Netflix in 2011	
Session 8 April 22	Entry Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disciplined Entrepreneurship</li> </ul>	Voice Wars: Hey Google vs. Alexa vs. Siri	
April 27				Final project is due.