Course Overview
This course considers research and theory, both classic and recent, in strategic management and related areas. Topics will include competitive advantage, organizational learning, strategic cognition, the resource based view of the firm, top management teams, entrepreneurship, innovation, corporate-level strategy, strategic decision making, personality influences, and sustainability. The course format is a small discussion seminar and the focus is on articles from top management, psychology, and strategy-relevant journals (such as SMJ, AMJ, AMR, ASQ, and JAP), though occasional practitioner pieces will also be considered.

The major course requirements are regular attendance and participation in discussions, weekly readings (4-6 articles per week depending on topic and article length), two medium length papers (8-14 pages long; e.g., research idea paper, planned research program overview, research proposal, theoretical advancement or integration overview), a presentation based on one of the papers, and weekly “challenge questions” (to promote thinking about the topic before class, each requires only a one-page response).

Objectives
1. To gain familiarity with key research and theory on strategic management and related areas such as entrepreneurship.
2. To successfully apply major concepts, practices, and theories of strategic management to the resolution of problems and challenges within organizations.
3. To enhance your ability to analyze strategic management issues and problems from a scientific perspective.
4. To identify, acknowledge, and evaluate your own assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the behavior of top leaders, teams, and individuals within organizations.
5. To facilitate the identification and development of promising research ideas for future studies of individual and group behavior.

Format
Before each session, we will all review a set of readings and consider a number of issues and questions to be discussed. You will be expected to bring forward discussion questions and issues for consideration, and to be prepared to stimulate initial discussions on one specific paper with a few interesting starter observations or questions. Before each session, I will also provide a "challenge question" for consideration. You should prepare a brief (one page), typed response, submit it via the course webpage at least one hour before class, and bring also a copy with you to class.

Although I will often share insights and information that cannot be gleaned directly from the readings, there will be very little lecture in this course. My role is to facilitate critical thinking, integration, and application of concepts; to play devil’s advocate in our discussions and challenge you to analyze your own assumptions and arguments; and to stimulate creativity and generation of new ideas. Your role is to come prepared to every session—having read, carefully considered, and critically examined all materials.
and issues raised; to be an enthusiastic and thoughtful contributor to our discussions; to challenge your colleagues’ ideas and stimulate their creativity; and to integrate and extract practical information from the course that will be useful to your career. Active, high quality participation is expected from everyone. My sincere wish is that we will all work together to create a learning environment that is stimulating, challenging, and fun.

Course Themes
Regardless of the specific issues we’re considering, a number of themes will run throughout the course and will serve as focal points or organizing assumptions. Indeed, these are key assumptions that influence the discussions in most doctoral courses that I teach, in one form or another. Though we will on occasion debate the validity of these assumptions, I think we will find them useful for organizing our discussions.

1. Systems thinking – Organizations are complex, dynamic entities consisting of individuals, groups, communication networks, divisions, and linkages within and across these entities.
2. The power of the situation – Powerful situations can create their own reality and serve to either constrain or empower individuals and groups.
3. The power of the individual – Although situations exert a strong influence on behavior, individual differences and personality are also very important to fully understanding organizational behavior.
4. Basic behavioral processes – There are fundamental behavioral processes than often transcend settings. Lessons learned from theory, laboratory work, case studies, field experimentation, and business practice are all relevant to understanding organizational behavior, and we will consider all of these sources of information in this course.
5. The ubiquity of change – All aspects of organizational behavior are influenced significantly by change, and change is a central aspect of all organizations and systems.
6. Learned aspects of leadership – A fundamental controversy in leadership is whether leaders are born or made. We will consider this controversy, but also reach beyond it to acknowledge that regardless of genetic and personality influences, at least some of the key aspects of leadership can be learned and therefore taught.
7. Our social nature – Humans are social animals that are influenced by the presence, attitudes, and actions of others. In order to fully understand individuals within organizations, we must consider their relationships and interactions with other individuals, groups, and entities both within and outside the organization.
8. Hidden paradoxes – Phenomena that are typically regarded as mostly positive or negative in nature often have potentially inverse implications, at least under certain conditions or when applied to certain situations.

Course Assignments and Grades
1. **2 Papers** (30 points each, 60 total). Papers should be 8-14 pages long (not counting references, tables, or figures), double-spaced, 11-point font. Each paper should advance one or more of your specific research or theory building aims with regard to strategic management in a compelling manner. Possibilities include research idea papers (that develop a new research idea and briefly describe various research studies that could be conducted to test it), research proposals (efficient but detailed basis for one or a limited number of specific studies, probably with introduction and method section only), research program overviews (that highlight a theoretical basis for a set of hypotheses and overview a series of studies to test those hypotheses in a programmatic fashion), or a paper that seeks to advance theory in a significant manner (such as an overview of a proposal theoretical integration, advancement, new theory, or application of existing theory to a new area). I may be open to other approaches also, ask and we can discuss. Another option is to use the first paper to develop a research proposal and the second paper to add the results and discussion section and turn it into a collectively complete research manuscript. It is also possible that challenge question responses could be the impetus for developing the class papers. Regardless, the writing should be clean, efficient, integrative, interesting, and professionally useful to you in some significant way. Also, the papers for this class must be new and distinct from any other papers you have written, including for other classes. If you have any doubts about whether your paper will meet this criterion, ask and we will discuss. Papers
should be submitted via the course website (Activities > Dropbox) at least one hour before class on their respective due dates.

2. **Presentation of paper** (10 points). At the end of the semester, you will be asked to make a 15-20 minute presentation of one of your papers to the class. The presentation is intended to be similar to a paper presentation you might make at a regional or national conference. Prepare well and make good use of visual aids. A sample evaluation form is attached to this syllabus. Although the timing is based on a typical conference presentation window and is directed toward helping you prepare for such a window, we will also allow at least 10 minutes of questions afterward for feedback (because we can), so the 15-20 minutes does not need to include time for questions.

3. **Challenge questions** (12 points). One page, typed responses. Responses must show evidence of critical, integrative thought and are scored as acceptable (1 point) or unacceptable (0 points). No challenge questions are due for the first class and for the two classes when papers are due.

4. **Participation** (18 points). This will be scored based on the quality and quantity of your contributions to class discussions. Note that quality is the most important factor here. A single insightful comment or question that takes the discussion to a new level or in a new direction is often a valuable contribution. To assist me in evaluating your participation, you will be asked to complete a self-assessment form near the end of the semester.

Total: 100 points.

Scale:  
90-100=A  90.00-100.00%  
80-89=B  80.00-89.99%  
70-79=C  70.00-79.99%  
60-69=D  60.00-69.99%  
0-59=F  0.00-59.99%

**Course Policies**

1. **Preparation, attendance, and in-class participation.** Regular attendance, careful preparation, and high-quality participation is expected from all.

2. **Readings.** There is no textbook for this course. Readings will be assigned each week from journal articles. You are responsible for obtaining these articles on your own. Most of them will be available in full-text form using one of the reference databases available via the Morris Library web site.

3. **Professionalism.** All class members are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy and professionalism at all times. In particular, I want to encourage open discussions where we feel free to attack ideas. However, keep in mind that we should not personalize our comments and should focus instead on the ideas. Similarly, we should not take someone arguing against our own view as a personal attack as long as the critique is professionally stated and not personalized.

4. **Syllabus Attachment.** Visit the link below and review the information carefully:  

5. **Possible Changes to Syllabus and Course Schedule.** This syllabus represents my best reasonable expectations. However, changes may be made to accommodate our interests or time constraints.

6. **Late papers.** Late challenge questions will not be accepted. Late papers submitted within 24 hours or deadline will be penalized 20%. Papers will not be accepted more than 24 hours past deadline.

**Schedule and Readings**

During the first class session we will have a discussion about your interests and I will also ask you to complete a questionnaire about them. At that session I will also ask you to nominate articles you find especially interesting and relevant for inclusion. The final schedule of course topics and readings will then be based on your feedback and my own interests, as well as core content that obviously must be included for a doctoral strategy course. The reading list and challenge question for each class will be provided at least one week in advance (with the exception of week 2, which will be provided at least 72 hours in advance, allowing time to process the week 1 interest information).
KEY DATES and EVENTS:
October 8 – Paper 1 due by 5:00pm
November 19 – Thanksgiving holiday, no classes
December 10 – Paper 1 due by 5:00pm, Presentations
NOTE: There is no final exam in this class.

Evaluation Form for Presentations

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1. Speaker articulated words cleanly.
2. Speaker refrained from awkward verbal utterances (umm, uh, er, you know, etc.).
3. Speaker spoke actively and did not just read passively from notes.
4. Speaker made eye contact with audience members.
5. Text on slides or overheads was clearly visible.
6. Slides were well organized.
7. Slides contained the right amount of information (neither too little nor too much).
8. Presentation was well paced.
9. Material presented was clear.
10. Presentation included relevant research and theory.
11. Content of the presentation was solid and persuasive.
12. Conclusions were supported with logic and evidence.
13. Limitations were clearly acknowledged.
14. Speaker answered questions well.
15. Presentation was polished and professional.

Score (out of 10):
Comments: