Strategic Management
Business Administration and Management
MBA Session 2015-2016, Module 10
GSEM University of Geneva

SYLLABUS

Faculty: Prof. Dr. Sebastian Raisch, University of Geneva
Email: Sebastian.Raisch@unige.ch
Phone: +41 22 379 8801

Course Overview:

This course deals with the craft of strategy – that is, how to analyze a company’s external environment and internal capabilities, how to select the right strategy at different levels of the organization, and how to execute the chosen strategy. We will explore conceptual frameworks and models developed by leading strategy scholars to analyze competitive situations and strategic options. Several real-life company cases and exercises are used to acquire practical experience in dealing with strategic issues. We start from the analysis of the external competitive environment and assess how a firm can select the best position within this environment. We then move to the analysis of internal firm resources and capabilities, and also look at the firm’s value chain that underpins corporate success. Next, we turn our attention to strategy making both at the business-unit and corporate levels. We analyze current business portfolios and discuss future corporate growth. The course concludes with the challenges of strategy execution with a particular focus on leadership challenges.

We will address the following main topics:

- **Strategic Analysis**: How to analyze industries and their attractiveness for conducting business? How to analyze firms and their competitive advantage?
- **Competitive Strategy**: What are the alternative strategies to successfully compete with rivals? How can firms develop strategies that help avoid the competition?
- **Corporate Strategy**: How to analyze the firm’s current portfolio of businesses? How can firms grow successfully and develop their portfolio of businesses?
- **Strategy Execution**: How to ensure successful implementation of firm strategies? What are the key leadership challenges in executing strategies?

As an outcome of this course, participants are expected to acquire knowledge and skills that will help them manage effectively in a business environment. Since virtually all organizations deal with strategic management in one form or another, this course is intended for students interested in pursuing general management positions in almost any type of organization.
**Course Schedule:**

The lessons draw on the case studies and readings indicated below. **Prior reading of all mandatory material (especially the cases) is indispensable for following this course.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fri 13 May 2016</th>
<th>Introduction / Competitive Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:15 – 16:00</td>
<td>Defining Strategy: An Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15 – 18:00</td>
<td>Analyzing Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00 – 18:30</td>
<td><em>Dinner Break</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:30 – 19:30</td>
<td>Analyzing Firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:45 – 20:45</td>
<td>Competing with Rivals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sat 14 May 2016</th>
<th>Competitive Strategy / Corporate Strategy I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:15 – 09:30</td>
<td>Competing with Rivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:30</td>
<td>Managing the Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 13:00</td>
<td>Managing the Portfolio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fri 27 May 2016</th>
<th>Corporate Strategy II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:15 – 16:00</td>
<td>Growing the Firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15 – 18:00</td>
<td>Growing the Firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00 – 18:30</td>
<td><em>Dinner Break</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:30 – 19:30</td>
<td>Meet the Growth Champions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:30 – 20:45</td>
<td>Meet the Growth Champions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sat 28 May 2016</th>
<th>Corporate Strategy II / Strategy Execution / Course Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:15 – 09:45</td>
<td>Growing the Firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 11:45</td>
<td>Providing Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 13:00</td>
<td>Summary &amp; Exam Info</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Readings:

Some readings (*) are mandatory material to be studied prior to the course, while the lecture of other texts is voluntary and only meant to support the students' understanding of the course materials (all cases & texts provided on CHAMILO):

13 May 2016

- *The Personal Computer Industry in 2003* (Case Summary, 2013)*
- *Dell Computer in 2003* (Case Summary, 2013)*
- *Apple Inc. in 2012* (Case Summary, 2013)*

14 May 2016

- *Fact File P&G*

27 May 2016

- *Koeppen, B. & Raisch, S. 2015, “Phoenix Rising: Kempinski’s Rebirth as a Luxury Hospitality Group,” University of Geneva Case Study*

28 May 2016


Further non-mandatory (but potentially helpful) readings:


Additional readings as well as the solutions to the group work and case discussion session will be made available to participants during / after the course.

Course Evaluation:

The final grade will be based on an individual take-home assignment. The take-home exam will involve the application of class concepts and constructs to a case we have not previously discussed. The case will be made available in class. Together with the case, participants will receive a number of concrete assignment questions. They are supposed to respond to these questions in the form of a maximum three-page executive summary (Word, 12pt, 1.5-spaced).

Participants should submit the summary electronically (to the following email account: jonathan.schad@unige.ch) by no later than 1:00 PM on Monday, 13 June 2016.

A good summary will identify the main issues, outline key analytical points, identify options, and if necessary, make recommendations. The preparation, analysis, and written work done in respect of the final exam are to represent individual effort based on the course material made available to participants. It is not acceptable for members of the study group to submit essentially similar analyses of the same case as individual work. The individual case analysis that participants submit must clearly represent their own thinking. Written and personalized feedback on every participant’s exam will be provided together with the grades.

Strategic Management is an interactive, case-based class. Active participation in class discussion is absolutely necessary if learning is to take place. More generally, effective case discussions require widespread and active participation on the part of the class. Class participation helps to develop an understanding of the actual situation faced by decision makers and to develop insights, alternative courses of action, and analyses that are
not inherently obvious. Case discussions also present an opportunity to apply course frameworks to business situations. Effective participation requires a thorough reading of the cases and assigned materials and a good deal of thought about the case situation before coming to class.

**Course Faculty:**

**Sebastian Raisch** is Professor of Strategy, Vice Dean, and Director of the MBA program at GSEM, University of Geneva. He earned a PhD from the University of Geneva and a Habilitation from the University of St. Gallen. Previously, he held faculty positions at the University of St. Gallen and the Harvard Business School. Prior to life in academia, he was a strategy consultant, working in different European countries.

Sebastian’s current research concerns corporate growth, innovation, and change in multinational firms. His research has been published in leading academic and practitioner journals including the *Academy of Management Journal, Harvard Business Review, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies,* and *Organization Science.* He has won the Academy of Management Executive Best Paper Award, the Strategic Management Society (SMS) Best Paper Award for Practice Implications, the SMS Best PhD Paper Prize, the Journal of Management Scholarly Impact Award, and other awards for excellence in research and teaching. Sebastian has conducted research and consulted top managers in companies such as BMW, Deutsche Bank, General Electric, Nestlé, Siemens, Volkswagen, and UBS.

**Jonathan Schad** is a PhD student and a teaching assistant at GSEM under the supervision of Professor Raisch since 2011. In addition, he is a research associate at the Center for Organizational Excellence (CORE), a collaboration between GSEM and the University of St. Gallen. Before joining the team he has been working and studying in Europe and Asia.

Jonathan’s current research concerns corporate growth, organization theory, and organization design within multinational firms.

**Contacts:**

**Prof. Dr. Sebastian Raisch**  
Email: Sebastian.Raisch@unige.ch  
Office: 3329

**Jonathan Schad**  
Email: Jonathan.Schad@unige.ch  
Office: 3336