



**Kuwait University**  
**College of Business Administration**  
**Management and Marketing Department**

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**Course Syllabus**

**Dr. Abdullatif Alrashdan**  
**MGT 450 – Strategic Management**  
**Spring 2024-2025**

**Lecture Time and Location:**

**MGT 450 / 03** : Sun Tue Thu      12:00 PM – 12:50 PM      Room D1 - 1016

**Contact Information:**

**Email** : [abdullatif.alrashdan@ku.edu.kw](mailto:abdullatif.alrashdan@ku.edu.kw) (This is also my *MS Teams* Account ID)  
**Office Hours** : Mon & Thu 04:00 PM – 04:55 PM or by *email appointment*  
**Office Location** : Management and Marketing Department – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor – Office No. A1-1009  
**Course Website** : [www.aalrashdan.com/str](http://www.aalrashdan.com/str)

**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 Objectives (CLOs):**

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

1. Acquire familiarity with the principal concepts, frameworks, and techniques of strategic management.
2. Gain expertise in applying these concepts, frameworks, and techniques 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 his/her capacity as a general manager in terms of:



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- 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. Apply and improve his/her skills of oral and written communication.

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<sup>1</sup>**

CLO	Competency Goal			
	Analytical	Communication	Information Technology	Business Ethics
1	A			
2	R			
3	A			
4	R			
5		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. I intend to keep lecturing to a bare minimum. 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 and 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.

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<sup>1</sup> CBA Competency Goals can be found at the end of this document.



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An important feature of MGT 450 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. To be specific, in analyzing the company cases, I shall be expecting you to:

- Undertake analysis of the firm’s financial statements in order to assess its performance and financial status.
- Analyze the main features of its industry and market environment (drawing on the tools and techniques of marketing and microeconomics).
- Understand basic features of its production system and production technology and their implications for other functions of the firm.

But MGT 450 is not just about reading and analysis, it is also about ideas. Successful 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:**

**Textbook** : Contemporary Strategy Analysis: Text and Cases by Robert Grant. Eighth Edition (2013). John Wiley & Sons. ISBN#: 978-1119941897

**Additional Material** : Required reading materials will be provided through the course website.

**Grading:**

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

Weight	Description
10%	Class Participation (Collective learning, class discussion, class attendance, and lateness)
25%	Exam 1
25%	Exam 2
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



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**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 throughout the semester count 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. In case we have a **collective learning activity (i.e., Case discussion or a guest speaker), your attendance and lateness will count heavily for your participation grade.** Your participation during any case discussions will contribute to your participation grade.

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](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 both the quantity and quality 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 in 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:** We will have THREE examinations, two midterms and a final exam, which will cover the course material to that point in the course, including lectures, discussions, and readings. Details about exam



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contents, time, and location will be discussed in the class. Missed examinations may not be made up without prior permissions, no exceptions.

**Quizzes:** There will be unannounced quizzes (i.e. pop-quizzes) at the beginning of classes in which we discuss case studies. The quiz will cover the main ideas of the case to ensure that each student has read the case study carefully and ready for class discussion. Further details will be discussed in class.

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

### **Course Website**

MGT 450 uses a course website to facilitate the administration of the course. You will be responsible for checking the course site regularly for class work and announcements. Please become familiar with the website (<http://www.aalrashdan.com>). 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 450, 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](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 Mondays and Thursdays from 4:00 PM until 4:55 PM. If you have a time conflict, please contact me to schedule an appointment for another time. You may contact me any time via email. It is best not to contact me via telephone, as I often work in areas other than my office. 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. For example, “450 Fulan Alfulani”.



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### Case Analysis Workshop

Analyzing business case studies can be challenging, especially if you have no prior experience working with cases. Sometime early on the semester, I will hold a case analysis workshop to help you prepare your case and prepare for the in-class case discussions. The date, time, and venue for the workshop will be announced in class during the first week of the semester.

### Course Outline:

- What is Strategy?
- Analysis of Industry and Competition
- Analyzing Resources and Capabilities
- Analyzing Cost and Differentiation Advantage
- The Sources and Dimensions of Competitive Advantage
- Corporate Governance
- Interorganizational relationships and Strategic Alliances
- Vertical Integration and the Scope of the Firm
- Diversification Strategy and External Growth Strategies
- Entrepreneurial and New Venture Strategy

### Important Dates

Date	Event
March 15, 2025	Last day to drop classes
May 15, 2025	Last day of classes
May 20, 2025, 08:00 AM to 10:00 AM	Final Exam (Comprehensive)



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### **CBA Competency Goals**

**LG1. Analytical Competency:** A CBA graduate will be able to use analytical skills to solve business problems and make a well-supported business decision.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

- 1.1. Use appropriate analytical techniques to solve a given business problem.
- 1.2. Critically evaluate multiple solutions to a business problem.
- 1.3. Make well-supported business decisions.

**LG2. Communication Competency:** A CBA graduate will be able to communicate effectively in a wide variety of business settings.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

- 2.1. Deliver clear, concise, and audience-centered presentations.
- 2.2. Write clear, concise, and audience-centered business documents.

**LG3. Information Technology Competency:** A CBA graduate will be able to utilize Information Technology for the completion of business tasks.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

- 3.1. Use data-processing tools to analyze or solve business problems.

**LG4. Ethical Competency:** A CBA graduate will be able to recognize ethical issues present in business environment, analyze the tradeoffs between different ethical perspectives, and make a well-supported ethical decision.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

- 4.1. Identify the ethical dimensions of a business decision.
- 4.2. Recognize and analyze the tradeoffs created by application of competing ethical perspectives.
- 4.3. Formulate and defend a well-supported recommendation for the resolution of an ethical issue.

**LG5. General Business Knowledge:** A CBA graduate will be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the main business disciplines' concepts and theories.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

- 5.1. Acquire a fundamental understanding of knowledge from the main business disciplines (e.g. finance, accounting, marketing, and management information systems, among others).