COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to expose Ph.D. students to a broad foundation in strategic management research. The course is appropriate for doctoral students interested in pursuing scholarship in strategic management or related areas such as human resources, information systems, management science, marketing strategy, operations management, and organization theory.

The course does not cover every topic of interest to the strategy field and offers a limited view into each topic area. The course will introduce, to a rather limited extent, topics in closely related areas such as entrepreneurship, international business and technology management. The course complements other doctoral seminars such as one in organization theory.

COURSE MATERIALS

Most of the course readings are journal articles. The readings include both seminal theoretical articles and more recent empirical examinations related to the topics of interest. We will also use the following book as a reference: Mahoney, Joseph T. 2005. Economic foundations of strategy. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.

In addition to the required readings, I will provide a list of optional readings on each topic.

The course assumes you being familiar with the key concepts in the philosophy of social science (e.g., deductive vs. inductive reasoning, positive vs. normative research, falsification in theorizing); research design (e.g., theory and hypothesis development through verbal reasoning or model building; sampling; data collection; measurement); estimation methods (e.g. linear regression); and microeconomics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class participation

You are required to attend every session and should be prepared to actively participate in class discussion. This is not a lecture course. Class discussion and interaction are a crucial part of our synthesis of the material and learning. Good participation includes asking questions, raising original ideas, making constructive comments, and having a positive attitude toward learning.

2. Write-ups

You are required to read all the assigned readings for each session. In addition, you will be individually assigned a specific reading to lead the class discussion.
You will hand in a write-up at the start of each session. The write-up should consist of three parts: (1), a summary of the reading for which you will lead the discussion (1-2 pages, single-spaced); (2), a synthesis of all the readings identifying the linkages among them (1-2 pages, single-spaced), and placing the readings in the context of the field; and (3), a critique, which culminates in identifying one specific research question that could extend the readings (within 1 page).

Power point slides are also acceptable. Feel free to use tables and figures as supplements to illustrate your ideas.

Your write-ups and presentations will not be graded but will contribute to the final class participation grade.

3. Dissertation review and presentation
You will pick one dissertation finalist in your area from the past five years, summarize and review/critique its major ideas. You will then make a presentation in about 20 minutes. You need to hand in a copy of your review.

4. Research proposal
You are required to submit a research proposal. The proposal will include:

- identifying a focal question,
- providing a relevant literature review,
- developing logical hypotheses, and
- discussing the empirical design (i.e., data sources, sample, variables, measures, and estimation methods). Empirical results are not required.

For those of you from other areas/departments, your research topic is not limited to the topics we cover in class, but it should be related to the course in some way.

Feel free to discuss your paper idea with me over the term.

You will present your proposal at the end of the term for about 15 minutes with 5-10 minutes for Q&As. Proposals are due by 5:00pm December 14, 2012.

EVALUATION
You will be evaluated in terms of:

- **Class participation**, including your attendance, your dissertation review and presentation, your write-ups, and the quality of your contribution to class discussion (50 percent)
- **Research proposal** (50 percent)
### COURSE OVERVIEW

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COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1. Fundamental issues in Strategy

Readings:

Doctoral seminar packet.

Session 2. The research and review process

Session 3. Dissertation review
  o Pick a dissertation finalist from the past five years in your area, summarize and review/critique the main ideas. You’ll present your summary and review in 20 minutes.

Session 4. Industrial organization, competitive dynamics, and competitive advantage
  o Industrial organization, game theory and applications in strategy

Background Readings:


Readings (pick four):


Literature reviews:

Session 5. Resource heterogeneity, complementarity and competitive advantage

○ Resource-based view: Resources and capabilities/competences as sources of competitive advantage; Knowledge as a source of competitive advantage

Background Readings:

Readings (pick four):

Literature review:

Session 6. Dynamic capabilities

○ Evolutionary economics, localized search and learning
○ Dynamic capabilities as sources of competitive advantage

Readings (pick four):


Literature reviews:


Session 7. Entrepreneurship, innovation and Schumpeterian rents

Background Readings:


Jacobson R. 1992. The Austrian school of strategy. Academy of Management Review 17(4): 782-807. Skim through this paper if you have time or are interested in entrepreneurship.

Readings (pick four):


**Session 8. Flexibility and Real options**

**Background Readings:**


**Readings (pick four):**


**Literature reviews:**


Session 9. Information and agency problems

- Information economics, agency theory, and applications in strategy.

Background reading:

Readings (pick four):

Literature reviews:

Session 10. Property rights and institutions

Background reading:
Readings (pick four):


Overviews:


Session 11. Transaction costs and governance

Readings (pick four):


**Session 12. Alliances and networks**

**Background Readings:**


**Readings (pick four):**


**Recent reviews:**


**Session 13. Diversification and scope of the firm**

*Background Readings:*


*Readings (pick four):*


*Literature reviews:*


**Session 14. Mergers and acquisitions**

*Background reading:*


*Readings (pick four):*


