

WMBA 6110: Business Strategic Management

Instructor: Susana Velez-Castrillon, PhD
Associate Professor of Management
Richards College of Business
University of West Georgia
Carrollton, Georgia 30117

Contact : (678) 838-4847 (office)
e-mail: svelez@westga.edu

Communication:

My preferred contact method for the content of this class is through Brightspace email. For any other communication, or if something goes wrong with Brightspace, please use: svelez@westga.edu. Please allow two days for an email response from me.

We can also set up a video conference by previous appointment.

Introduction:

Welcome to the Business Strategic Management Course! I am excited to be teaching what should be one of the last courses in your MBA. This course is sometimes called the “capstone” – the crowning achievement, or high point according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary. As such, it is meant to integrate everything you learned in your MBA courses, and also the knowledge and experience from your professional career.

Other courses focus on specific functions: Human Resources, Marketing, Finance, etc. Business Strategic Management focuses on the “big picture” of the organization. The main questions that we seek to answer are:

1. Why do some firms perform better than others?
2. What is the source of sustainable competitive advantage?
3. What is the manager’s role in achieving and maintaining this advantage?

I hope that you find this course challenging, and that it helps you realize how much you have learned through your MBA courses.

Course Description:

According to the Georgia WebMBA, “Business Strategic Management is designed to provide an executive viewpoint of strategy formation and management of an enterprise. Designed to be the final experience for WebMBA students, the course is an integrative capstone for the program. Students learn how to audit and analyze complex situations to determine the firm’s strategies for long-run survival and growth in competitive markets. They also examine techniques for analysis of environmental conditions and trends, opportunities and threats, resource strengths and limitations. Case studies, discussions and a sophisticated strategy simulation constitute the primary content of the course. By the end of the course, participants will know how to plan, implement, and control organizational efficiency and effectiveness at both the strategic and operational level.”

Course Learning Goals (LG) and Objectives (LO):

This course supports the following WebMBA Learning Goals and Objectives

LG1. Analyze and evaluate alternative courses of action using appropriate qualitative and quantitative tools to create value.

LO 1.1 Analyze, interpret, and apply financial and other business data necessary to make business decisions using appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative tools. (Knowledge & skill)

LO 1.5 Evaluate relationships among value chain components (knowledge & skill)

LG5. Integrate multiple business functions across a broad range of situations by solving problems and making strategic decisions.

LO 5.2 Assess the multiple impacts of changes in corporate-level, business unit (SBU) level, and functional level strategies. (Skill)

Course Materials:**Required Textbook:**

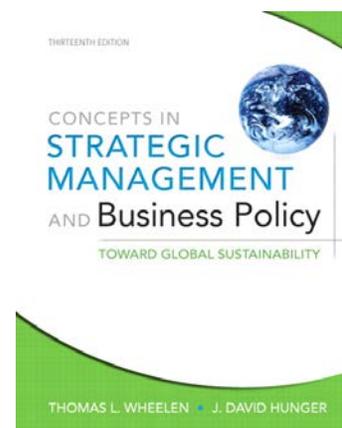
Concepts in Strategic Management and Business Policy:

Toward Global Sustainability, 13th edition

Authors: Thomas L. Wheelen & J. David Hunger

ISBN 13: 978-0132153225

This is a slightly older edition so you should be able to find some good quality used textbooks online at a very good price. You can use this link to compare textbook prices. [Concepts in Strategic Management and Business Policy](#)



Required Simulation: Every student will also need access to the Capstone Simulation Program (www.capsim.com), including the CopXM assessment module.

To register, use the industry ID C98332_000.

This will give you access to the individual practice round. Once the practice round is finished you will be moved to the team competition round. There is no need to register again.

More information is provided in the section explaining the simulation assessment in this syllabus.

Additional Readings: Original sources are most of the time the best way to get an undistorted view of an author's point of view. As such, we think it is important for you to read some of the classics of the strategy, business policy, and strategic management literature. These readings should be available through your home school library, using the "Galileo" login. These readings will serve as a basis for team-led discussions, and the list of readings and teams can be found in the class schedule at the end of this syllabus.

Grading Summary:

Discussions:	32 %
Reading Reflections (Individual)	
8 readings * 2%	16%
Case Studies (Team Submission, Individual Replies)	
1 Team Case Study Submission x 4%	4%
6 Individual Replies to other team's cases x 2%	12%

Simulation:	25 %
Capstone Simulation (Individual Practice Rounds)	5%
Capstone Simulation (Team Competition)	20%

CompXM Program Assessment Exam (Individual):	13%
Chapter Quizzes	
10 Chapter Quizzes x 1.0	10%
Final Exam (Individual Case Study):	20%

TOTAL	100%

About 24% of your grade is based on team work. I dreaded team assignments when I was a student, but there is no denying that the working in groups is a skill that employers seek in their hires and that, as so many other things, team work skills are developed with practice. However, to make sure that there are no freeloaders in any team, each team member will submit a peer-evaluation at the end of the semester.

Your grade in the team assignments will be a combination of your team's overall performance and the *peer evaluations*, available in the Capstone simulation website (www.capsim.com).

Discussion Board Assignments (32% combined):

Individual Reading Reflection: Eight weeks during the course you are assigned to read an article, in addition to the book chapter. Some are short, others are longer. Some are recent, others are nearly antique. But each reading has been carefully selected to introduce you to one of the core ideas of business strategy. In any academic discipline, new and transformative core ideas or theories are introduced infrequently, maybe once a decade. In many cases, these original ideas are watered down and the essence of the idea is included in a textbook. I have found it much more valuable to invite students to read the original works in the author's own words. When you read the original work, nothing is lost in translation or diluted in a summary. Once you have read the articles, you should reflect on what you have learned and share your thoughts in the discussion board for that week. These responses should be the work of a Master's student near the end of a graduate program of study. Although there is no word minimum or maximum, your response should be long enough to be insightful and short enough to be focused and clear. I also recommend you read and respond to the postings of other students so that you can learn from their insights as well.

Case Discussions: Your team will be assigned one of the topics covered in this class. During the week the topic is covered, your team is assigned to select an article from the current business news (Yahoo Finance, BusinessWeek, The Economist, etc.). Your team will post (you decide who does what and when) the article and a discussion about how the article relates to what we are learning in class that week. This posting should begin a discussion related to a business and the challenges it is facing. All students are expected to respond to the postings and carry on a dialogue about each post. In each post your team is invited to act as if you are the CEO of that firm and outline the decision processes you would go through to create a stronger competitive advantage and better performance for the company. At the beginning of the semester, your posts will likely be filled with ideas for functional level changes. Toward the end of the semester, you will find that your responses become more strategic as your content knowledge increases. It may be rewarding for you to compare early responses to those you complete late in the semester. I encourage you to watch your knowledge progress and see if there is a marked difference.

Capstone Business Strategy Simulation Project (25%):

We will use a computer simulation program called "Capstone" to provide you with practice in the analysis and implementation of business decisions. This is mainly a team project and you will make and implement decisions as a team, but 5% of your grade comes from the individual practice rounds that we will complete before you begin your team decision-making. The Capstone program simulates the strategic management process in a competitive environment. Each company (group) competes for sales, profits, and market share while students practice reading and understanding financial statements, allocating corporate resources, and balancing competing demands. You will need a credit card to register on the Capstone website. Everyone on the team will need to register (not just one per team!). Registration will cost about \$68, and you will be expected to register on time to start the individual practice rounds. There will be four individual practice rounds before we begin the team competition rounds that count for 5% of your course grade (the team competition part counts for 20% of your grade).

FOR ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE SIMULATION OR YOUR COMPANY RESULTS, ALWAYS CONTACT CAPSIM® BEFORE YOU CONTACT THE PROFESSOR.

You can reach them Monday – Friday, 7am - 7pm Eastern Time Zone or by sending them an email using the "HELP" link from the left menu of your Capsim® account. Their toll-free number is 877-477-8787.

The Capstone simulation activities are as follows:

- *Registration, the Rehearsal Round and Individual Practice Rounds (4):* This assignment is done individually and counts as 5% of your grade. See the course schedule for Practice Round decision due dates. Make sure you read the assignment instructions and team member guide ("The Guide") carefully BEFORE you begin the practice rounds. This is your opportunity to practice making Capstone decisions individually. Use this period of time to experiment with the Capstone program in order to gain knowledge of the ROI and cause-and-effect relationships between different investments and decisions.
- *Competition Rounds:* At the conclusion of the Practice Rounds, the Capstone simulation will be restarted and the Team Competition Rounds begin. Practice Round results and reports will remain available for only a short time prior to the beginning of the Team Competitive Rounds. Your team's overall grade for the Capstone Competition Rounds will be assessed based on several criteria. That assessment will include information from the available measures of performance such as the Balance Scorecard and traditional performance measures included in the Capstone Courier and the Analyst Reports. These are all outcome measures provided in the simulation and you should familiarize yourself with them during the practice rounds.

The points you receive for this project will be determined by using each team's numerical score for all competitive rounds as shown on the balanced scorecard report. The top performing team's score will be used as the denominator and your teams' score as the numerator. The resulting percentage will then be used as your grade for this project. **Note, however, that a higher minimum score may be awarded to teams that have displayed substantial effort and have shown performance improvements over the eight competitive rounds, so keep trying!**

- Peer evaluations are completed on the capsim.com site. The Peer Evaluation score (completed at the end of the semester) will have an impact on your group project grades. Note that additional Capstone decision "modules" will be activated and require additional group decisions based on the following schedule:
 - Human Resource Management module – Competitive Rounds 3 through 8
 - Total Quality Management module – Competitive Rounds 4 through 8

CompXM Assessment (13%)

The Comp-XM test is a program assessment exam that counts for 10% of your overall course grade. Students will work alone on this assignment. (Note that students who do not actively participate in the Capstone project usually encounter difficulty with this assessment!). This is an individual assignment that you will complete after all of your team's Capstone decision rounds have been completed. You will be given a set of Capstone decisions to make on your own and then you will be asked questions about it. The assessment involves a combination of Capstone decision-making and "board query" questions. The "board query" questions are related to material that you should have learned in other WebMBA classes (Accounting, Finance, Operations Management, Marketing, etc.). This assessment is used to measure what you have learned from the Capstone business simulation experience and from the WebMBA program as a whole. You will have 10 days to complete this assessment, but you should start as soon as possible since the CompXM exam will most likely take a total of 10-14 hours to complete. The CompXM assessment allows you to start and stop as many times as you like. However, you must complete it prior to the deadline, which is Sunday, April 8. To determine your grade on the CompXM, I will average the top three scores in the class and use that as "100%". Therefore, your individual score is based on your individual performance compared to your classmates' performance. Note that this is an individual (not a group) assignment, so collaboration with others is not allowed and will be considered cheating and may result in failure to pass the class

Quizzes 10%:

You will complete about 10 chapter quizzes that will, in total, count for 10% of your overall course grade. The quizzes cover your textbook readings and the video presentations that I will post each week. The main purposes of these quizzes are to: (a) motivate you to keep up with the weekly textbook chapter readings and video presentations; (b) serve as a reading comprehension check; (c) help me to know which topics the class may need further

guidance and/or explanation; and (d) help you to prepare for the midterm and final exams. Be sure to view the videos that I will post each week before you begin each quiz. The quizzes are all timed and you are only allowed one chance at each (you can't retake them), so you should review all of the material **before** you begin each quiz. You will not have time to look up the answers to all of the questions. The deadline for quizzes will always be Sunday night. (Be aware that the course learning management system will be taken down several times during the semester for maintenance -- this is usually done on Friday nights after 9:00 p.m., but check the posted downtimes and plan accordingly!)

Final Exam (Individual Case Study) 20%:

At the end of the semester, your final will be a written exam. It will include responses to a case study using open-ended questions. As this is the capstone course for the program, it is anticipated that you will pull information and knowledge from each of the courses in the program to successfully complete this exam. This exam should be the magnum opus of your Master's program experience.

Deadlines, Make-Up Assignments and Exams:

Make-up exams, assignments, case studies, in-class exercises will be given *only in the event of extraordinary circumstances and university-accepted documented situations:*

Please let me know if under *rare and extreme circumstances* you will be late in submitting an assignment. A minor delay (less than a week) will result in a penalty of 10% of the grade. A major delay (over a week) will result in 0 points for the assignment. A similar policy is in place for projects that exceed length limits. Minor excesses (10% or less) will normally result in penalties of 5% of the grade, and significant excesses (more than 10%) in a penalty of 10% of the grade.

1. You need to contact the instructor and provide all relevant documentation, 72 hours before the assignment or exam for pre-scheduled events (such as work-related travel), and up to 72 hours after the exam for fortuitous events (such as illness).
2. A maximum of one make-up assignment will be allowed per student.
3. This policy is not a blanket policy where everyone gets a make-up assignment.
4. Scheduling of all make-up assignments and exams is at the discretion of the instructor.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty may result in possible university-level disciplinary action. Examples of academic dishonesty include cheating and plagiarism. Academic dishonesty in this class includes submitting work written by others as well as work written by you for other classes. Communication with another student during an examination or collaborating with other students on individual assignments and other similar behavior that defeats the

purpose of examinations and individual assignments is unacceptable. Individual assignments, by definition, should not be done with other students. Plagiarism is another cause of violation of the academic, business, and community rules of ethics. Sources of information used in your work should be cited and quotation marks should be used when appropriate. An example of plagiarism is cutting and pasting materials from the Internet or other sources without giving proper credit or identifying the words of others with quotation marks (note that I will use a plagiarism checker on all material that you submit in this course!). Collaborating with other students on any quizzes and the Comp-XM[®] exam is cheating and may result in failure to pass the class and possible university-level disciplinary action.

Administration:

- I will return your graded tests and assignments with feedback within a week of the due dates.
- Graded examinations will be kept on file no longer than one semester following the completion of the current semester. Any requests for grade reconsideration or grade appeals must be made within this time period.
- Program-level assessment has become an important component of assuring program quality and in maintaining professional accreditations with organizations such as AACSB, International, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Some of the assignments in this course could be used to assess student learning at the program level. When a course assignment is used in this manner, we will follow federal guidelines to protect the confidentiality of student information.

About Your Instructor:**Susana Velez-Castrillon**

I am an Associate Professor of Management at the University of West Georgia, where I teach Strategic Management, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). My research focuses on corporate reputation, and how corporate governance practices, and environmental factors shape this reputation. I am also interested in organizational improvisation as a dynamic capability, and its role in decision making and firm performance. I received my Ph.D. in Management from the University of Houston in 2012. Before deciding to become an academic, I worked in business development for a biotechnology start-up in London with business in Cuba (not illegal in Europe), and Finland. I have an M.Phil. in BioScience Enterprise from the University of Cambridge (UK), and a BSc (Hons) in Biology from Javeriana University in Colombia.

WMBA 6110 – Tentative Course Schedule - Summer 2018

All assignments are due by Wednesday night on the week assigned.

Week	Dates	Assigned Readings	Assignments (Due Wednesday at 11:30 pm.)	Capsim Simulation (Due Wednesday at 11 pm)
<i>MODULE I: INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGY AND BUSINESS POLICY</i>				
1	4/25-5/2	Chapter 1 – Basic Concepts of Strategic Management Porter. 1996. What is strategy? Harvard Business Review. November-December.	Download and Read the Syllabus Individual Reading Reflection: What is Strategy? Chapter 1 Quiz.	Register Complete the “Introduction” which includes all tabs in the “getting started” link.
2	5/3-5/9	Chapter 2 – Corporate Governance	Case 1: Team Gold finds article. All respond. Chapter 2 Quiz	Individual Practice Round 1
3	5/10-5/16	Chapter 3 – Social Responsibility and Ethics in Strategic Management Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. 2011. Creating shared value. Harvard Business Review, 89(1/2), 62-77.	Individual Reading Reflection: Creating Shared Value Chapter 3 Quiz	Individual Practice Round 2

Week	Dates	Assigned Readings	Assignments (Due Wednesday at 11:30 pm.)	Capsim Simulation (Due Wednesday at 11 pm)
<i>MODULE II: SCANNING THE ENVIRONMENT</i>				
4	5/17-5/23	Chapter 4 – General Environmental Scanning (pages 94-109)	Case 2: Team Jade finds article. All respond.	Individual Practice Round 3
5	5/24-5/30	Chapter 4 – Industry Analysis (pages 109 – 127) Porter 2008. The five competitive forces that shape strategy. Harvard Business Review. January.	Individual Reading Reflection: Five Forces Case 3: Team Onyx finds article. All respond. Chapter 4 Quiz	Individual Practice Round 4 If you want the data from the practice rounds you need to download them before May 31.
6	5/31-6/6	Chapter 5 – Internal Analysis: Organizational Analysis Barney. 1991. Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. Journal of Management. 17(1). 99-120.	Individual Reading Reflection: Resource-Based View of the Firm Case 4: Team Pearl finds article. All respond. Chapter 5 Quiz	Team Competition Round 1

Week	Dates	Assigned Readings	Assignments (Due Wednesday at 11:30 pm.)	Capsim Simulation (Due Wednesday at 11 pm)
<i>MODULE III: STRATEGY FORMULATION</i>				
7	6/7-6/13	Chapter 6 – Situation Analysis and Business Strategy Kim and Maughborne. 2004. Blue ocean strategy. Harvard Business Review. October.	Individual Reading Reflection: Blue Ocean Strategy Chapter 6 Quiz	Team Competition Round 2
8	6/14-6/20	Chapter 7 – Corporate Strategy Mintzberg, H. 1987. Crafting strategy. Harvard Business Review. July-August.	Individual Reading Reflection: Formulation Case 5: Team Ruby finds article. All respond. Chapter 7 Quiz	Team Competition Round 3
9	6/21-6/27	Chapter 8 – Functional Strategy and Strategic Choice Hamel, G. The Why, What, and How of Management Innovation. Harvard Business Review, February	Individual Reading Reflection: How will the Firm Change? Chapter 8 Quiz	Team Competition Round 4

Week	Dates	Assigned Readings	Assignments (Due Wednesday at 11:30 pm.)	Capsim Simulation (Due Wednesday at 11 pm)
<i>MODULE IV: STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTROL</i>				
10	6/28-7/5 (Note the change to the 5 due to the 7/4 holiday)	Chapter 9: Organizing for Action Miles, R. E., Snow, C. C., Meyer, A. D., & Coleman, J. J. 1978. Organizational strategy, structure, and process. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> , 3(3), 546.	Individual Reading Reflection: Structure and Strategy Case 6: Team Sapphire finds article. All respond. Chapter 9 Quiz	Team Competition Round 5
11	7/6-7/12	Chapter 11 – Evaluation and Control	Case 7: Team Topaz finds article. All respond. Chapter 11 Quiz	Team Competition Round 6 Comp XM Opens 07/12
<i>MODULE V: INTEGRATION</i>				
12	7/13-7/18	Reflection		Team Competition Round 7 CompXM Closes 07/18s Peer evaluations (Capstone website)