

Course Information

Title: Business Strategy Capstone

Course #: BA-5080

Credit Hours: 3

Room: Lindner 109

Schedule: 9:45-11:15 AM

Term: Summer 2018

Prerequisites: Senior standing and the completion of all course requirements in the Junior Core. If you do not meet the course prerequisite requirements, you are responsible for dropping this class from your schedule.

Instructor Information

Name: Daniel A. Gruber, Ph.D.

Title: Associate Dean for Innovation and New Ventures

Office Information: LCB, Dean's Office (102 E)

Office: (513)556-7194

Fax: (513)556-4891

Email: daniel.gruber@uc.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30-9:30 AM

Communication Policy: Students are encouraged to contact me anytime via email. A response will be given within 36-48 hours except on weekends.

Course Materials

Required

Essentials of Strategic Management: The Quest for Competitive Advantage, 5th Edition; Gamble, Thompson, and Peteraf, McGraw-Hill Education. Note: This text is available via Blackboard as an e-book with a required application called Connect. Do not purchase at the bookstore. The discounted cost of the package is \$100.

CAPSTONE Simulation by Capsim. The cost is \$46. Please do not try to register until advised to do so. I will discuss all the specifics in class at the appropriate time, and e-mail instructions with how to register for the simulation then.

Student Learning Objectives for BA 5080

1. To develop a managerial point of view - a capacity for analyzing and solving problems from a broad business and company-wide perspective.
2. To integrate the knowledge learned in functionally oriented classes.
3. To practice distinguishing between basic causes of business problems and attendant symptoms.
4. To deepen understanding of the ethical and social implications of management decisions and actions within organizations.
5. To practice conceptualizing, communicating, and implementing business strategic plans.
6. To develop habits of orderly, analytical thinking and skill in reporting conclusions effectively in both written and oral forms.
7. To practice organizing and conducting tasks within a group (team) setting.

Course Description

This course is intended to be the culmination of your undergraduate curriculum. As a capstone course, it provides a framework for integrating knowledge from functional foundation courses throughout the undergraduate curriculum. You will be expected to analyze and assess internal operations of a firm and the external and competitive environment of an industry. Students will also be asked to formulate effective competitive strategies for firms under conditions of uncertainty. Comprehensive case studies, readings, videos, and industry simulations will be used to help you understand the difficulties and challenges of effectively implementing strategic plans. This course is designed to challenge your analytical and decision making skills, as well as develop interpersonal skills important to your future success. As your instructor, I will bridge theory and practice by applying the theories we discuss to analyze the contemporary business environment. To deepen your understanding of the business world, we will hear from guest speakers who will share their experiences. Class discussion and assignments will focus on applying the theories, cases and experiences to real-world examples, as well as learning from the challenges companies are currently facing.

GRADE EVALUATION:

Individual – Course Participation 200 points
Individual – Connect Chapter Quizzes 200 points
Individual – CompXM Final Exam 200 points
Team – Capstone Simulation 200 points
Team – Case paper 100 points
Team – Case presentation 100 points
Total 1000 points

Grading Scale:

A 93-100	A- 90-92	B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82		
C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72	D+ 67-69	D 63-66	D- 60-62	F 0-60

Class Participation & Quizzes

Your participation grade will be a function of three inputs. First, you cannot participate if you are not present. Therefore, attendance will be taken every class period via a sign-in sheet. It is your responsibility to sign this sheet every class period. Second, you must come prepared to discuss assigned readings and cases. Students are expected to regularly volunteer comments relating to the assigned readings and cases. You may also be called upon at random to discuss assigned readings and cases. At the end of the semester, each student will submit a self-assessment of their verbal participation during class. This self-assessment should include any information that substantiates your contributions. As a hint, you might find it useful to maintain a personal log of your class comments and/or questions to document your self-evaluation. Third, I will factor in your team members' assessment of your contribution to team projects and assignments in the course.

Quizzes will be administered via Connect and are due BEFORE every class covering a new chapter from the textbook, beginning in the second week of classes. This assures that you have read the assigned material before class. Grading policy associated with these quizzes will be explained in class.

Exams There will be one self-paced, online final exam (referred to as CompXM) at the end of the semester. More details will be provided as the date of the exam approaches.

CompXM® for Capstone As the CEO of your company, each decision you make influences the assessment items you must answer. This combined simulation and assessment (exam) gives you the opportunity to prove your business acumen in business decisions and content knowledge. The CompXM exam consists of a 5-round simulation exam that includes four decisions rounds which have associated board queries, plus one closing round of only board queries. Students have the last two weeks of school to complete this online assessment at their convenience. Check the course schedule for precise dates and times. Details will be explained in class.

Teams

Teams will be formed in the first two weeks of classes, and each team will be expected to complete a number of assignments during the semester. Team size will vary depending on the class size. The instructor will announce the maximum team size during the first week of classes. You may choose your own teams, subject to the approval of the instructor. If you do not choose a team, you will be assigned one. Teams are expected to be self-directed and self-managed. If your team is experiencing problems, please see the instructor as soon as possible for assistance in resolving them.

Each team member will evaluate other team members' participation at the end of the term and these evaluations will be factored into each individual's course participation grade. Important: If you do not participate with your team on the simulation and case paper and presentation, you will not pass this class. Team members are expected to report any "free riders" to the instructor early on, before final actions are necessary.

Team Assignments

Capstone® Simulation

As part of the leadership team of your Capstone company, you will learn the complexities of coordinating decisions across four primary functional areas: R&D, Marketing, Finance and Production. You will get the opportunity to analyze market conditions and to develop strategies that will make your company more successful. You will also make tactical decisions to implement your strategies. This online simulation will test your business acumen through one strategic, competitive, and engaging learning experience. Each team will be expected to meet weekly to work together on management progress reports, weekly input decisions, and a presentation of your team's performance at the end of the simulation exercise. The initial decisions will be more time consuming as your team learns the mechanics of the simulation, but it will become easier as the semester progresses. Your Capstone Simulation final grade is based on the years your team will run the company in a practice mode, the overall company final score (balance score rank), plus the confidential evaluations from your peers.

TeamMATE® An online peer evaluation allows you to evaluate your team members and their contribution. There will be two (2) peer evaluations in the course (mid-term and final peer evaluation).

Team Assignments - continued In addition, each team will be assigned a case to develop an analysis and recommendations in a term paper and a brief Executive presentation at the end of the term. The assignment questions for the case analyses and additional guidelines for structuring the case analyses will be posted on Blackboard later in the semester.

Pace Statement



This course aligns with PACE, the Lindner College of Business platform for developing the *total* business professional.

P – Professionalism

- Enhance oral & written **communication**, express ideas clearly, logically and persuasively.
- Develop and practice **teamwork** skills through group projects and exercises.
- Practice professional habits of punctuality, preparation, respect and participation.

A – Academics

- Develop foundational knowledge of core **business functions** and their interactions within firms.
- Begin applying functional and cross-functional knowledge **to critically analyze business problems**; for example applying techniques for business plan development.

C – Character

- Learn and apply **leadership** techniques for project management (plan, brief, execute, debrief).
- Build an understanding and initial skills of **managing diversity**, including understanding cultural differences, and challenges and opportunities of global business.
- Understand importance of **ethics and social responsibility** in business and personal settings.

E – Engagement

- Build understanding of importance and practices of **networking** through interactions with business professionals and guest speakers.
- Develop awareness and appreciation of **involvement** in social organizations, community service, and professional group opportunities.

Course Policies

A. Weather-related policy: During periods of severe inclement weather, university officials may announce that some or all of the university's offices and facilities are closed for part or all of the day. Announcements about a weather emergency are made via UC's electronic mail system, homepage, text messages, and through the local news media.

B. Special needs policy: If you have any special needs (e.g., visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical impairment, communication disorder, and/or specific learning disability, etc.) that may influence your performance in this course, you must meet with the Accessibility Resources Office to arrange for reasonable accommodations to ensure an equitable opportunity to meet all the requirements of this course. If you require accommodations, please contact them at 556-6823, Campus Location: 210 University Pavilion. You will be provided an Accommodation Form indicating your accommodation for the semester. Please present this form to me by the second day of class to ensure your accommodation needs are discussed, agreed upon, and provided.

C. Topics discussed in this class will be covered through a combination of lectures, case studies, activities, videos, and group discussions. A course accomplishes its objectives only when students prepare and become involved in the activities of the entire class.

D. I understand that other demands such as interviewing, job requirements, and illnesses may require you to miss a couple of classes. This is generally not a problem. Note that your course grade may be reduced for excessive absences (more than 3), in addition to grade reductions for lack of participation.

E. I would appreciate it if you would let me know in advance via email if you are planning to miss a class. If you are sick, let me and your team members know, but do not attend class when there is a possibility you may get others sick. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out from your classmates what material was covered and what additional assignments (if any) were made.

F. Some assignments will be done in a group setting and must be completed in part outside of class. Because of the amount of group work required, class time will be allocated to team meetings when appropriate; however, if you can't meet outside of class with your team, you should not take this class.

G. Class participation will be evaluated regularly and will include in-class comments, comments on the readings in advance of class, and comments on the discussion after class. Effective class comments cite course materials, draw on real-world experiences, or pose new questions to the class. High-quality participation involves knowing when to speak and when to listen. Comments that are repetitive, disrespectful or lacking sufficient foundation will be discouraged. The use of electronic devices for class material is permitted except when guest speakers are presenting.

H. Team assignments may not be turned in late.

I. No makeup work will be assigned, except for excused absences.

J. Any changes to this syllabus, due dates, or grading requirements will be made as far in advance as possible. All students will be held responsible for completion of all course components. Failure to meet requirements in a timely manner will result in a failing grade being given for that portion of the class.

K. If you believe that your grade on a written assignment is inaccurate and you wish to dispute it, please do the following: 1. Type your specific comments in a Word Document and turn it in to me via e-mail (as an attachment) within three days of the return of the subject material (grade). 2. Clearly state why you believe you deserve a higher grade (based on substantive reasons). 3. Last, be aware that I will re-grade the entire assignment, and thus reviews can lead to decreases as well as increases in points.

Course Communication

University policy requires that the email set up in Blackboard is the primary means of communication. It is advisable that you use your UC email for this purpose and that you check it often. If you choose to change your email in Blackboard to a non-UC email it is your responsibility to ensure you check it.

Student Services

Below is a short list of services available for students enrolled at the University of Cincinnati.

Counseling Services, Clifton Campus

Students have access to counseling and mental health care through the University Health Services (UHS), which can provide both psychotherapy and psychiatric services. In addition, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide professional counseling upon request; students may receive five free counseling sessions through CAPS without insurance. After hours, students may call UHS at 513-556-2564 or CAPS Cares at 513-556-0648. For urgent physician consultation after-hours students may call 513-584-7777.

Accessibility Resources Office

Students with disabilities who need academic accommodations or other specialized services while attending the University of Cincinnati will receive reasonable accommodations to meet their individual needs as well as advocacy assistance on disability-related issues. Students requiring special accommodation must register with the Disability Services Office. [UC's Accessibility Resources Office.](#)

Peer Tutoring

[The Learning Assistance Center](#) offers tutoring for UC students at our office in 2510B French Hall West. Sessions are one-on-one with a subject-specific tutor to answer your questions. The Learning Assistance Center's dedicated tutors participate in ongoing training to equip them with strategies to support extended classroom learning. **Tutoring is free of charge.** To contact their office please visit the [Peer Tutoring page](#) of the Learning Assistance Center's webpage or call 513-556-3244.

Course and Grading Policies

Course Structure

Changes to the syllabus, due dates, course requirements or grading requirements will be made as far in advance as possible. Due dates will be clearly marked in Blackboard. All assignments will be submitted via Blackboard using a Word document, PDF document, PowerPoint document, or an Excel document.

Written assignments will be graded on the following criteria:

- Organization and structure: employs a logical framework and identifies a crucial issue for analysis.
- Depth of analysis: information is gathered from appropriate sources and is presented in a persuasive manner.
- Creativity and insight: material is presented in an original, engaging and interesting manner.
- Integration with course readings, lectures, and discussions: draws on, applies and seeks to extend concepts covered in the class.
- Style: smoothly and professionally written, using appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Academic Integrity

To help ensure the alignments of incentives, the Lindner College of Business has implemented a “Two Strikes Policy” regarding Academic Integrity that supplements the UC Student Code of Conduct (see: [UC's Student Code of Conduct](#))

- All academic programs at the Lindner College of Business use this “Two Strikes Policy”; any student who has been found responsible for two cases of academic misconduct may be dismissed from the College.
- All cases of academic misconduct (e.g., copying other students assignments, failure to adequately cite or reference, cheating, plagiarism, falsification, etc.) will be formally reported by faculty; and
- Students will be afforded due process for allegations as outlined in the policy.

Instructor Biography

Dan Gruber is the Associate Dean of Innovation and New Ventures, Director of the Carl H. Lindner Honors-PLUS program, and a Professor-Educator in the department of management at the Carl H. Lindner College of Business at the University of Cincinnati. Dan's position focuses on developing and implementing new innovations in pedagogy and curriculum design, technology and the overall Lindner student experience. Dan collaborates with the Lindner Associate Deans that oversee undergraduate, graduate and online programs so his work can benefit all Lindner students. Before joining the University of Cincinnati, Dan was a faculty member at both the Medill School of Journalism and the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and utilizes his cross-functional expertise to create new and innovative partnerships across disciplines within the Lindner College of Business, between Lindner and other UC colleges as well as with the Cincinnati business community. Dan earned his BS in Business Administration from Washington University's Olin School of Business and his MBA and Master of Industrial and Labor Relations from Cornell University's School of Management and School of Industrial and Labor Relations. He earned his PhD from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. Dan has won teaching awards at the University of Michigan and Northwestern University as well as several grants for teaching innovation including the Procter and Gamble Higher Education Grant Fund.

Class Schedule – Subject to Change – See Blackboard for Updated Timeline

Day	Topics and Assignments	Source	Homework Due	Homework Assigned
5/8 (Tu)	Introduction and Course Overview	Syllabus		Purchase E-Book/Register for Connect
5/10 (Th)	Course Introduction Continued			Chapter 1 quiz
5/15 (Tu)	What is strategy?	Text: Ch. 1	Chapter 1 quiz	
5/17 (Th)	CAPSIM Simulation Introduction		Team Requests	Chapter 2 quiz; Ind. Sim Prep
5/22 (Tu)	Charting a Company's Direction Balanced Scorecard	Text: Ch. 2	Chapter 2 quiz Team Plans	Hand in Teams List
5/24 (Th)	Work on Simulation Practice Round 1 decisions in class		Ind. Sim Prep	Chapter 3 quiz
5/29 (Tu)	Evaluating the External Environment	Text: Ch. 3	Chapter 3 quiz	Chapter 4 quiz
5/31 (Th)	Team Time to Finalize Decisions Capsim Practice Round 1 due			
6/5 (Tu)	Evaluating the Internal Environment	Text: Ch. 4	Chapter 4 quiz	Robin Hood
6/7 (Th)	Case: Robin Hood (Case 10) Capsim Practice Round 2 due			Chapter 5 quiz
6/12 (Tu)	The Five Generic Competitive Strategies	Text: Ch. 5	Chapter 5 quiz	
6/14 (Th)	Case: Apple (Case 3) Capsim Competitive Round 1 due			Chapter 6 quiz
6/19 (Tu)	Strategic Competitive Actions	Text: Ch. 6	Chapter 6 quiz	
6/21 (Th)	Finalize Round 1 Decisions in Class Capsim Competitive Round 2 due			Chapter 7 Quiz
6/26 (Tu)	International Strategies	Text: Ch. 7	Chapter 7 quiz	
6/28 (Th)	Team Time to Finalize Decisions Capsim Competitive Round 3 due			Chapter 8 quiz
7/3 (Tu)	Corporate Strategy	Text: Ch. 8	Chapter 8 quiz	
7/5 (Th)	Case: Tesla (Case 7) Capsim Competitive Round 4 due			Chapter 9 quiz
7/10 (Tu)	Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility	Text: Ch. 9	Chapter 9 quiz	
7/12 (Th)	Capsim Competitive Round 5 due			
7/17 (Tu)	Strategy Execution Case: Southwest Airlines (Case 11)	Text: Ch. 10	Chapter 10 quiz	
7/19 (Th)	COMPXM exam introduction and review			Comp-XM Final Exam available on 7/19; due by 8/2
7/24 (Tu)	Team Case Presentations			
7/26 (Th)	Team Case Presentations			
7/31 (Tu)	Team Case Presentations			
8/2 (Th)	Team Case Presentations Class Wrap Up			
	Comp-XM Final Exam will be available on 7/19 and due by 8/2			

*Note I will be representing the Lindner College of Business at a conference in June and may have to miss other classes during the summer. When I am not here, a colleague from the Management Department will cover for me.