

MGMTFE 420 : BUSINESS STRATEGY

Fall 2020 - 4 Units

Course Syllabus

Instructor Information

Faculty of Record: Professor Jennifer Kao
Email: jennifer.kao@anderson.ucla.edu
Office Location: Virtual office (by Zoom)
Office Hours: By appointment, and scheduled hours prior to exams

Teaching Assistant: Section 1: Benjamin Rovner, ben.rovner.2021@anderson.ucla.edu
Sections 3 and 4: Yiyang Zeng, yiyang.zeng.phd@anderson.ucla.edu

FEMBA Coordinator: Cedric Dicker, cedric.dicker@anderson.ucla.edu

Course Meeting Times and Location

Section 1: Saturday 2:00 PM - 5:15 PM
<https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/20F-MGMTFE420-1>

Section 3: Tuesday 6:30 PM - 9:45 PM
<https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/20F-MGMTFE420-3>

Section 4: Thursday 6:30 PM - 9:45 PM
<https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/20F-MGMTFE420-4>

Course Description

Lecture, three hours. Evaluation and formulation of organization's overall policies and strategies. Economic, heuristic, and social process approaches to policy formulation, environmental analysis, and organizational appraisal. Senior management's role in managing policy process. Letter grading.



Additional Course Information

The course centers around the most fundamental question in business: how can our company succeed in the long run, in the face of firms that seek to outcompete or replicate us? We break down this question into the sub-components: how does our organization create value, how does our organization capture value, and how well does our organization deliver value?

The course combines both lecture and discussion formats. The approach of Management 420 is unique in the MBA core in that we adopt the perspective of the general manager with overall responsibility for the performance of the firm or business unit within the firm. The concepts, skills, and analytical tools that you will learn in this course can be used to craft effective strategies in a broad range of firms and industries.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Develop and engage in strategic thinking
2. Understand the fundamental strategic concepts of creating, capturing, and delivering value
3. Master the tools of business strategy: strategy articulation, industry analysis, organizational design for strategic alignment, and corporate strategy
4. Integrate knowledge gained in previous and concurrent courses with a focus on understanding what aspects are most useful to general managers
5. Develop habits of structured, analytical, and critical thinking, and the ability to report key conclusions effectively, both in oral and written form

Course Materials

Required Text:

The cases and articles listed on the course site are all mandatory reading unless otherwise noted. The course pack contains all the required readings. It can be purchased through the links below. **Please make sure to select the correct link for your section.** Articles not included in the course pack will be distributed through CCLE.

Section 1: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/753968>

Section 3: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/753975>

Section 4: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/753979>

Course Outline

Week	Date	Key Lecture Topics	Case	General Concept
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 9/26 • Sec 3: 9/29 • Sec 4: 9/24 	Strategy Definition	Coors	Foundations of Strategic Analysis
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 10/3 • Sec 3: 10/6 • Sec 4: 10/1 	Industry Analysis	Cola Wars	Foundations of Strategic Analysis
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 10/10 • Sec 3: 10/13 • Sec 4: 10/8 	Cost Advantage	Wal-Mart*	Competitive Advantage
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 10/17 • Sec 3: 10/20 • Sec 4: 10/15 	Differentiation Advantage	The Economist	Competitive Advantage
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 10/24 • Sec 3: 10/27 • Sec 4: 10/22 	MIDTERM EXAM		
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 10/31 • Sec 3: 11/3 • Sec 4: 10/29 	Entry Games	Ryanair	Competitive Dynamics
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 11/7 • Sec 3: 11/10 • Sec 4: 11/5 	Network Effects	Google	Competitive Dynamics
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 11/14 • Sec 3: 11/17 • Sec 4: 11/12 	Platform Strategy	Netflix*	Competitive Dynamics
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 11/21 • Sec 3: 11/24 • Sec 4: 11/19 	Diversification	Disney	Corporate Strategy
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 12/5 • Sec 3: 12/1 • Sec 4: 12/3 	Sustainability, Course Review	Patagonia	Corporate Strategy, Review
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sec 1: 12/12 • Sec 3: 12/8 • Sec 4: 12/10 	FINAL EXAM		

*Assignment deadlines for group memos (Wal-Mart, Netflix): 11:59pm on day before class

Professor and TA Office Hours

The Professor and TA are available outside of class should students require additional help with the material. Experience from prior years has indicated that the typical student only seeks out this help just before the exams. Rather than set weekly office hours that are very crowded during exam times, and poorly attended at other times, we will have extended office hours in the days leading up to exams, and office hours that are by appointment for other times. We will communicate the date, time and location of exam office hours closer to the exam. Students should feel free to email the Professor or TA at any time to set up an appointment to meet to discuss questions with the course material. Students are asked to email their questions in advance.

Evaluation and Grading

Required Assignments and Weighted Percentages

This course will be graded using the following weighted percentages for each of the assignments in the course:

Assignments	% of Grade
2 Graded Group Memos	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	35%
Class Participation	20%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

This class will adhere to the grade distribution rules for core courses used across the Anderson community. Grades will be allocated as follows:

A+ and A	Top 25% of the class
A-	Next 25% of the class
B+	Next 20% of the class
B	Next 20% of the class
B-	Bottom 10% of the class

Grading Complaints/Regrades

The Professor and TA put substantial care and effort into grading assignments, and we therefore hope to keep regrades to a minimum. Students should remember that all grades are “on the curve,” so relatively strong performance on an assignment may result in an average assignment grade, even if the average student performed strongly.

For each assignment or exam, the Professor will distribute an “outstanding answer” document, which shows an actual student submission that received a high grade. Students should first carefully review their memo or exam answers and compare them to the “outstanding answers” distributed by the Professor. If, after this review, a student feels that his/her assignment was improperly graded, the student should contact the TA and ask for a regrade. The TA will explain the regrading process to the student. All regrades are done “blind”—that is, the person doing the

regrade will not know the original grade given on the assignment/question, and will also not know why the regrade is being requested. Students who request a regrade acknowledge that their grade on the assignment/exam may go up, stay the same, or go down after the regrade. The result of the regrade is final. All regrades must be requested within one week of distribution of grades for the given assignment/exam.

Attendance and Missed Classes

Because this is a participation-based class, it is critical that students attend as many classes as possible. If you must be absent, you will not earn participation points on that day. There is no way for students to “make up” foregone participation points for a missed class. Allowing participation makeup would be unfair to the students who attended class despite their busy schedules and outside commitments. Please do not email the Professor or TA asking how to “make up” a class or the participation points. Of course, if you miss a class and have problems with the material after reviewing the readings and slides, please make an appointment with the TA. As with any student with questions concerning the material, we are happy to help.

No “Section Hopping”

Students must attend their assigned section, and are not allowed to “hop” to the other section. Allowing section hopping is costly to the non-home section because it crowds out participation of students enrolled in that section. Therefore, section-hopping will only be allowed for students missing class due to job-related travel, military service, childbirth, or severe illness. Please notify the FEMBA coordinator if one of these circumstances applies to you.

Assignment Descriptions

Assignment descriptions are provided as an overview. Full details, instructions, and grading criteria are provided on the course site.

Class Meeting Participation

The value of this class lies as much in learning to apply the course concepts to real-world scenarios as it does in the concepts themselves. Therefore, this course is case-based and its success depends heavily on the quality of class discussion. The case-based discussion is designed expressly for you to practice problem-solving in a fast-paced, but low-risk environment. Preparation for class involves reading the materials and working through, in some detail, the case “study questions” in advance. Though the case discussion might not explicitly answer each and every study question, by preparing these questions, students will get the most learning out of the class. In assigning grades to class discussion, the Professor and TA will focus primarily on the *quality* of your input; however, it usually takes at least some quantity of participation for us to make that evaluation.

Group Memos

The group memoranda are designed to give you practice in conducting quantitative analysis of a company’s strategic position, a critical skill for any general manager. You will provide value-added analysis around the facts in a case, explaining clearly, concisely and logically the implications of the most important case facts. The assignment questions for each memo will be posted a week in advance on the course site. You may write your own individual memo or form groups with 4-6

members in total. Everyone should be prepared to defend his or her answer in class. **Students must follow the formatting and submission guidelines that are provided on the course site.**

Midterm

The midterm is scheduled for Class 5. It will cover the material learned up to that point. Further details will be announced as the exam approaches. You must take the exam on the time scheduled by Anderson for your section— the exceptions are illness, military service, or childbirth. Please plan accordingly and notify the TA if one of these exceptions applies to you.

Final Exam

The final exam is comprehensive. It will include a small number of multiple choice, true/false, and short-answer questions on course concepts. It will also ask 3 to 4 essay questions about a case, similar in format to the cases prepared for each class session. You must take the exam on the time scheduled by Anderson for your section—the exceptions are illness, military service, or childbirth. Please plan accordingly and notify the TA if one of these exceptions applies to you.

UCLA Policies

Code of Conduct

All participants in the course are bound by the **UCLA Student Conduct Code**:

https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/portals/16/documents/uclacodeofconduct_rev030416.pdf

Netiquette

The written language has many advantages: more opportunity for reasoned thought, more ability to go in-depth, and more time to think through an issue before posting a comment. However, written communication also has certain disadvantages, such a lack of the face-to-face signaling that occurs through body language, intonation, pausing, facial expressions, and gestures. As a result, please be aware of the possibility of miscommunication and compose your comments in a positive, supportive, and constructive manner.

Academic Integrity

UCLA is an institution of learning, research, and scholarship predicated on the existence of an environment of honesty and integrity. Section 102.01 of the UCLA Student Conduct Code prohibits all forms of academic misconduct or research misconduct, including, but not limited to, cheating, fabrication or falsification, plagiarism, multiple submissions, facilitating academic dishonesty, coercion regarding grading or evaluation of coursework, or unauthorized collaboration. By submitting your exams for grading, you affirm that your work is solely your own and that you have not communicated with anyone other than the instructor and proctors in any way during the exam.

Students who knowingly or intentionally conduct or help another student engage in acts that violate UCLA's expectations of academic integrity will be subject to disciplinary action and referred to the Dean of Students' Office. Please familiarize yourself with **UCLA's Academic Integrity Policy** (<https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity>) and speak to your instructor if you have any questions about what is and is not allowed in this course.

Disability Services

UCLA is committed to providing a barrier free environment for persons with documented disabilities. If you are already registered with the Center for Accessible Education (CAE), please request your Letter of Accommodation in the Student Portal. If you are seeking registration with the CAE, please submit your request for accommodation via the CAE website. Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations should submit their request for accommodations as soon as possible, as it may take up to two weeks to review the request. For more information, please visit the CAE website (www.cae.ucla.edu), visit the CAE at A255 Murphy Hall, or contact by phone at 310-825-1501.