

Eastern Oregon University
Course Syllabus



Course Number: BA 508

Course Name: Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Course Description: Students will learn to use the tools and techniques associated with modern business strategy to create sustainable competitive advantage. In particular, students will discuss and master the fundamentals of modern competitive strategy; learn to assess the opportunities and threats present in the external environment; identify the strengths, weaknesses, and core competencies within any organization; and then create a pro-active strategic plan that capitalizes on these factors.

Credit Hours: 3 hours

Professor: TBD

Office: TBD

eMail: TBD

Office Hours: TBD

Classroom: TBD **Class time:** TBD

Required Text and Readings: TBD

Regular reading of professional business journals or newspapers such as The Wall Street Journal, Business Week, The Economist, Fortune, Forbes, INC., is highly recommended. The EOU library has subscriptions to many of these publications, and additional business resources, that are available free of charge to EOU students.

Prerequisites: Admitted MBA student in good academic standing

Learning Outcomes: On completion, students should demonstrate the following outcomes.

- (1) Demonstrate an understanding of strategic tools and techniques
- (2) Perform a critical analysis of the external environment using PESTEL factors
- (3) Conduct an internal analysis and identify core competencies within the organization
- (4) Evaluate the competitive environment and understand the core competencies of others
- (5) Explain how to identify/apply common business and corporate level strategies
- (6) Identify common organizational structures and their strengths/weaknesses
- (7) Explain the concepts of business ethics and the implied social contract

Eastern Oregon University
Course Syllabus

Course Overview:

In this course we will study business policy and strategy. We will learn how to evaluate both our internal and external environment, the competitive forces that shape our markets, and understand the resources and capabilities that we have to work with - or need to acquire. We will also learn to stitch all these elements together into business and corporate level strategies that are designed to win. **The correct business strategy can quite literally make the difference between success and failure.**

Means of Assessment: All learning outcomes are assessed with class discussion, case analysis, discussion briefs, and a comprehensive final project.

Assignment	Due Date	Max Score	Percentage of Total Grade	Learning Outcomes
Discussion & Participation	entire class	100	10%	2 - 6
Case Analysis	weekly	300	30%	1 - 7
Discussion Briefs	Week 3, 6	300	30%	4, 7
Final Project	Mon finals week	300	30%	1 - 7
Course Total		1,000	100%	

● **Discussion & Participation: 10% of Final Grade**

Working successfully in business requires collaboration, communication, and teamwork. This class will give you the opportunity to learn in a highly active and collaborative environment. 10% of your grade will be based on your regular participation in class discussions.

Of course, you must attend in order participate, yet we are looking for much more. You are expected to read assignments before class and be prepared to discuss the assigned topics in a spirited but respectful manner. The quantity of your participation is not as important as the quality of your participation. Your participation will be evaluated based on your ability to provide insightful analysis of discussion topics versus simply reciting theory and facts.

● **Case Analysis: 30% of Final Grade**

You will be presented with a case that summarizes the current situation of an existing organization and a critical set of decisions that must be made. Your job is to carefully sift through the information presented, decide which factors are most relevant to the current situation, weigh the options, and then propose a course of action.

Just as in real life, not all cases will contain complete information. In many cases you will need to make reasonable assumptions and then work through the scenario. This may also mean that you will need contingency plans just in case things don't unfold as expected.

With most cases we are not looking for a specific "right" answer, we are more interested in the analytical tools and reasoning used to arrive at the conclusion, and how well you can support and defend your plan of action.

Eastern Oregon University
Course Syllabus

Discussion Briefs: 30% of Final Grade

There will be two response briefs on “strategy in action” or other “hot topics” assigned over the course of the term. The assignments will be posted in your weekly module on Canvas. The assignment will usually consist of a video clip or article with questions that explore the topic in more detail. You will review the information presented and then prepare a response brief (maximum of 2 pages, 1.5 spaced, 12 point font) that responds to the questions.

The Response Briefs will be graded based on the sophistication of the written contribution and the quality of the information presented. We are looking for insightful analysis – not just a summary of what was included in the video/press clip.

Please be certain that you address the question(s) posed. Additionally, please use appropriate grammar and “proof read” your document. **Points will be deducted for poorly prepared written assignments.** Papers that do not address the assigned question, or are “off-topic”, will receive no credit.

Papers must be submitted before the due date posted on Canvas. **Response briefs will only be accepted on Canvas and late briefs will not be accepted.**

- **Final Project: 30% of Final Grade**

The class will be broken into teams which will each address the strategic concerns of a specific organization over the course of the term. The teams will be formed the second week of class and each team will select an organization from a list supplied by your instructor. Teams can also suggest an organization that they would like to work on. The choice of organization must be approved by your instructor no later than week 2. Teams will each be responsible for conducting a strategic analysis and delivering a presentation + final report. The presentation will be delivered during week 10, the final report is due Monday or finals week. The specific details of report structure and content will be posted on Canvas.

Eastern Oregon University
Course Syllabus

*Projects must be submitted on Canvas before the posted date. **Late projects will not be accepted.***

The letter grade equivalent for the total points is as follows:

Grade	Minimum Points
A	95
A-	90
B+	86
B	83
B-	80
C+	76
C	73
C-	70
D	60
F	<60

EOU Writing Center

The Writing Center provides a place — physical or virtual — where every EOU writer can find an interested, responsive reader. Writing tutorials are free of charge for EOU's undergraduate and graduate students who are writing for any course at any level, or who are writing resumes, job letters, graduate applications, and more. Go to eou.mywconline.com to schedule an appointment in the Writing Center (Loso Hall 234). Students in online course can also visit the [eTutoring](#) page to submit papers to a writing tutor.

Statement on Student Conduct:

Eastern Oregon University places a high value upon student safety and protecting the inclusive and inviting nature of the learning environment. The university does not permit behavior that is disrespectful, threatening, or disruptive; to faculty, other students, or the learning process. This policy applies both inside and outside the classroom. Please refer to the student Code of Conduct for more details: <https://www.eou.edu/student-affairs/code-of-conduct/>

Statement on Academic Misconduct:

Eastern Oregon University also places a high value upon the integrity of its student scholars. Any student found guilty of an act of academic misconduct (including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or theft of an examination or supplies) may be subject to having his or her grade reduced in the course in question, being placed on probation or suspended from the University, or being expelled from the University—or a combination of these. Please see Student Handbook at: <http://www.eou.edu/saffairs/handbook/honest.html>

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities Policy:

Eastern Oregon University
Course Syllabus

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation for any type of disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours or contact the Disability Services Office in Loso Hall, Room 234. Phone: 541-962-3081 (disabsvc@eou.edu). You can learn more about the types of services offered here: <https://www.eou.edu/disability/accommodations/>.

Syllabus Prepared By: W. Zehr

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