



RUTGERS

HR Strategy II: Business and Competitive Strategy

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Spring 2026

[Syllabus as of January 20, 2026]

“Leaders establish the vision for the future and set the strategy for getting there.” – John P. Kotter

“I was drawn to the field of competition and strategy because it tackles perhaps the most basic question in both business management and industrial economics: What determines corporate performance?” – Michael Porter

“The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do” – Michael Porter

“The biggest risk is not taking any risk... In a world that is changing quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks.” -- Mark Zuckerberg

“Leadership belongs to those who take it” – Sheryl Sandberg

Instructor: Jane Baylis

Class Sessions: Tuesdays, 7:20 – 10:00 pm

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Overview

Strategic management is defined by the question of *Why are some companies successful while others fail? And what can you do about it?* The primary objective of this course is to provide you with a deep understanding of strategic management. Topics to be covered will include competitor analysis, strategy formulation (at the business, corporate and international levels), acquisitions and restructuring, and cooperative strategies.

We will discuss the reality that some firms gain sustainable competitive advantage over industry rivals while others struggle to simply survive. How do factors such as a firm's internal and external environment impact their selection and implementation of strategy? How do new firms effectively plan and execute strategies that will enable them to successfully compete against established firms? These are some examples of the types of questions we will seek to answer in our study of strategic management. To achieve these objectives, a balance of theory and practice will be applied in the form of textbook readings and discussions mixed in with “real life” business examples and cases. Successful completion of this course enables you to understand an organization from a strategic perspective as a general manager and craft and implement strategy to help it gain and sustain a competitive advantage.

SMLR / HR Management Learning Goals

Three Core Areas for Success in SMLR

The curriculum in the programs within SMLR focuses on different areas (i.e.. HRM, LSER) and levels of study (i.e. UG, Masters, PhD). Across these programs, we strive to advance students' cognitive skills and processes, their Knowledge of Theory and Application, and develop their professional skills.

- 1) Cognitive Skills and Processes
- 2) Knowledge of Theory, Practice, and Application
- 3) Professional Development

Cognitive Skills and Processes

The cognitive skills and process area reflects the goal for SMLR programs to help students develop skills central to lifelong learning and participation in society and the workplace.

Written & Oral Communication – Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry level professional.

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English.
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.
- Produce quality research papers with proper convention of attribution/citation.
- Produce high quality executive summaries.
- Make an argument using contemporary and/or historical evidence.
- Present ideas and arguments in a logical and effective way

Quantitative Skills – Apply appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods for research workplace issues.

- Formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information.
- Apply quantitative methods to analyze data for HR decision making including cost-benefit analyses, ROI, etc. (HRM)
- Apply qualitative methods appropriately, alone and in combination with quantitative methods.

Research Skills – Demonstrate an ability to collect, analyze and synthesize information to make logical and informed decisions impacting the workplace. Use evidence to evaluate hypotheses, theories, and approaches to workplace issues.

- Employ current technologies to access information, to conduct research, and to communicate findings.
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.
- Assess and critique relevant evidence and research findings.
- Access high-quality historical, qualitative, and quantitative evidence or research
- Use evidence-based analysis to appraise the validity of various hypotheses, theories, and approaches to workplace issues.

Knowledge of Theory, Practice and Application

The knowledge of theory and application area reflects the goal for SMLR programs to ensure that students learn the key theoretical and foundation areas of study in their domains and realize opportunities to apply that knowledge to practice situations.

Theoretical Perspectives - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories, and concepts in their field of study.
- Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues.

Understanding Context – Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions.

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of and perspectives on work.
- Analyze a contemporary global issue in their field from a multi-disciplinary and intersectional perspective.
- Analyze issues related to business strategies, organizational structures, and work systems
- Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (LSER)
- Analyze issues related to the selection, motivation, and development of talent in a local and global context (HRM)

Application – Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance.

- Apply concepts and substantive institutional knowledge to understanding contemporary developments related to work.
- Understand the legal, regulatory, and ethical issues related to their field
- Develop human resource management functional capabilities used to select, motivate, and develop workers (HRM)
- Understand the internal and external alignment and measurement of human resource practices (HRM)

Professional Development

Professional Development – Demonstrate an ability to interact with and influence others in a professional manner, and to effectively present ideas and recommendations.

- Develop effective presentation skills appropriate for different settings and audiences.
- Develop career management skills to navigate one's career.
- Develop capabilities to work and lead in a multicultural and diverse environment.
- Work productively in teams, in social networks, and on an individual basis
- Develop cultural agility competencies.
- Demonstrate lifelong personal and professional development skills.

Student Resources and Scholarships

- a. If you are in need of help in the areas of (a) mental health, (b) academic coaching, and (c) financial assistance: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/about-smlr/fall-2022-information-smlr-students>
- b. Scholarships – we encourage you to view the SMLR's scholarship offerings,: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/academic-programs/scholarships>

Course Requirements and Grading

(Specific due dates noted on the course outline below, and on the detailed assignment documents)

- 1) Smartbook Reading Assignments (20% of course grade):** You will be expected to complete your chapter readings and assignments prior to class. You will have two weeks to complete each Smartbook assignment which consists of both reading and comprehension questions.
- 2) Mid-term - Individual Case Analysis (25% of course grade):** This will involve analyzing a case study. A separate handout detailing this assignment will be provided and posted on Canvas. **Case Analysis is due on March 23rd.**
- 3) Final Team Project and Presentation (30% of course grade):** You will be assigned to a team early in the semester, and your team will choose an organization to both analyze and offer insightful and creative recommendations related to the organization's strategy. A written summary will accompany your presentation and will be part of your grade. Each team will be assigned a grade for this presentation, and this grade will be shared by every member of the team. A separate handout detailing this assignment will be provided and posted on Canvas. **Final team presentations will be on May 4th.**
- 4) Final – Individual Case Analysis (25% of course grade):** This will involve analyzing a case study. A separate handout detailing this assignment will be provided and posted on Canvas one week prior to the due date. **The Case Analysis is due on May 4th.**

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Note: All assignments (team and individual) will be submitted via Canvas, and the Turnitin verification service will be used for this class. Turnitin is a software program used by Rutgers and many other universities to check for originality and plagiarism.

EVALUATION

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Course Component	Percentage of Final Grade
Smartbook Reading Assignments	20%
Mid-term - Case Analysis	25%
Final Team Project	30%
Final - Case Analysis	25%
Total:	100%

Grading Scale

90-100 = A

88-89 = B+

80-87 = B

78-79 = C+

70-77 = C

60-69 = F

Note: for most assignment grades, I will also use “minus” grades, i.e. A-, B-, C-; in addition to the standard grades above.

Course Policies

You are expected to complete all the reading and come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. Further, you should be prepared to discuss and debate the material for the course to practice critical thinking and to build your understanding of the material. If you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for finding out about the materials covered and any changes in schedule or assignments.

Assignments will not be accepted after the noted due date unless special arrangements have been made with the professor in advance. Students will not be permitted to take examinations after the exam date stated on the syllabus. All known student disabilities and religious holidays will be accommodated as appropriate. If you need any accommodation, you should discuss this with me no later than the second-class session.

All students will be expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the students' failure of the course and referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Students should use their Rutgers e-mail addresses for class communications with the instructor and the members of their team. In addition, we will use Canvas as the primary source of class content, and for other collaboration as required. **As such, students should check their Rutgers email and Canvas on a frequent basis.**

Course Materials

Students are responsible for accessing and completing all readings **prior** to the class for which the readings are assigned. Required readings listed on the course schedule.

We will be using the McGraw Hill Connect platform for this course, McGraw Hill Connect access is included in part of your tuition for this course. As such, it is the lowest price for these materials required for this course. Please go to Canvas under the Announcement area to watch a short video that contains details on how to register for Connect. For any technical difficulty in registering please go to Connect Student Support: 800-331-5094.

Customer Care is available to help you with questions about accessing your course material, using your eTextbook, or opting out in to the First Day program.

*Customer Care hours of operation are 11pm Sunday – 12am Saturday (Central Time).
Phone assistance is available Monday – Friday, 8am to 8pm (Central Time)*

- Student Experience Video: <https://youtu.be/bNhSdKueifU>
- Link to Customer Care website and FAQs: <https://tinyurl.com/firstdayfaq>
- Open a ticket Online for the Customer Care team:
<https://tinyurl.com/customercarerequest>
- Email the Customer Care team: bookstorecustomercare@bncollege.com
- Call the Customer Care team: 1-844-9-EBOOKS (1-844-932-6657)

Additionally, you can purchase a loose-leaf copy of the textbook for an additional \$44.00. This can be done through your Connect account. The textbook is:

- Rothaermel, F.T. 2024 **Strategic Management: Concepts, 6th Edition.** McGraw-Hill Higher Education. *(All assigned chapters appear in the course schedule)*

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments (due at beginning of class unless otherwise noted)
Class 1 January 28	Course Introduction What is Strategy?	Chapter 1
Class 2 February 2	Strategic Leadership: Managing the Strategy Process	Chapter 2
Class 3 February 16	External Analysis: Industry Structure, Competitive Forces, and Strategic Groups	Chapter 3
Class 4 February 23	Internal Analysis: Resources, Capabilities, and Core Competencies	Chapter 4
Class 5 March 2	Shared Value and Competitive Advantage	Chapter 5
Class 6 March 9	Business Strategy: Differentiation, Cost, Leadership, Blue Oceans and Innovation Entrepreneurship and Platform	Chapter 6 Chapter 7
March 16	Spring Break	
Class 7 March 23	Mid-Term – Individual Case Analysis – Due 03/23/26	
Class 8 March 30	Work on team project	
Class 9 March 30	Corporate Strategy: Vertical Integration and Diversification	Chapter 8
Class 10 April 6	Corporate Strategy: Strategic Alliances, Mergers and Acquisitions	Chapter 9
Class 11 April 13	Global Strategy: Competing Around the World	Chapter 10
Class 12 April 20	Organizational Design, Structure, Culture and Control	Chapter 11
Class 13 April 27	Corporate Governance, Business Ethics and Business Models	Chapter 12
Class 13 May 4	Final Team Presentations Due – 05/04/26	Team Presentations and Written Reports Due (upload to Canvas)
May 4	Final – Individual Case Analysis – Due 05/04/26	