**Course Syllabus**

**Dr. Hammad Akbar**

**MGT 507 – Strategic Management  
Fall 2025**

**Lecture Time and Location:**

**MGT 507**: Monday 1700 hours – 1950 hours

Location: BUA-S Room A1007

**Contact Information:**

**Email**: [hammad.akbar@ku.edu.kw](mailto:hammad.akbar@ku.edu.kw) (This is also my *MS Teams* Account ID)

**Office Hours**: Mondays 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM or by appointment

**Course Website**: See Teams

**Course Description:**

This course seeks answers to the question of why some firms perform better than others. Success in business requires the firm to develop a strategy that creates a sustainable competitive advantage. This course presents a framework for analyzing and thinking about how a firm can do this. The essence of the framework is that a firm needs to develop and manage its internal resources and capabilities in relation to its external environment.

The course will explore the underlying principles of strategy formulation, including the analysis of industries and competition, and the appraisal of firms’ resources and capabilities, and will consider their application in different business contexts, covering a diverse set of companies and industries. The course is concerned not just with analysis but also with decisions. You will be asked to take the role of a senior executive in the companies that we are discussing, or an adviser to that executive. As such, this course will help you integrate your knowledge of the functional areas of business into a holistic view of the firm. Strategy can be uncomfortable because the questions and answers are often ambiguous and the solutions unclear. However, there are frequently better alternatives that can be reached through careful understanding of the competitive environment.

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLO):**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the principal concepts, frameworks, and techniques of strategic management.
2. Apply the concepts, frameworks, and techniques of strategic management in order to:
   * understand the reasons for good or bad performance by an enterprise,
   * generate strategy options for an enterprise,
   * assess available options under conditions of imperfect knowledge,
   * select the most appropriate strategy,
   * recommend the best means of implementing the chosen strategy.
3. Integrate the knowledge gained in previous and parallel courses.
4. Develop their capacity as a general manager in terms of:
   * an appreciation of the work of the general manager,
   * the ability to view business problems from a general management perspective,
   * the ability to develop original and innovatory approaches to strategic problems,
   * the ability to develop business judgment.
5. Communicate students’ analyses of strategic case studies in an oral format.

By the end of this course, you should be able to perform both industry-level and firm-level analyses. At the industry level, you will be able to give a brief (recent) historical overview of an industry as well as undertake an industry-level and intra-industry analysis of the sources of sustainable competitive advantage. In addition, based upon your analysis, you should be able to give some idea of what you think the future holds for the industry. What opportunities and threats exist for the industry over the horizon?

**CLO Mapping to CBA Skill-Based Competency Goals**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Learning Outcomes** | **Competency (Goals)** | | | | | |
| *Analytical (LG5)* | *Communication (LG4)* | *Information Technology (LG3)* | *Decision-Making Skills (LG2)* | *Business Ethics (LG1)* | *General Business Knowledge* |
| 1 |  |  |  | A |  | A |
| 2 | A |  |  | A |  | A |
| 3 | A |  |  | R |  | R |
| 4 | A |  |  | A |  | A |
| 5 |  | A |  |  |  | A |

**Type of Emphases:**

* **(I)ntroduce:** Students will be introduced to the skill and their grasp of it assessed in the course.
* **(A)pply:** The course will not cover the skill. Students should have a high-level grasp of the skill and are required to apply it in the course.
* **(R)einforce:** Students should have an introductory-level grasp of the skill and the course will improve their mastery to a higher level.

**My Expectations of You**

The focus of the course will be **applying concepts and ideas to real-world examples**, primarily through our case discussions. For the class to work well, and for you to benefit from it, preparation for each class meeting is essential. All students are expected to arrive at class having read the assigned chapter or case, and prepared to offer and defend their recommendations. Since our class discussion forms the focus of the course, it is important that I get to know who you are as soon as possible. **Please display your name card** and try to sit in the same seat every session.

An important feature of MGT 507 is that it is an integrative class—I shall be expecting you to draw on the knowledge you have gained from your previous classes, and from your general knowledge of business affairs. But MGT 507 is not just about reading and analysis, it is also about ideas. Successful managers or entrepreneurs are innovators—they seek to identify and exploit new opportunities for profit. In making recommendations I shall be expecting you to generate novel, interesting, and commercially attractive ideas.

**Required Material:**

Required reading materials will be provided through the course website.

**Required Material:**

**Case Material**: Required reading materials will be provided through the course website or distributed in the class.

**Textbook:** David, F. R., David, F. R., and David M. E. (2023). Strategic Management: A Competitive Advantage, Concept and Cases, 18th edition.

Published by Pearson

**Grading:**

The scores in this course will be the weighted average of the following items:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Weight** | **Description** |
| 10% | Attendance (two late attendances make one absence) |
| 20% | Industry Analysis and Presentation |
| 20% | Class Participation (class discussion and group exercises/discussions) |
| 10% | Group Report and Presentation |
| 40% | Final Exam |
| 100% | TOTAL |

**Grade Distribution:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PERCENT** | **GRADE** |
| 95.00 – 100.00 % | A |
| 90.00 – 94.99 % | A- |
| 87.00 – 89.99 % | B+ |
| 83.00 – 86.99 % | B |
| 80.00 – 82.99 % | B- |
| 77.00 – 79.99 % | C+ |
| 73.00 – 76.99 % | C |
| 70.00 – 72.99 % | C- |
| 65.00 – 69.99 % | D+ |
| 60.00 – 64.99 % | D |
| ≤ 59.99 % | F |

**Course Requirements and Policies:**

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.” –Woody Allen

**Collective learning and class attendance** will be determined based on roll calls conducted in class. In case method pedagogy, class attendance is critical to individual and collective learning. ***My expectation is that every student arrives on time and attends every class***. Absenteeism and lateness to class count heavily against the participation grade since it adversely impacts the learning experience of the section as a whole. Anyone who cannot attend class should email me in advance if at all possible. **You are allowed ONLY ONE free absence for case discussion or guest speaker classes. If the case discussion spans two class sessions, missing both sessions counts as if you missed two case classes. If you miss more than TWO case discussion or guest speaker classes, you will receive ZERO points for participation.**

Every student in this course must abide by the Kuwait University Policy on Attendance (published in the Student Guide, Chapter 3, Section 13). A copy of the student guide can be accessed online on:

http://www.kuniv.edu/cs/groups/ku/documents/ku\_content/kuw055940.pdf

**Class discussion:** Class discussion will be assessed on the basis of your **contributions to class discussion** and listening. Of course, the underlying condition for class participation is attendance. I expect you to attend all sessions. Prior to class, you should thoroughly read and prepare the case for that day, including answering the study questions. Please ensure that you have used the frameworks, tools, and ideas from the readings in your analysis as appropriate. In grading class participation, I look at the **quality of contribution more than the quantity of contribution**. With regards to quality, some of the criteria I shall apply include:

* Are the points made relevant to the discussion?
* Do they go beyond a mere recitation of case facts, and are implications clearly drawn?
* Is there evidence of analysis rather than expressions of opinions?
* Are the comments linked to those of others?
* Did the contribution further the class understanding of the issues?
* Is the participant a good listener?
* Do comments raise interesting questions?
* In discussion, do the comments fit with the class context?
* Does the analysis make use of models and techniques from the readings or lectures?
* Are comments made in a respectful, professional, and constructive manner?

Students should not expect to receive full points for participation. Simply being present does not warrant full credit, nor does frequent participation that does not advance the learning of the class. I will use “**cold calling**” occasionally so you need to be prepared for each class. Cell phones must be turned off or set to the “silent” mode during classes. Laptops may not be used during case discussion segments and activities.

**Exams:** Exams will be based on individual and group presentations, that will aim to test your knowledge of the course material to that point in the course, including lectures, discussions, and readings.

***Note:*** *The instructor reserves the right to change assignments and cases as necessary to facilitate an improved learning experience.*

**Course Website**

MGT 507 uses a course website to facilitate the administration of the course, in addition to MS Teams. You will be responsible for checking the course site regularly for class work and announcements. Please become familiar with the website (tbc). I recommend creating a shortcut (link or favorite) in your browser that will take you to the course login page. At the course website, you can

* Check for announcements,
* Download slides and files related to MGT 507, and
* Review the grades and monitor your progress.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:** Every student in this course must abide by the Kuwait University Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism (published in the Student Guide, Chapter 3, Section 2). A copy of the student guide can be accessed online on:

http://www.kuniv.edu/cs/groups/ku/documents/ku\_content/kuw055940.pdf

Please carefully note all sources and assistance when you turn in your work. Under no circumstances should you take credit for work that is not yours. You should neither receive nor give any unauthorized assistance on any deliverable. If you have any questions about what constitutes “unauthorized assistance” please email me before the deliverable is submitted.

**Writing Style:** Students must refer to MLA writing style for their assignments and report writing. Refer to the English Language Center for help.

**Office Hours**

Office hours are stated at the beginning of this document. If you have a time conflict, please contact me to schedule an appointment for another time. You may contact me anytime via email. In general, this syllabus is your first source of information on questions pertaining to the class. I will not answer a question the answer for which is in the syllabus. **When sending me an email, always include the class number and your first and last name in the email title**.

**Course Outline:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Topics** |
| Introduction | What is strategy? • Strategic positioning • Strategic coherence • Goals, values, and performance • Measuring firm performance |
| Competitive Advantage | Sustainable competitive advantage • Sources of competitive advantage • Cost advantage • Differentiation advantage |
| Industry Analysis | Analysis of industry and competition • Structure-Conduct-Performance framework • Porter’s Five Forced model • Industry profitability • Industry structures |
| Resources and Capabilities | Analyzing resources and capabilities • The resource-based view • Resources and competitive advantage • Barriers to imitation |
| Corporate Governance | The agency theory • Corporate governance • Information and incentives • Adverse selection |
| Entrepreneurial and New Venture Strategy | The Schumpeterian view • Idea generation • Business models • Blue Ocean strategy • Competition |
| Technology-based Industries and the Management of Innovation | Technology development • Legal protection of innovation • Strategic management of technology • Technology standards and the network externalities |
| Vertical Integration and the Scope of the Firm | Transaction cost economics • Make vs. buy decision • The scope of the firm’s activities • Value chain and vertical integration |
| Diversification Strategy and External Growth Strategies | Corporate growth • Diversification strategies • Managing the multi-business firm • Mergers and acquisitions |

**Important Dates**

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event** |
| tbc | Last day of classes |
| tbc | Final Exam (Comprehensive) |