BA545d - Advances in Strategic Management
Fall, 2013
Th 6:00 - 8:45 PM, Rehn 215

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Course Objective

This course will survey the contemporary literature in strategic management, in order to provide an overview of the field. The assumption that guides the course is that contemporary strategic management has been structured by the tension between two quasi-paradigms: the Porter model of competitive advantage and the resource-based view of the firm. Therefore, a major focus of the seminar will be the development of these two quasi-paradigms, and the contemporary evolution away from Porter’s model toward the resource-based view. We will also examine other topics that draw on strategic management theory, such as strategic human resource management, entrepreneurship, the nature of entrepreneurial opportunity, and the penetration of strategy into neo-institutional theory, as in the construct of “institutional strategy.” While this course does not pretend to provide a complete review of contemporary schools of thought in strategic management, it singles out some of the most important ones.

Readings

Readings will be drawn from the scholarly literature in strategic management. The selections will include journal articles that you can download from Google Scholar, JSTOR, or EBSCO. The one exception is James Thompson’s book, Organizations in Action (Transaction Publishers, 2003). This book can be purchased from Amazon.com, and you should buy it right away. Copies are available new or used, starting at about $6.00. Thompson’s book will be used to establish the foundation for our study of the specialized schools of thought in strategic management.

A key at the end of the syllabus provides abbreviations for most of the journals from which articles for this course will be
Course Requirements

A. Literature Summaries. Students are required to write seven literature summaries, each covering a specific group of readings. These summaries should be no more than six pages long, and are due on September 9, September 30, October 21, November 4, November 11, November 18, and November 25. The date each summary is due and the readings it should cover are noted on the Course Outline and Schedule below.

Each summary should integrate the relevant readings around one or two central themes that tie the readings together. The task of detecting central themes and organizing literature around them is similar to the task that scholars perform in writing the literature review section of a paper. In cases where many papers are being integrated into a single summary, the central themes will necessarily be general. One possible integration device is to compare and contrast groups of papers along one or two dimensions.

The due dates for the summaries are scheduled so that students will already have participated in class discussion of the readings before the summaries must be handed in. The summaries can be submitted as hard copies or e-mailed to the instructor.

The summaries will be read by the instructor, graded, and handed back with comments. When citing published literature in the summaries, students should use the reference and citation format specified in the Style Guide for Authors that appears in all January issues of the Academy of Management Review (the Style Guide can also be found on the AMR website).

B. Class Discussion. To facilitate a focused analysis of the readings for each class, the students will take turns presenting the articles and book chapters. One student will be responsible for each article or section of a book to be covered on a given day. These assignments will be worked out informally in advance by mutual agreement between the instructor and the students. The job of each student presenting will be to make a brief (10-15 minute) summary and critique of the reading (s)he is responsible for. These presentations will be informal, but they should be
made with PowerPoint slides.

On days where several articles or chapters are scheduled for discussion, this format may result in multiple student presentations per class. Thus it is important to keep the presentations concise and to the point. The role of the instructor will be to critique the presentations, moderate the class discussion, and integrate across articles or chapters. Of course, each student must keep up with all the readings in addition to the particular articles or chapters (s)he is responsible for presenting. This is especially important in order to be able to write an effective literature summary.

C. Class Participation. Class participation covers the presentation role described above as well as the normal role of contributing class member. Evaluation of class participation will be based on two general criteria. The first, and more easily assessed criterion, is quantity of participation. The second, and less easily assessed criterion, is quality of participation. Examples of questions that underlie the evaluation of quality include: Does the student demonstrate a basic understanding of the assigned reading material? Can the student identify common themes in the readings, and use those themes to link and compare the articles and chapters? Does the student use the readings as a foundation to develop new theoretical ideas or insights? Can the student formulate appropriate critiques of the readings, and defend his or her position in discussion with other class members?

D. Papers. No paper is required for this course, but if any student wishes to develop a paper that advances his/her own research interests, the instructor will endeavor to give comments once a draft has been completed. However, writing a paper does not absolve the student from completing the literature summaries and participating as a presenter in the classes. Also, if a paper is developed in this course, the paper must have a link to material covered in the course.

Grading Weights

These weights are approximate, and reflect the relative emphasis put on different course requirements in the overall evaluation of the student:
Literature summaries: 60%
Class participation: 40%

100%

Course Outline and Schedule

Week 1    Introduction
August 22

Week 2    First Principles
August 29

Week 3    First Principles
September 5
          Thompson (2003): Organizations in Action (Part 2)

September 9    Summary #1 due (Week 2 and Week 3 readings)

Week 4    Porter’s Model of Competitive Advantage
September 12
          Readings to be announced

Week 5    Empirical Research on Porter’s Model
September 19
          Readings to be announced
Week 6  
September 26  
**Critiques of Porter’s Model**

Readings to be announced

September 30  
**Summary #2 due (Weeks 4, 5, and 6 readings)**

Week 7  
October 3  
**The Resource-Based View (RBV)**

Readings to be announced

Week 8  
October 10  
**Empirical Research on the RBV**

Readings to be announced

Week 9  
October 17  
**Critiques of the RBV**

Readings to be announced

October 21  
**Summary #3 due (Weeks 7, 8, and 9 readings)**

Week 10  
October 24  
**Strategic Cognition**

Readings to be announced

Week 11  
October 31  
**Strategic Cognition (cont.)**

Readings to be announced

November 4  
**Summary #4 due (Week 10 and Week 11 readings)**
Week 12
November 7
Strategic Human Resource Management
Readings to be announced

November 11
Summary #5 due (Week 12 readings)

Week 13
November 14
Entrepreneurship and the Nature of Entrepreneurial Opportunity
Readings to be announced

November 18
Summary #6 due (Week 13 readings)

Week 14
November 21
Institutional Strategy and Institutional Entrepreneurship
Readings to be announced

November 25
Summary #7 due (Week 14 readings)

Week 15
November 28
Thanksgiving

December 14
Commencement

Key

AJS = American Journal of Sociology
AMJ = Academy of Management Journal
AMR = Academy of Management Review
ASQ = Administrative Science Quarterly
ASR = American Sociological Review
HBR = Harvard Business Review

HIWO = Handbook of Industrial, Work and Organizational Psychology (edited book)
HOS = Handbook of Organization Studies (edited book)
HOI = Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism (edited book)
JOM = Journal of Management
OrgS = Organization Studies
OS = Organization Science
SMJ = Strategic Management Journal

Other Useful Information

The following link contains some general information that may be useful to students:
http://pvcaa.siu.edu/_common/documents/Syllabus_Attachment.pdf