COURSE SYLLABUS

BUSINESS 9770A – Spring 2018

Business Strategy I

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Thursday @ 9:00a
Location: IVEY 3102

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This doctoral seminar surveys the core theoretical perspectives used in strategy research with a particular focus on those influenced by economics, as well as major strategy phenomena on which these perspectives are commonly applied. It is meant to provide in-depth understanding on the overarching theme of firm behaviour, performance and heterogeneity, and it aims to provoke meaningful inquiry on frontier issues in strategy research. The course includes both theoretical and empirical papers, and covers foundational issues as well as recent research within each subfield of study.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
By the end of this course, doctoral students should have (a) an acute understanding of the basics in the theoretical and methodological traditions within strategy research, (b) a clear awareness of the origin and lineage of thoughts, as well as contemporary movements in each stream of inquiry, and (c) the skills necessary to evaluate, critique, and contribute to the field of strategy research.

METHODS OF EVALUATION
Evaluation will be on the basis of the following weights:

- Class discussion and summaries 50%
- Term paper and presentation 50%

EXPECTATIONS
Each student is required to read all the main assigned readings and actively participate in class discussions for each session. ‘Additional readings’ are also important papers that either constitute key parts of the foundation or represent major recent advances in that research stream.

In addition, each student will be individually assigned a specific paper on which the student will lead the class discussion (approximately 15 minutes maximum). A critical summary (maximum 1 page; single
spaced) of the assigned paper is required, as well as a short research question that could extend the paper. Specifically, the summary should include:

(a) Summary of the research question or problem the paper addresses
(b) Strengths and limitations of the paper
(c) Contribution to the field, and any major obvious and non-obvious links to other papers discussed in the same or earlier session of this seminar
(d) One interesting and researchable question derived from this paper

These paper summaries will not be graded per se, but will contribute to the class participation grade. Each student will make copies of his/her summary for other students in class.

Further, for each session, one student will be assigned as the 'integrator' for that session, tying together all reading in that session and placing them in the context of the field. This student will not be required to turn in a paper summary for that session but will prepare an integration scheme for all the papers, to be presented at the end of the session (5 to 15 minutes maximum). The integration scheme should include how these papers are linked to each other, what are the main questions pursued in these papers, what answers these papers provide to these questions, and what future research are or can be pointed out by these papers.

Each student is also required to write a term paper. Ideally, this will be an empirical research paper. However, if data collection cannot be performed in time, then the paper should at least clearly identify the motivation and research question, effectively explain the logical underlying arguments, lay out the proposition(s), identify the type of data needed to test the propositions, and indicate where/how such data would be collected. In either case, particular attention should be placed on research design I want to know (a) what you are measuring and (b) how you plan to invoke variance to facilitate your analysis. Each student will present his / her paper idea to the class on session 12. Papers are due on December 30th at 5pm.

PLAGIARISM / ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).”

HEALTH AND WELLNESS
As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page http://www.music.uwo.ca, and our own Mcintosh Gallery http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca.
Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/module.html. This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.

DETAILED SESSION SCHEDULE

January 11: Session 1
Intro and concept
- Mahoney, J. T. and A. M. McGahan. 2007. The field of strategic management within the evolving science of strategic organization. Strategic Organization.

January 18: Session 2
Classic Industrial Organization
Additional readings:


January 25: Session 3
Resource Based View I


February 1: Session 4
Resource Based View II


Additional readings:

February 8: Session 5
Coasian view of the firm and its extensions: I


• Hart, Oliver, 1995. Firms, contracts, and financial structure. Chapters 1 and 2.

February 22: Session 6
Coasian view of the firm and its extensions: II


March 1: Session 7
Evolutionary Theory


Additional readings:


March 8: Session 8
Diversification


March 15: Session 9
Mergers and Acquisitions


March 29: Session 10  
Agency Theory  


Additional readings:


April 5: Session 11  
Agglomeration and Spillovers 


TBD: Session 12

Students Presentations