BUSINESS 9770A – Spring 2021

Business Strategy I

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Wednesday @ 8:00a
Location: Zoom

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:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class discussion and summaries</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper and presentation</td>
<td>50%</td>
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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 5-10 minutes maximum). A critical summary (maximum 1 page; single spaced) of the assigned paper is required. 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) *If room permits*, one interesting and researchable question derived from this paper

Each student will make copies of his/her summary for other students in class.

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. **Term Paper due April 23** by 12pm.

**ACADEMIC OFFENCES: PLAGIARISM AND 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](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](http://www.turnitin.com)).

**SUPPORT SERVICES: HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/](http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

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](http://www.music.uwo.ca), and our own McIntosh Gallery [http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca](http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca). Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca](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.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES
Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both SAS and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction. For more information, see http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
The Ivey community welcomes individuals of different ages, socio-economic backgrounds, non-discriminatory perspectives, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations, ability, and other visible and nonvisible differences. We consider our community, in-person and virtual, to be a place where all individuals, whatever their differences, are valued and will be treated with respect.
DETAILED SESSION SCHEDULE

January 13: Session 1
Intro and concept


January 20: Session 2
Classic Industrial Organization


Additional readings:


COURSE SYLLABUS


January 27: Session 3
Resource Based View I

February 3: Session 4
Resource Based View II

Additional readings:
February 10: Session 5
Coasian view of the firm and its extensions: I


February 17: Session 6
Coasian view of the firm and its extensions: II


February 24: Session 7
Evolutionary Theory


Additional readings:


March 3: Session 8
Diversification


March 10: Session 9
Mergers and Acquisitions


March 17: Session 10
Agency Theory


Additional readings:

March 24: Session 11  
Agglomeration and Spillovers


April 7: Session 12  
Students Presentations