



This course is in support of a degree program at the UHD College of Business that has earned professional accreditation by AACSB International. AACSB International is an association of more than 1,100 business educational institutions, and other organizations in 70 countries that are dedicated to the advancement of management education worldwide. Only 568 business programs, or less than 5% worldwide, have earned this distinguished hallmark of excellence in management education.

1. COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE

MGT 4302 Business Strategy (Synchronous Online)

August 24th - December 16th, Friday, 1:30 PM – 4:15 PM.

<https://uhd.zoom.us/j/94114859982> with passcode: 495363

2. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

The capstone course in business emphasizing planning and decision making, formulating strategies, and implementing action plans. Comprehensive cases provide the opportunity to study proper interrelationships among production, operations, finance, accounting, marketing, and the many other functions involved in managing a business enterprise.

3. PREREQUISITES

Prerequisite(s) ARE NOT optional; prerequisites ARE requirements, courses that must be completed PRIOR to taking this course. The prerequisite(s) for this course are described in the UHD catalog course description as: “BA 3300, completion of all required general education and business core courses, and designation as a declared business major.” It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that he/she meets the prerequisites prior to enrollment in this course. If the student enrolls and does not meet the prerequisites he/she may be administratively withdrawn from the course at any time. The administrative withdrawal will result in NO REFUND of tuition and fees because it appears that the student knowingly enrolled in the course in violation of the Catalog requirements. Any variance in prerequisite requirements or this policy must be obtained in writing from the Department Chair prior to enrollment in this course.

4. INSTRUCTOR

Yajing Li, a Ph.D. candidate in Strategic Management at Rice University.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact me through liy@uhd.edu. Announcements and class communication will occur through Blackboard Learn and Gator Mail, so it is imperative that you frequently check both modes of interaction.

6. OFFICE LOCATION AND OFFICE HOURS

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM Friday through Zoom (<https://uhd.zoom.us/j/94114859982> with passcode: 495363), by email appointment.

7. COURSE MATERIALS

- *Essentials of Strategic Management: The Quest for Competitive Advantage* 7th by Gamble, Peteraf, and Thompson, Jr.
It is *recommended* that you have this book while I will provide slides to assist your learning during the class. If you want to buy, here is the link for more information:
<https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/1260261549.html#buying-options> (\$130, \$80 for ebook)
- Case study pack from Harvard Business School. It is *required* for this course. The cost is \$12.75 in total. This contains the cases we will be doing for this course. The case study pack can be purchased in this link: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/743727>
- A webcam and a microphone for Zoom meetings. The zoom link for *pre-registration* is posted on Blackboard.

Supplementary Material

To aid in the student's success, related course materials (PowerPoint presentations and case discussions) will be posted on Blackboard for your review. Please take advantage of the provided support material.

8. PARTICIPATION

This is not a traditional lecture-based course. Conceptual material will be illustrated and applied to the “real world” through rigorous class discussions and exercises. It is also an online course. By its very nature, an online course requires a considerable amount of student involvement and self-study, as the direct interaction with the professor is much less than that in a face-to-face, classroom setting. While online meetings with the professor can be scheduled, much of the responsibility for day-to-day study belongs solely to the student.

For some classes, you will be required to read cases. “What types of problems or opportunities do these readings help address?” and “How could I apply these insights to this case or my work situations?” Be prepared to discuss these questions when you come to class. Most of your learning will occur in preparation for and participating in the case discussions.

Some of the specific things that will have an impact on effective class participation include:

- Are you a good listener?
- Are your contributions relevant to the discussion? Do your comments relate to the comments of others and to the themes that the class is exploring together?
- Do your comments add to our understanding of the situation? Are you incisive? Do you cut to the core of the problem?
- Are you willing to challenge the ideas that are being expressed? Can you do so in a manner that is respectful and not contentious?
- Are you willing to test new ideas, or are all comments “safe”? (Repetition of case facts without analysis or conclusions or repeating comments already made.)
- Do you integrate material from past classes or the readings where appropriate? Do your comments reflect cumulative learning over the course and the business school curriculum or do you merely consider each case in isolation?

You will be graded based on your participation. An example of a high score is “insightful thoughts and highly active participation in class discussions via synchronous sessions”. An example of a low score is “lack of participation for class discussions via synchronous sessions”.

9. ASSIGNMENTS

This is a fast-paced course. Students should log on to Blackboard and check GatorMail, regularly (optimally every day), to remain current with all announcements, course work, and assignments.

Class Participation 20%

See details as illustrated in Section 8.

Pop Quizzes 20%

Some classes will start with a pop quiz on the content of previous lectures. The pop quiz is composed of blank-filling questions, true or false questions, or multiple-choice questions. Each pop quiz has 5 questions and I would balance the 4 pop quizzes across weeks. In-class quizzes will cover the topics discussed in the weeks before. The quizzes will be designed to test your knowledge of the material covered in class, as well as cases discussed in class.

Two-page current event write-up 20%

The two-page assignment is about finding TWO articles on certain topics (full list of topics is at below) from company websites, the Wall Street Journal, The Economist, the New York Times, or any other credible media. One action is a good action taken by a firm and one example is a bad action taken by a firm. Good or bad actions refer to implications for stakeholders such as shareholders, customers, employees, or society, etc. Actions should happen in 2000-2020. The firm can be public or private and the firm can be US or foreign. The firm cannot be the same as your group project company. The action cannot be discussed in the classes already (e.g. examples that instructor used for teaching). Two actions can be about the same or different topics, and two examples can be from the same or different firms. Topics can be: internal analysis (firm capabilities), cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy, strategy process, corporate governance (e.g. CEO, board), entrepreneurship, innovation, outsourcing, diversification, alliance, merger or acquisition, international strategy, corporate social responsibility. In each action, please describe the example in the first paragraph and then give YOUR own analysis using the content of lectures (not repeating the analysis from the article). (Example file “Action-100000.doc” is in blackboard/course content). Each action is a one-page limit with 12 points of the text and one-inch margins. One-page limit for each article/action and the total is two-page limit for two articles/actions.

- Grades:
 - (1) correctly name your files (2 points): “Action-ID#.doc”, e.g. “Action-100000.doc”. Either pdf or doc is ok.
 - (2) fill in the excel (2 points): to ensure no duplications
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1zIdx6EXLf2D0GpKmh6KFdvTXkhe0nPsMCpYb67RsOQ/edit?usp=sharing>
 - (3) a clear illustration of two firm actions (6 points)
 - (4) a clear analysis of the good action (5 points)
 - (5) a clear analysis of the bad action (5 points)
- Submission (due 5 pm on 11/12): <https://rice.app.box.com/f/5c14635c896c4498b862e331a486348d>

Final Exam 20%

At the end of the semester, you will be tested on your knowledge and understanding of the content covered in-class lectures and discussions. The exam will include both multiple-choice and essay-type questions. Please bring printed cases. The final exam will use respondus monitor, which requires a PC

and webcam. If you are required to use Respondus Lockdown Browser for exams, we recommend that you uninstall any previously installed version and reinstall the latest version from the link: <http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/information.pl?ID=354814027>. You may also check <https://web.respondus.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RLDB-Quick-Start-Guide-Bb-Student.pdf>

Final Group Presentation 20%

The final project is a team-based assignment that includes your team's assessment of a company's current situation and your strategic advice for its future. Using all the concepts we learned in class, you are expected to isolate a strategic or competitive problem facing a real organization, gather information about this problem, and provide guidance for future strategies. Student groups have latitude in choosing which strategic problems and which organizations they would like to study, but I recommend diversifying the choices across groups. Whatever problems and organizations are chosen, student groups are strongly encouraged to go beyond published sources of data, to directly interview managers, employees, customers, and other individuals involved in the situation (where feasible).

Each of the final project teams will make a presentation. The presentations are designed to give you experience in presenting to your potential clients. Your goals for the presentation will be: 1) to provide a comprehensive summary of the organization's situation; 2) identify problems facing the organization; and 3) provide your suggestions to the decision-maker on how to address the problems in order to sustain or achieve a competitive advantage. The number of team members and the length of the presentation will be decided after we finalize the student list. A guideline for the final presentation will be provided in class.

Peer Evaluations: Additionally, to ensure equal team participation, overall peer evaluations have to be submitted at the **end of the semester**. This may deduct points from your final score if you do not contribute enough.

BBA B-CAT Exam (bonus)

The BBA B-CAT is administered as part of MGT 4302 and will be available via Blackboard. These are global assessment tests and important for the Marilyn Davies College of Business's assurance of learning processes. You will be assigned tests to assess your knowledge of the BBA core as well as your knowledge of your major(s). The score you receive will be treated as extra credit that will be added to your final course grade. Late exams will not be accepted. No notes, texts, or course materials are permitted during B-Cat exams.

The maximum bonus is 5% of your course grade. The bonus will be determined by multiplying the grade for BBA BCAT by 5%. For example: if your BBA BCAT score is 80, you would earn a course grade bonus of 4 percentage points ($80 \times 5\% = 4$ percentage point bonus). So, if you had an 86% average for the course, this bonus would give them $86\% + 4\% = 90\%$ overall.

More details will come from Ms. Patty Barnes (barnespa@uhd.edu) or Dr. Nathan Neale (nealen@uhd.edu).

10. GRADING

Participation	20%
4 pop quizzes @ 5% each	20%
Two-page current event write-up	20%

Individual Final Exam	20%
Final Group Presentation	20%
BBA B-CAT Exam (bonus)	5%

Your grade will be determined using the following scale:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A	100-90%
B	89.9-80%
C	79.9-70%
D	69.9-60%
F	<60%

These points are set and will be strictly adhered to when determining final grades. Understand that changing the criteria for one student means changing the grading criteria for all students. It is imperative that you turn in all projects in a timely manner just as you would in a job. All questions regarding grades should be addressed as they arise; do not wait until the end of the course to consult with the professor regarding any grading issues.

11. COURSE & EXAM SCHEDULE

The following is a **tentative** schedule for the course. **I reserve the right to change assignment dates and the content that will be covered. I also reserve the right to correct any errors that may occur in this syllabus.**

Week	Topic	Assignment
9/4	What is strategy	Read Cola Wars case for next week
9/11	Industry analysis	
9/18	Cost leadership strategy	Group presentation of Apple case (due 5 pm on 9/24)
9/25	Differentiation strategy	Prepare corporate governance exercise for next week
10/2	Corporate governance	
10/9	Entrepreneurship & Innovation	
10/16	Outsourcing & Diversification	
10/23	Alliance & Acquisition	Group presentation of Starbucks case (due 5 pm on 10/29)
10/30	International strategy	
11/6	Final review	Two-page current event write-up (due 5 pm on 11/12)
11/13	Final presentation	
11/20	Final presentation	Final presentation slides (due 5 pm on 11/25)
11/27	Thanksgiving holidays (no class)	
12/4	Reading days (no class)	
12/11	Final exam	

12.ADA REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Houston-Downtown complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA

Note: This syllabus is for general guidance only. I reserve the right to make any changes necessary as circumstances dictate. It is the student's responsibility to ensure he/she is aware of any changes the student may have missed due to absences or inattention.

guidelines, UHD strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a documented disability requiring academic adjustments/auxiliary aids, please contact the Office of Disability Services, One Main St., Suite 409-South, Houston, TX 77002. (Office) 713-226-5227 (Website) www.uhd.edu/disability/ (Email) disabilityservices@uhd.edu

13. DISASTER PLANNING

In the event that the university is officially closed due to natural or manmade disasters, activities in the course will be suspended until the university officially reopens or determines to move all university courses online. All decisions will be communicated through the same channels that the university uses to communicate with students during disasters. Adjustments to the syllabus may be made by the professor, as necessary.

14. LATE WORK POLICY

Late submissions will not be accepted; all assignments are due by the specified dates, as listed on the Detailed Class Calendar (Section 11).

15. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The predominant learning outcomes that are assessed in this course are students' communication proficiency, ability to apply decision-making models, and competence in identifying and applying basic business concepts (see Appendix for related matrix).

16. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (PS 03.A.19 and page 24 UHD Student Handbook)

The UHD academic honesty policy states that students will, "be honest in all academic activities and must not tolerate dishonesty." Students are responsible for doing their own work and avoiding all forms of academic dishonesty. The most common academic honesty violations are cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: Submitting material that is not one's own, Using information or devices that are not allowed by the faculty member, Obtaining and/or using unauthorized material, Fabricating information, Violating procedures prescribed to protect the integrity of a test or other evaluation exercise, Collaborating with others on assignments without the faculty member's consent, Cooperating with or helping another student to cheat, Having another person take an examination in the student's place, Altering exam answers and requesting that the exam be re-graded, and Communicating with any person, other than the faculty member or exam proctor, during an exam. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: Directly quoting the words of others without using quotation marks or indented format to identify them, Using sources of information (published or unpublished) without identifying them, and Paraphrasing materials or ideas of others without identifying the sources. Please visit this website <http://www.uhd.edu/library/guides/plagiarism.html> for further information on plagiarism.

17. CLASS MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Your failure to participate in class (face to face or hybrid), engage course material (online only), or make contact with faculty to adequately explain your absence by the 10th class day of the semester will result in your being administratively dropped from this course. Being dropped from this course may affect your enrollment status and/or your financial aid eligibility.

Since information technology introduces a layer of anonymity, it is important to remember that all online communication should adhere to the traditional guidelines of classroom civility. Differences of opinion make for interesting discourse; however, all correspondence should demonstrate a respectful, affable tone.

Please complete exams using a computer with a reliable Internet connection, as there will be no allowance for points lost because of technical difficulties or user error. Additionally, please do not wait until the last minute to attempt exams or to turn in assignments, as any work submitted after the deadline will not be graded.

Consult <https://www.uhd.edu/computing/services-training/blackboard/Pages/blackboardtestbestpractices-student.aspx> for some suggestions regarding Blackboard usage.

18.UHD Student Support Services

UHD has developed many resources to support your learning. We have developed a website that will offer a “one stop shop” for access to many of the resources you might need this semester to support your educational goals. Please access this website to get started: <https://tinyurl.com/SSR2020>. If you do not find the resource you need on this website, please contact your instructor, who will make every effort to connect you with the help you need.

19.University Requirements: Disruptions, COVID Reporting, and Safety

To address issues related to disruption of university functions, COVID reporting, and safety protocols, as well as mandatory engagement with classes by the 10th class day, UHD has prepared a general set of requirements that can be found [HERE](#).

20.University Policy Jurisdiction

All students are subject to the university-wide policies set forth in the UHD Catalog, the Student Handbook, and the UHD website, available at <https://www.uhd.edu/policies/Pages/policies-index.aspx>

APPENDIX

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcome	Course Activities to Facilitate Learning Outcomes
The student will communicate in an organized and professional manner.	This learning outcome is assessed through: 1- Case Study assignment 2- Discussion 3- Additional exercises
The student will apply decision-making models.	This learning outcome is assessed through: 1- Exams 2- Case Study assignment 3- Additional exercises
The student will identify and apply basic business concepts.	This learning outcome is assessed through: 1- Exams 2- Case Study assignment 3- Additional exercises

Curriculum Management and Assurance of Learning

All students must complete a series of assessment tests prior to graduation. The tests measure your achievement of the intended instructional outcomes of the Business Core and your selected field of study. This process ensures our learning material is relevant and rigorous – and that your degree maintains or increases in value in the marketplace. The results are used annually by your faculty to adjust ongoing teaching practices and improve student learning in the courses, as well as develop extracurricular activities when necessary. Course grades are not used because they provide a high-level view of student performance, but do not identify specific changes to instruction. Please take these tests as seriously as a job interview or job performance evaluation because they represent the knowledge, skills, and attitudes employers are expecting of you after graduation. Do your best on the tests without any outside assistance. You are prepared for these tests by virtue of completing all the required courses within the areas you have selected.