



Sofaer Global MBA

Principles of Strategy 1238-2322

First Semester, module 1 (10/10/2021-25/11/2021)

Module	Day	Hour	Class	Lecturer	Email
1	Wednesday	13:45-16:30	254	Dr. Yair Friedman	yair@friedman.org.il

We will divide our weekly encounters into sub-sessions, with occasional in-between YouTube clips and other medias that will enable self-learning and illustrate real world application of the discussed concepts.

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Units

1 course unit = 4 ECTS units

The ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) is a framework defined by the European Commission to allow for unified recognition of student academic achievements from different countries.

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to strategic management and combines both theory and practice. During the course, we will focus on understanding the illusive but desired "Competitive Advantage" which is the secret behind organizational resilience and success (both businesses and people...). The course provides fundamental tools for analyzing strategic situations, defining and selecting a suitable competitive advantage as well as describing tools that allow the chosen strategy to assist the organization in its mission to reach (financial and other) success. The aim of the course is to provide an overview of Strategic Management, a field which deals with diverse questions concerning business planning and implementation. We will also discuss innovative tools to achieve the set strategic goals while determining long-term goals, diagnosing relevant internal and external factors and assessing the choices for the conservation and enhancement of the firm's business achievements. Course schedule will be in the course website before the beginning of the semester.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the student will:

- Understand and be able to analyze strategy / competitive advantage
- Have knowledge of planning, design, implementation and control of strategic management and the tools required for its execution

Student Evaluation and Grade Composition

Percentage	Assignment	Due Date	Group Size/Comments
10%	Class Participation	-	Individual
40%	5 Weekly personal assignments	-	Individual
50%	Case Assignment in teams of four students	1.12.2021	Teams

* According to University regulations, participation in all classes of a course is mandatory (Article 5).

* Students who absent themselves from classes or do not actively participate in class may be removed from the course at the discretion of the lecturer.

Course Assignments

Weekly personal assignments (5 WPAs) (40% of evaluation grade)

WPAs are assignments aimed to enhance your learning experience; they are designed to provide you with an opportunity to reflect on issues and concepts discussed in class and apply them using real-world examples (potentially bringing your own experience and suggesting practical implications). You will be given a set of detailed instructions and must complete all of the (relatively easy and short) WPAs. The WPAs and their corresponding due dates are noted on the Course Schedule. Each WPA includes 1-3 short questions and are designed to ascertain your participation and comprehension of the previous session. Each student must submit a one-page (max!) response (preferably in word format) on the course's moodle, on time.

Case Study (50%)

Self-selected teams of 4 will solve a given case study and answer all of the presented questions fully, using course materials.

Class Participation - Individual (10%)

This course will be highly interactive. Student minimal attendance and participation is a baseline requirement. In addition, each student is responsible to prepare for and participate in class sessions. Students may be randomly called on to ensure that materials have been read or to facilitate class discussion.

Students who are unable to complete an assignment or any course requirement must notify the Lecturer in advance via email!

As of the 2008/9 academic year the Faculty has implemented a grading policy for all graduate level courses. This policy applies to all graduate courses in the Faculty and will be reflected in the final course grade. Accordingly, the final average of the class for this course (which is an elective course) will fall between 83-87. Additional information regarding this policy can be found on the Faculty website.

<https://coller.tau.ac.il/MBA-students/programs/2019-20/MBA/regulations/exams>

Evaluation of the Course by Students

Following completion of the course students will participate in a teaching survey to evaluate the instructor and the course, to provide feedback for the benefit of the students, the teachers and the university.

Course Site (Moodle)

The course site will be the primary tool to communicate messages and material to students. You should check the course site regularly for information on classes, assignments and exams, at the end of the course

as well. Course material will be available on the course site. Please note that topics that are not covered in the course material but are discussed in class are considered integral to the course.

Course Outline*

Date	Topics	Readings	Objectives	Submit
13/10	Introduction: Basic concepts	Management of strategy. Ch. 1 + Porter (1996)	What is a strategy? What are Values, Mission statement and vision?	
	Introduction: Strategic Management process		What are the 5 missions of Strategic Mgmt.?	
20/10	MBV	Management of strategy. Ch. 2+3	What are the Models for Industry analysis?	WPA1
27/10	RBV		What are Capabilities & Core Competences?	WPA2
3/11	Strategy Formulation Process	Management of strategy. Ch. 2+3	What are Focused Strategies?	WPA3
	Strategy Formulation Process	Porter (2008)	What is International Strategy?	
10/11	Competitive Dynamics		Entry into competitive activity	WPA4
	Competitive Dynamics		Cooperative Strategy & Alliances	
17/11 (FC)	Mergers & Acquisitions	Christensen et al. (2011)	Which companies succeed and which fail? Why?	WPA5
24/11	Sharing Economy & Summation		What is Sharing Economy and what are its competitive advantages?	
1/12				Case Study Assignment

*Flipped Classroom (FC) session - students will engage with materials online beforehand while in-class activities will involve peer learning and small-group work.

Required Reading

Power-point presentations in PDF format that accompany the course will be available on Moodle. Please have your notes ready.

Case Study:

The Walt Disney Company and Pixar Inc.: To Acquire or Not to Acquire? by Juan Alcacer, David J. Collis and Mary Furey, HBS MARCH 2009 (REVISED JANUARY 2010)

Textbook: Grant, R.M. & Jordan, J. 2015. Foundations of strategy. Chapters 1-8. John Wiley & Sons.

Recommended Reading

Other course materials include:

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Sull, D. N. 2001. Strategy as Simple Rules. Harvard Business Review, 79(1), 106-6.

Christensen, Clayton M., Richard Alton, Curtis Rising, and Andrew Waldeck. "The New M&A Playbook." Harvard Business Review 89, no. 3 (March 2011): 48–57.

Voluntary "light reading" for strategy enthusiasts:

- Grant, R. 2010. Contemporary Strategy Analysis, 7th Edition. Blackwell Publications.
- Porter, M. 1996. "What is Strategy". Harvard Business Review.
- Harvard Business Review, 2011. HBR's 10 must reads on strategy, Harvard Business Press.
- Porter, M. E. 2008. The five competitive forces that shape strategy, Harvard Business Review, January.
- Harvard Business Review on strategic renewal, 2008. Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation.
- Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. 2008. Mastering the management system, Harvard Business Review, January.

A few noteworthy remarks

- I have been engaged in Strategy since 2002. I have worked in Private Equity Funds as a Senior Analyst and an Executive as well as a Strategic Consultant for many years. Lastly, I have written my PhD dissertation on strategic decisions and I have been teaching strategy related courses since 2007. As such, I really like integrating theory and practice. Still, if you have any remarks, ideas or observations, don't hesitate - I am an enthusiastic learner.
- I plan to be prepared and I hope you will be as well. At times, I may call on individuals whose hands are not raised (or zoom cell blackened). Please let me know before the start of the class if some emergency has made it impossible for you to be prepared adequately for that class. This avoids embarrassment for us all.
- All materials will be uploaded to the courses moodle page, except for the solutions of the cases. If you are missing any materials, you should contact me via e-mail. I will be happy to assist.
- Please turn off cell phones etc. during sessions. External distractions disrupt class and lower the quality of discussions and interactions.
- I will be happy to discuss the course or any other issue of interest to you on an individual basis. Please approach me in class to set up an appointment. E-mail is the surest way to track me down - yair@friedman.org.il, and I will typically respond within 24 hours.

Case Study: "Walt Disney and Pixar"

Case: The Walt Disney Company and Pixar Inc.: To Acquire or Not to Acquire?

by Juan Alcacer, David J. Collis and Mary Furey

HBS MARCH 2009 (REVISED JANUARY 2010)

Assignment questions:

1. Analyze the market in which these two companies compete. Do they possess a sustainable competitive advantage? Explain.
2. Should Disney acquire Pixar? Explain why or why not to make this strategic decision.
3. From the standpoint of Pixar (consider you're Pixar's Chairperson of the board of directors), does an acquisition by Disney serve the company best interests? Why (why not)?
4. Discuss the alternative strategic choices of both companies as follows:

- a. Discuss the alternative strategic choices of Disney to the acquisition.
- b. Discuss the alternative strategic choices of Pixar to its acquisition by Disney.