

**Strategic Thinking in H.R**  
**Course Number: MPHR-802**  
**Spring Session**

**January 14 – April 29, 2010**

**Professor: Dr. Christopher J. Metzler**

**E-mail: [cjm89@georgetown.edu](mailto:cjm89@georgetown.edu) Contact: 202-687-4914**

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**Course Description:**

The focus of this course is on providing H.R. professionals with the skills and tools to learn how to think analytically. Research indicates that successful organizations base their key business decisions on organizational strategies. Thus, H.R. professionals must be able to add value by thinking critically about the ramifications of business decisions on the leadership of H.R. This course provides students with a strategic thinking and application process that entails environmental analysis, assessment of competencies and weaknesses, analysis of competitors and the formulation and implementation of effective strategies that result in competitive advantage.

It requires students to apply the critical business skills of planning and managing strategic activities. The course also seeks to develop students' capacity to identify issues, to reason carefully about strategic options and improve their ability to manage the organizational process by which strategies get formed and executed.

**Course Objectives:**

On completion of this course, students will:

- Learn how to think critically
- Analyze and understand the role strategies play in determining the direction of an organization;
- Understand and apply strategic thinking and planning as it relates to business operations;
- Understand how to present well –reasoned plans and proposals to leadership and.
- Develop and apply the skills to identify an organization's strategies and determine how H.R. impacts organizational imperatives

**Course Requirements:**

Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned materials for that class and to be ready to participate in class discussions. Students are strongly encouraged to utilize email and the Internet as resources for information about the class, networking, communication, and research. Supplemental reading material will be assigned during the term.

### **Required Texts**

1. The Necessary Nature of Future Firms. Attributes of Survivors in a Changing World. By G.P. Huber; Sage Publications, 2004
2. Concepts in Strategic Management and Business Policy. By Thomas L. Wheelen & J. David Hunger, (12/E); Pearson/Prentice-Hall. ISBN: 0136097391

### **Recommended Reading**

1. Thomas Friedman, The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century. Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2005.
2. Michael E. Porter, On Competition. Harvard Business Review, 1998

**You must read and comprehend all required reading for each class. Points will be added or deducted based on subject-matter knowledge and participation during each class session.**

**Quizzes** – The professor reserves the right to administer unscheduled quizzes which will be considered part of the class participation grade.

Date	Class Week/Area of Focus	Readings/Activities
January 14	<b>Week 1</b> – Introductions, review of Syllabus, course expectations and grading system Course Overview Discussion of assigned readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Necessary Nature of Future Firms</i>. Preface and Appendix</li> <li>• <i>Concepts in Strategic Management &amp; Business Policy</i>. Strategic Management Model.</li> <li>• Impact of <i>The World is Flat</i> on future state of firms. Importance of strategic planning and thinking on longer-term success. <i>Three page paper due by noon on 1/12/10. Topic: why strategic thinking is necessary in HR</i> <a href="mailto:cjm89@georgetown.edu">cjm89@georgetown.edu</a></li> </ul>
January 21	<b>Week 2</b> – Models and Business Organizations; Organizational Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Necessary Nature of Future Firms: Pages 15-44; 117-142</i></li> </ul>
January 28	<b>Week 3</b> – Knowledge Management; Thinking Creatively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Necessary Nature of Future Firms: Pages 143-176; 177-214</i></li> <li>• Three page due by <b>5 pm on 1/26/10</b> which explains why attracting and nurturing intellectual property is crucial for strategic sustainability of businesses. All papers emailed to <a href="mailto:cjm89@georgetown.edu">cjm89@georgetown.edu</a></li> </ul>
February 4	<b>Week 4</b> – All subsequent reading is found in <i>Concepts in Strategic Management</i> textbook: Chapter 1, Appendix 1.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts in Strategic Management</li> <li>• Strategic Audit of a Corporation</li> <li>• Select and Name Consulting Firms for Case Analyses</li> <li>• Select Case Study for Term Paper</li> </ul>
February 11	<b>Week 5</b> – Chapter 2; Chapter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Governance</li> <li>• Social Responsibility and Ethics in Strategic Management</li> <li>• Case 1 (Byte Products, Inc.) – Individual three page recommendation and justification to the Byte Board, <b>due by email <a href="mailto:cjm89@georgetown.edu">cjm89@georgetown.edu</a> 5 pm on 2/14/2010</b></li> <li>• Firms present recommendations during class.</li> </ul>
February 18	<b>Week 6</b> – Chapter 4; Appendix 4.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Scanning and Industry Analysis</li> <li>• Competitive Analysis Techniques</li> <li>• Discuss Case 16 (Harley-Davidson, Inc)</li> <li>• Discuss: Midterm Exam</li> </ul>
February 25	<b>Week 7 – Midterm Exam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed Book In Class Midterm</li> </ul>
March 4	<b>Week 8</b> – Chapter 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Scanning: Organizational Analysis</li> <li>• Case 29 (Panera Bread Company) – Individual three page that applies principles and tools of organizational analysis, <b>emailed to <a href="mailto:cjm89@georgetown.edu">cjm89@georgetown.edu</a> 2/28/10 by 5:00 pm</b> ; Firms present analysis during class.</li> </ul>
March 18	<b>Week 9</b> – Chapter 6, Chapter 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy Formulation: Situation Analysis and Business Strategy</li> <li>• Strategy Formulation: Corporate Strategy</li> <li>• Case 18 (Carnival Corporation) – Three page due by <b>5 pm on 3/16/10</b> that applies situation analyses; and recommends both business and corporate strategy (with supporting rationale). All papers emailed to <a href="mailto:cjm89@georgetown.edu">cjm89@georgetown.edu</a></li> </ul>

March 25	<b>Week 10</b> – Chapter 8, Chapter 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy Formulation: Functional Strategy and Strategic Choice</li> <li>• Strategy Implementation: Organizing for Action</li> <li>• Case 21 (GAP) – Individual two page applying functional analysis to company and recommending a strategic choice, <b>passed in at beginning of class</b>; Firms present analysis during class.</li> </ul>
April 8	<b>Week 11</b> – Chapter 10, Chapter 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy Implementation: Staffing and Directing</li> <li>• Evaluation and Control</li> </ul>
April 15	<b>Week 12</b> – Final Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Presentations (DRY RUN)</li> </ul>
April 22	<b>Week 13</b> – Final Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Presentations</li> </ul>
April 29	<b>Week 14</b> – Final Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Presentations</li> <li>• Final Papers due 20 page minimum on case study and recommendations</li> </ul>

### Grading System

Case Studies and Papers	25 percent
Firm Presentations	5 percent
Mid-Term	25 percent
Final Papers	50 percent

**Grading** – Your final grade will be based on a combination of weekly assignments, the mid-term exam, case studies, quizzes, class participation, and your final papers. Collaboration will be valued in classroom activities, along with evidence of having completed reading assignments in preparation for class activities and assignments. **Weekly reading assignments and participation go hand-in-hand; it is therefore advised that you read required materials and come to class prepared to engage in substantive discussions. Everyone is expected and required to participate in class.**

**Syllabus modification notation:** In some instances, the syllabus might need to be altered, and as the professor, I retain the right to make said changes. In such instances, I will give notice of those changes to the class in a timely manner.

Assignments and grades will be posted on Blackboard. It is students' responsibility to check Blackboard to ensure that they are aware of assignments and other related communication from the professor.

This is the general topical direction in which the course will proceed. However, from time to time, this direction may change as events dictate.

The following is provided as a guide used for assessing grades in all areas of the grading system. There is no grade of D.

<b>A</b>	100-95 percent
<b>A-</b>	94-90
<b>B+</b>	89-87
<b>B</b>	86-83
<b>B-</b>	82-80
<b>C</b>	79-70
<b>F</b>	69 and below

**A 95 - 100%**

Clearly stands out as excellent work. An “A” grade work could be used as a model for other students to emulate. Shows excellent grasp of subject matter and conceptual integration. The presentation shows excellent in-depth analytical thinking and an elegantly innovative application. It is very well written and organized. Additional input is provided, relevant to the subject, from outside sources or personal experience.

**A-90 - 94%**

Represents high quality performance. Shows excellent grasp of subject matter and conceptual integration. Shows a high level of thinking, analysis and application. It is very well written and organized. Additional input is provided, relevant to the subject, from outside sources or personal experience.

**B+87 - 89%**

Represents very good work. Shows thorough grasp of subject matter and effective application. Shows good thinking and analysis. It is well written and organized. Additional input is provided, relevant to the subject, from outside sources or personal experience.

**B 83 - 86%**

Represents satisfactory work. Shows adequate level of thinking and analysis. Standard of presentation, organization and appropriateness of application is adequate. Some level of additional input is provided.

**B-82 - 80%**

Work is below graduate level expectations, marginally passing. Presentation is rather general, superficial, or incomplete and not very well written. Indicates minimal level of individual thought or effort with inadequate attempts at application.

**C 70-79%**

Work is clearly unsatisfactory. It is poorly written and presented, shows poor analysis, misses important elements and lacks any noticeable attempts at application.

**F 69% and below**

Fails to meet minimum acceptable standards.

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**Attendance:** Students are expected at all meetings of the course. We do understand that from time to time, family, personal and work or work emergencies may arise. In those circumstances, please contact me immediately. A student who misses more than two classes is subject to withdrawal from the class by Dean Metzler and a final grade of “F” in the course.

**Late Papers:** Except in rare circumstances, late papers are not accepted. In case of an emergency, this rule can be waived with appropriate documentation and cause. Requests for extensions must reach me no later than a week before the paper is due.

**Incompletes**

Incompletes are given in only the most extraordinary circumstances and with appropriate documentation. Where an incomplete is granted, a grade of “N” shall be granted until the work is handed in and, then, the grade shall be changed accordingly. In no case shall work submitted after the announced date (date will be announced in class) be granted an incomplete. The work shall be delivered no later than 4 p.m. on that day. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in an F.

**Citation System**

Students must use APA style in all papers submitted in the course.

**Turnitin.com**

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be added as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers in the future. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

**Students with Disabilities Policy**

- Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Some accommodations might include note takers, books on tape, extended time on assignments, and interpreter services among others. Students must obtain an official letter from the Academic Resource Center listing the exact accommodations needed.

- Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) (Leavey Center, Suite 335; 202-687-8354; [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu); <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm>) before the start of classes to allow their office time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

### **Honor System**

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. If you have not done so, please read the honor code material located online at: <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/>

### **The Honor Pledge**

*In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system;*

*To live out a commitment to integrity in all my words and actions;*

*To be honest in every academic endeavor;*

*And to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together;*

*To live out the ideals of Georgetown University, I commit myself to be a person for others in my daily life, respectful of difference and disagreement;*

*To care for this venerable campus and all of those with whom I share it;*

*And to fulfill in all ways the trust placed in me to carry on the Georgetown tradition.*

### **Requirements for Final paper:**

The final paper will be given in lieu of a final exam. The paper shall be no less than 20 and no more than 25 pages double space pages. Students must use APA format. Papers must be submitted via [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com)

The final paper must demonstrate that the student has developed a clear understanding of the theories and concepts taught in class and is able to apply them to the specific research

project that their group has been assigned. This is a research paper and as such, general papers which do not go beyond the research in the course texts, will be heavily penalized.

This is an individual paper and students are prohibited from collaborating on this paper.

The Research Paper will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- 1) clarity of thesis statement
- 2) validity and soundness of arguments
- 3) application of theories and concepts learned in the semester
- 4) thoroughness of research
- 5) organization and style
- 6) clarity of writing

### *Suggested Outline*

- Introduction

This section gives an overview of the main themes in the paper and gives a brief preview of what the essay will cover. This section also clearly states the research question(s) that the paper will address. As a general rule, you should write your introduction LAST.

- Literature Review

This section provides an organized exposition of the ideas and sources that the student used to develop his/her own ideas for the paper. The literature review should provide a summary of what work has been done in the student's area of research and also should demonstrate *how* the student's work compliments or fits into this existing body of knowledge.

- Description of Organizational Context

In this section, the student writes a detailed description of the organization that is the object of the analysis. This section should describe the organization broadly and then delve into the specific dimensions of the organization that are the focus of the student's research.

- Application of Theory to Organization

This section of the essay should contain the meat of your argument. Here you should draw linkages between the theoretical discussion in your literature review and this specific organization. Does this organization help us to understand how some theory operates? Does it show that there are important caveats to a theory?

You must develop a structured and logical argument in this section. Usually in essay of this type, a student chooses between 3-5 "major points" that they wish to support. A common tool used for presenting ideas about an organization in the HR literature is to call them "lessons learned."

- Conclusion

This section should summarize your paper and its major findings. You should also speculate about the directions future research ought to take in light of your findings. **\*\*IMPORTANT:** Your conclusion should also devote some significant space to a discussion of the implications of your work for decision makers or decision making in the topic area. For example if you paper found that there is a significant issue in an organization, what do you recommend in terms of steps needed to address the issue? Are there broader implications that can be gleaned by managers and decision makers in other organizations? Are there broader implications for the field of human resources?