MGMT.6910 Section 201
Strategy Formation and Implementation

Spring 2018
Wednesday 6:30 – 9:20 p.m.
Class Location: Pulichino Tong Bldg. 130

Dr. Elizabeth J. Altman
Assistant Professor of Management
Robert J. Manning School of Business
Pulichino Tong Business Center 356

Office hours:
Wednesday 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Thursday 11:00 – 12:00 p.m.
Also available by appointment
Office Telephone: 1-978-934-5791
E-mail: elizabeth_altman@uml.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This MBA-level class exposes graduate students to theories and concepts of strategy formation and implementation. The course will enable managers to: 1) assess business environments, 2) diagnose an organization’s strengths and weaknesses, 3) develop strategic plans to create long-term competitive advantage, and 4) understand the challenges of implementing strategic plans in organizations. The course will expose students to critical decisions and trade-offs faced by strategists and tools to address them. Drawing from the professor’s research areas, this course will also address newer topics in strategy, with a particular focus on innovation, and including challenges and opportunities of platform-based businesses, business ecosystems, open innovation, and crowdsourcing. Additionally, this course integrates guest speakers from industry who bring real-world perspectives on creating and implementing strategies.

COURSE OVERVIEW
Course sessions are structured in four modules with two to four class sessions per module. The modules roughly track an organization’s strategic process and build upon each other throughout the semester. Most sessions include one case discussion.
Analyzing challenges faced in a real organization, and include student group presentations providing overviews, applications, and critiques of readings. In addition to the primary cases and articles, I generally assign articles from current business journals as either mandatory or optional readings to enhance our discussions.

The four course modules are as follows:

- Module 1: Strategic Analysis
- Module 2: Strategy Development
- Module 3: Innovation Strategy
- Module 4: Strategy Implementation

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
In general, I expect students to demonstrate the following:

- Actively participate in interactive dialogue on course topics
- Identify key issues in a business case
- Use analytic tools and techniques
- Recommend strategies that can be practically and effectively implemented
- Demonstrate clear and logical English writing skills
- Demonstrate proficiency in presentation skills, including creating and delivering management-appropriate professional level presentations

Since this is a graduate level course, my primary objective is to help students progress along their professional development paths whether they work at a multi-national Fortune 500 organization, a medium-sized firm, or a local start-up. By the end of the semester, my aim is that each student has become a better strategist comfortable looking at situations, particularly business challenges, and thinking strategically about how best to approach them. To that end, the course presents theoretical concepts and focuses on how to apply them in real-world settings. We explore a variety of business contexts and consider implications of changes underway in the global economy across international contexts, in multiple industries, and in various markets.

HOW THE COURSE WILL BE TAUGHT
This course relies extensively on the case method of instruction. The cases we cover enable us to explore a wide range of managerial situations in a variety of environments. The contexts include large and small firms, mature and growing organizations, U.S. and non-U.S. firms, technology and non-technology-centric firms, etc. For the class to be
successful and productive, students must prepare thoroughly and actively participate in each class session. Do not expect a traditional lecture. Instead, each class requires heavy class participation from each student.

One of the most important requirements to be successful in this course is thorough advanced preparation including reading and analyzing the case and additional materials. For each class, students should prepare written answers to the assigned questions and develop notes before class providing a case analysis and summaries of the readings to refer to during class. These notes make it easier for students to contribute effectively and engage in productive and informative class discussions.

During class, I will ask about the study questions and inquire about analyses of the case. “Cold calling,” where I choose students to answer questions whether or not they have raised their hands, is a regular portion of the class discussions. If you have read the case and prepared the study questions, you will not have any problems answering cold calls. You may occasionally pass on a cold call if you are unsure of an answer, but regularly passing will negatively affect your class participation grade.

I strongly suggest students establish study groups with a few other students so they can prepare for class discussions by asking each other questions about the case. Reading the case thoroughly a few times, answering study questions with written notes, and participating in study groups are the best way to prepare for case discussion classes.

There are two primary resources I recommend for preparing for a case-based course. The first is an online tutorial and is optional in the class coursepack. It is called “Case Analysis Coach” and is published by Harvard Business Publishing. The link is here: https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/4380-HTM-ENG.

The second is a book I also highly recommend:

At the graduate level, my role is to be a facilitator of learning. In many instances, students in the class have great depth of understanding based on their own experiences, and we learn a tremendous amount from each other. Each of you brings to class your own experiences from various regions of the world, and we leverage these as we explore concepts related to strategic formation and implementation.
It is important to recognize that strategy formation and implementation, unlike some disciplines, does not lend itself to concrete right or wrong answers. Everything depends on assumptions one makes and beliefs one holds about the future. This is what makes strategy so interesting to discuss and debate, and yet sometimes so difficult and frustrating. In this class, you will learn to apply tools and frameworks for strategic analysis and decision-making. Applying these tools, and recognizing the trade-offs associated with strategy, are essential skills for a high-performance manager.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Each week, there will be readings and videos to prepare for the class session. There are three main types of readings: cases, articles, and textbook chapters.

1. **HBP Case Coursepack**: Required cases are all from Harvard Business Publishing (HBP). The coursepack is available to purchase by clicking this link: [http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/72867636](http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/72867636) (Register first if you are not already in the system.)

2. **Articles on Libeguide**: Most of the non-case articles will be posted on a site administered by the UML library so that you don’t need to purchase them. The link to the libguide is here: [http://libguides.uml.edu/MGMT6910/home](http://libguides.uml.edu/MGMT6910/home).

3. **Textbook**: *Mastering Strategy* by Braun and Latham (2014) is an excellent basic strategy book co-authored by one of our UML Manning professors. The book should be available at the bookstore and at numerous online bookstores.

Each week, there will be cases and articles (and sometimes videos) to prepare for class. These are integral to the class, and constitute a critical part of the learning process and work for the class. You should plan to dedicate a good amount of time to preparation each week. I also often provide optional references. These materials should be valuable after the course is over to apply the class concepts in organizational settings.

EVALUATION

**Assignment Percentages of Final Grade:**

- In-Class Participation: 30%
- Individual Midterm Assignment: 15%
- Group Presentations (Two @ 15% each): 30%
- Individual Final Project: 25%
**In-Class Participation**

The essence of this course is interactions during class. The course relies heavily on the case method and participation is essential. Participation is based on valuable contributions to class discussion and insights provided (i.e., quality of comments).

**Characteristics of effective class participation include:**

1. Are points focused on relevant strategic issues and concerns (not simply a reiteration of case facts)?
2. Do comments show evidence of a thorough reading and analysis of the case and assigned text/articles, not just opinion based on general knowledge?
3. Do they apply and draw on frameworks and concepts we have discussed?
4. Do they reflect an ability to distinguish among facts, opinions, assumptions, and inferences?
5. Do the comments take into consideration ideas offered by others earlier in the class? Do they reflect good listening, interpretative, and integrative skills?
6. Are the comments concise and well-constructed?
7. Is there a willingness to test new ideas? Are the comments creative and bold?

**Please note that attendance does not equal participation.** Attending class is not enough to earn a high participation grade. Quantity of comments is not as important as quality. However, the only way to get better at commenting is practice, so if in doubt, please offer your thoughts and ideas to the class. I would rather have people commenting too much than too little.

After every class, I note participation in my log and assign points reflecting participation for that session; this is not a subjective or arbitrary exercise. Ratings fall across the following categories.

- **Outstanding Contributor** (3 points): Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation and demonstrate thorough analysis of the case and assigned readings. Ideas offered provide clear, well-reasoned insights grounded in strategic concepts and frameworks. Comments help provide direction for the class. Positions are well substantiated and persuasive and based on sound evidence and logic. If this person were not in class, the quality of the discussions would diminish significantly.

- **Adequate Contributor** (2 points): Contributions in class reflect adequate preparation of the case and readings. Some ideas offered provide useful insights and build in part on strategic concepts and frameworks from the class. Ideas
generally do not offer a new direction for the class. If this person were not in the class, the quality of discussion would diminish slightly.

- **Minor or Non-participant** (1 point): This person says little or nothing in class. Examples of comments in this category are straightforward details of the case and readings, and/or include mostly personal opinion. If this person were not in class, the quality of discussion would not be affected.

- **No-show with Excuse or Unsatisfactory Contributor** (0 points): This category captures two types of activity. In the first case, this person did not attend class, but did send an email before class explaining the need for the absence. In the second case, the person attended class but was clearly unprepared and did not participate adequately. Any comments that offered lack substance and provide little or no constructive direction for the class.

- **Unexcused absence** (-3 points): This person did not show-up to class and did not send an email notifying me beforehand.

I expect you to attend all class sessions and participate thoroughly. I expect students to arrive on time, and I will end on time. If you have an unavoidable and excusable conflict, and are unable to attend class, please let me know as soon as possible before class via email. If you are going to miss class, prepare the material, and get notes from a classmate. Missing more than one class will have a negative effect on your grade. If you miss three classes, you will not receive credit for the course.

**Individual Midterm Written Assignment**

There will be an individual midterm written assignment. The due date is in the calendar at the end of this syllabus. This project will be a formal written communication to a manager providing an industry analysis. The purpose is for you to individually apply the conceptual frameworks we have explored in the course until this point and practice explaining strategic concepts in written business form. More information on this project will be provided during class.

**Group Presentations**

We will have group presentations. Students will work together to apply the readings to organizations of their choice and consider how the theories, frameworks, and tools apply, or do not apply. This allows us to more deeply understand theories highlighted in the readings and discuss limitations. Each student will be part of two presentation teams. Grades are based on mastery of reading content, research and analysis, the
presentation, and management of the Q&A session. More detailed information about these presentations will be posted on Blackboard and discussed during class.

**Individual Final Project**
There will be an individual final written project that will take the form of an industry whitepaper. The due date is in the calendar at the end of this syllabus. The purpose of is for you to apply conceptual frameworks from the course to address a strategy problem faced by a company of your choosing. A one-page proposal will be due before the final assignment, so you can receive feedback on the proposal to ensure you are on the proper track to complete the assignment. Details of the assignment will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**
Unethical behavior and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class and will be disciplined consistent with UMass Lowell policy. We have all seen and heard how unethical and dishonest behavior can get people and organizations into trouble. Just as ethical behavior is paramount in the business world, such is the case in this course and all other courses you take at this institution. Accordingly, your university and the Manning School of Business expect high standards of ethical and moral conduct. While your instructor has the highest respect for each of you, and does not assume there will be any problems in this area, please be advised that plagiarism (copying other people’s work without giving them appropriate credit) or any other form of cheating is unacceptable and will be responded to accordingly. All written material (including proposals, papers, slides, etc.) must be entirely your own original work, and will be processed through online plagiarism checkers to ensure that all written work is original.

**ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT**
The University of Massachusetts Lowell is committed to serving all students with disabilities as defined by federal regulations. If you have a disability and are not yet being accommodated, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services at disability@uml.edu to register for accommodations. If you are receiving accommodations please speak to me during office hours, or privately after class, as we want to protect your privacy, so that we can make appropriate arrangements to receive your classroom and testing accommodations. Please contact me as soon as possible to ensure that we can provide accommodations as the semester begins.

Additionally, Student Disability Services supports software for **ALL** students. Read&Write Gold is literacy software that allows you to read on-screen text aloud,
research and check written work, and create study guides. You can download the software from the IT Software webpage on the UML website: https://www.uml.edu/IT/Services/Software/Read-Write-Gold.aspx

The Student Affairs Office (located in University Crossing, Suite 200) provides a range of services for students related to all types of important topics. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the services available to you as students of UMass Lowell.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR
Before embarking on a career as a professor, I spent 20 years in industry, primarily in mobile telecommunications. At Motorola for 18 years, I worked my way up from mechanical engineering, eventually taking on responsibilities in manufacturing and marketing, and then spending nine years as a vice president in strategy and business development roles for Motorola’s multi-billion-dollar mobile devices business. During my Motorola career, I led teams responsible for developing business strategies, identifying partners, developing relationship strategies, and executing and managing deals. I contributed to or led negotiations for over 200 deals including technology licenses, strategic alliances, equity investments, joint ventures, and M&A activities including international acquisitions and divestitures.

Switching careers to academia, in May 2015 I completed my doctorate in business administration at the Harvard Business School. I hold two masters degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in mechanical engineering and management. In 1994, I was awarded a U.S. Department of Commerce and Japanese government fellowship and spent a year at a Sony factory in Japan, and have worked in Europe and Asia. My undergraduate degree is in mechanical engineering from Cornell University where I have served on the Board of Trustees. I am an emerita member of the Cornell College of Engineering Advisory Council and the President’s Council of Cornell Women. In 2016, I was accepted for lifetime membership in the Council on Foreign Relations. My academic research focuses on platform businesses and their related business ecosystems, digital economy transitions, and the challenges posed by complex interdependent business networks.
### MGMT.6910 Section 201 – Spring 2018 Calendar and Class Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 – Jan. 24</td>
<td>Strategic Analysis</td>
<td>Cola Wars</td>
<td>Intro to Strategy &amp; Porter’s Five Forces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 – Jan. 31</td>
<td></td>
<td>Apple in 2015</td>
<td>Industry Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 – Feb. 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Disney</td>
<td>Corporate Strategy in a Multi-Unit Enterprise</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>INDIV. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 – Feb. 21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Bernice Cramer, Bose Corp.</td>
<td>Core Competencies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 – Feb. 28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elon Musk’s Big Bets</td>
<td>Competitive Advantage &amp; Role of the CEO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 – March 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>LEGO</td>
<td>Sustaining Growth &amp; Building Communities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8 – March 21</td>
<td>Innovation Strategy</td>
<td>Intuit QuickBooks</td>
<td>Platform Business Transitions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9 – March 28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Threadless</td>
<td>Open Innovation &amp; Crowdsourcing</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10 – April 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. John Kawola, Ultimaker</td>
<td>Industry Exploration – 3D Printing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11 – April 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Valisha Graves, Morgan Stanley</td>
<td>Industry Exploration - Fintech</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FINAL PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12 – April 18</td>
<td>Strategy Implementation</td>
<td>Westlake Lanes &amp; Sugar Bowl</td>
<td>Competitive Positioning &amp; Strategic Renewal</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13 – April 25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unilever’s New Global Strategy</td>
<td>Sustainability &amp; Strategy</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#14 – May 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Course Wrap-up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FINAL INDIVIDUAL PAPER DUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>