

MBA 800 Strategic Management Fall 2020



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Zoom Class: Sign in during your section time ([Link](#))
Strategy Café: Wednesdays 2-3pm & Sundays 2-3pm ([Link](#))
Appointment: https://calendly.com/mahka_moeen_strategy/strategy-chat

Welcome to the Strategic Management class! The objective of this course is to introduce you to the role of the “strategic manager,” someone who is responsible for the overall and long-term performance of the firm. This course focuses on how a firm can both formulate and implement effective business-level strategies to successfully compete with the markets of interest and earn above average profit.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are:

- Provide you with an overview of key strategic management conceptual frameworks and enhance your ability to apply these tools to real strategic decisions facing managers
- Provide you with the opportunity to enhance individual and team analytical, communication, and decision-making skills in addressing strategic issues

Teaching Method

Our class consists of three elements:

- Video lectures introduce you to strategic management frameworks. These frameworks provide the starting point for analysis and problem-solving of real-world strategic challenges.
- Cases and current events discussion focus on applying strategy frameworks to real-world phenomena.
- The final team project focuses on developing skills needed for the complex role of a strategic manager.

Required Readings

The required cases are available for purchase at: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/770744>

Course Grade and Components

- **Completion of Virtual Modules (25% of grade)**

The class includes seven virtual modules, which are available on Canvas. Submitting online quizzes, responding to reflection questions, and participating in discussion boards are essential parts of your grade. I expect all students to not only watch video lectures, but also synthesize the material so that they can come to our Zoom classes ready to discuss the content. Each virtual module replaces one session of pre-COVID class, and thus, takes 75 minutes. Each week’s module will appear on Canvas on Mondays, and you will have until the next Sunday at midnight to complete the module. No late submissions are accepted.

- **Zoom Class Participation (20% of grade)**

Because this is not a traditional lecture-based course, rigorous discussions of current business events, cases, and strategy concepts are major components of the class. I expect all students to be well prepared for each class, having watched the required material and analyzed assigned cases. Students who make consistent, meaningful contributions to class discussions will receive better class participations grades. The quality of comments is evaluated based on the clarity and coherence of arguments, application of theoretical frameworks, and the ability to support claims with evidence from the material.

During Zoom classes, there are multiple avenues for you to participate: you can raise your (virtual) hand; you can post your thoughts in public or private chat box; you can participate in polls; you can engage in group activities in breakout rooms; and you may be cold (or warm) called. I understand that you may not be able to say something in every one of our seven Zoom classes, and will look at your overall participation.

Following the MBA program guidelines, students are expected to attend class sessions with their cameras on for the entirety of the class. You must have your name clearly displayed on screen. Please also keep your audio muted except when speaking, log in using a computer (not cellphone), and avoid multi-tasking. If possible, please try to find a workspace with minimal distractions and loud noises.

- **Case Submission (20% of grade)**

You must submit two case assignments. Out of the five cases in the course packet, you can pick the two cases that you regard more interesting or relevant. For students submitting a case assignment, there is a template with specific questions posted on Canvas. Please respond to the questions using the template, and stay within the available space. There will be grade deductions for assignments longer than one page, or fonts smaller than 11 point. There will be no credit for late or emailed submissions.

Regardless of whether you choose to submit a case assignment, you must be prepared to discuss all cases in class. There will be orienting questions posted on Canvas to help your preparation.

If you feel material has been improperly graded, you must turn in a typed summary of the questions in dispute and a justification of your answers. Your justification must include citations from the text or other reputable sources within 5 days after announcement of the grades.

- **Industry Report (10% of grade)**

The industry report assignment is due on Sunday November 8 at midnight. Detailed instructions are posted on Canvas. For completing this assignment, you will need to have familiarity with the strategic frameworks discussed in virtual module 1. Please plan for up to 2 hours for completing this assignment.

- **Strategic Challenge Team Project (25% of grade)**

This is your only team submission, based on pre-assigned MBA teams. The objective is to provide you with an opportunity to apply strategy frameworks discussed in class to a real firm. Treat this as a strategy consulting project. The deliverable is a 7-minute video. Your classmates will later watch your videos.

During the first week of class, I will assign a firm facing a strategic challenge to your team. Your team can start conducting some preliminary research about the firm at the time. As we progress through the semester, and as you learn different frameworks, your team can assess whether and how each framework applies to the assigned firm. By week 5, you will have learned most of the frameworks needed to complete the project. So, you must plan ahead for your team meetings for weeks 5 and 6 and be ready for a focused effort to finish the project at the time. In my appointment scheduler link, I have provided many meeting options for those two weeks, and encourage you to discuss your team progress with me.

The video submission should include the following components:

- A brief introduction of the firm
- Identification of the firm's industry and its major competitors
- Identification of 1-2 strategic challenges facing the firm
- An explanation of the strategic management framework(s) that led you to identification of the above strategic challenge + supporting evidence

The submission will be graded for: depth and soundness of the analysis, conciseness and clarity, use of strategic management frameworks, creativity and originality.

You are encouraged to use raw data available in UNC library, business press, and firm websites. However, you should not use prepared strategic analyses of the firm offered by consultancy or analytic news pieces.

Program / Class Policies

- **Attendance Policy**

Regular class attendance in MBA core courses is a student obligation, and a student is responsible for all the work, including tests and written work, of all class meetings. Students may need to miss class for severe health problems leading to the student's illness, for serious personal or family problems, or for religious observances required by the student's faith. Students should notify their instructor prior to any known absences, if possible. Career- and conference-related activity are not appropriate reasons to miss class. Students must work directly with the MBA Program Office and the faculty member(s) to arrange the make-up of missed content. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, a student must miss their regularly-scheduled section, the student is allowed to attend a section that meets at a different time. Section-switching is permitted on a limited basis.

- **Zoom Etiquette**

Students participating in class via Zoom should create a productive workspace at home with a good webcam, headphones, and minimal distractions and loud noises. Students may find a second monitor helpful during class, especially for in-class exercises and activities. Students are expected to attend all class sessions with their webcams on for the entirety of the class. Avoid multitasking during class. Plan ahead and ensure that your personal schedule aligns with your academic schedule – do not login to class via a cell phone but always login from a computer. If you have questions during class, please speak up.

- **Peer Assessment**

Good teamwork is essential if your team is to perform effectively. In order to ensure full participation of all team members in the process, students will have the opportunity to complete a peer assessment

form at the end of the semester. At instructor's discretion, your peers' assessments of your contributions to the team project may influence your class participation grade. In order to maintain your team member's privacy under such circumstances, I won't discuss components of your class participation grade with you.

- **University of North Carolina Honor Code**

Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The Honor Code prohibits plagiarism, falsification or misrepresentation of an academic assignment, unauthorized collaboration on academic work, and cheating on examinations or other academic assignments. If you have questions about your responsibility under the Honor Code, please consult with me. More information is available at: <https://studentconduct.unc.edu/>

- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The University of North Carolina facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. Please coordinate with the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. Please visit <http://accessibility.unc.edu>

- **Commitment to Inclusive and Supporting Environment**

UNC students have many different backgrounds and life experiences. I am committed to running a classroom where all students feel that they: are part of the class, can relate to the course material, belong among their classmates, are treated respectfully, and learn successfully. Please let me know if you need anything from me to help you succeed. If you ever want to talk in this regard, please reach out to me.

To create a classroom environment that supports belonging and respectful, critical inquiry through the free and respectful exchange of ideas, the following principles will guide our class and discussions:

- My goal is to design and teach a class that fosters talent in and perspective from all students.
- We can all differ on any number of perspectives, opinions, and conclusions.
- Constructive (and sometimes difficult) discussions can sharpen thinking, deepen understanding, and reveal insights, and so these discussions are expected.
- Treat every class member with responsibility and respect at all times.
- Assume positive intent by your classmates and myself. We may make mistakes. We are human.
- Also know that, even if you have positive intentions in what you say, you may negatively affect others.
- Be thoughtful to current events, past experiences, and where others may be coming from.
- I will do my best to understand every position in a discussion. If the discussion veers of course, I may have to pause. I will then address the topic/issue later, either in class or offline.
- I will also do my best to address concerns students have about our discussions, either in class or, if we don't have time, outside of class.

Class Schedule

Week	Session	Topic	Deliverables (times in EST)
1	Zoom class 1 11/2 and 11/3	Course Introduction What is Strategy?	
	Virtual module 1	Industry Analysis	Deadline: 11/8 before midnight
2	Zoom class 2 11/9 and 11/10	Industry Reports	Industry report deadline: 11/8 before midnight
	Virtual module 2	External Environment	Deadline: 11/15 before midnight
3	Zoom class 3 11/16 and 11/17	Case #1: Tesla	If you choose to submit Tesla as one of your case assignments, deadline: 11/15 before midnight
	Virtual module 3	Competitive Advantage	Deadline: 11/22 before midnight
4	Zoom class 4 11/23 and 11/24	Case #2: Trader Joe's	If you choose to submit Trader Joe's as one of your case assignments, deadline: 11/22 before midnight
	Virtual module 4	Sustaining Advantage	Deadline: 11/29 before midnight
5	Team project		Have you started working on your team project? Feel free to schedule a meeting w/ me during weeks 5-6 to discuss your team progress.
	Zoom class 5 11/30 and 12/1	Case #3: S'well	If you choose to submit S'well as one of your case assignments, deadline: 11/29 before midnight
	Virtual module 5	Entry Strategy	Deadline: 12/6 before midnight
6	Zoom class 6 12/7 and 12/8	Case #4: Voice wars	If you choose to submit Voice wars as one of your case assignments, deadline: 12/6 before 8 midnight
	Virtual module 6	Strategic Renewal	Deadline: 12/13 before midnight
7	Zoom class 7 12/14 and 12/15	Case #5: Netflix	If you choose to submit Netflix as one of your case assignments, deadline: 12/13 before midnight
	Team project		Team project deadline: 12/14 before 8 am
	Virtual module 7	Project Feedback	Deadline: 12/20 before midnight