

**WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY**  
**College of Business**  
**Department of Marketing and Management**  
**Business Strategy and Policy**  
**MGT 460, Winter 2013/2014**

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I.     **PROFESSOR:**                     Raza Mir  
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II.    **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** This course requires senior status and is the capstone course of the undergraduate business program. It concerns strategic management and strategic planning. You will utilize knowledge from past business courses you have taken, integrating management, accounting, economics, finance, production and operations, business law, and marketing, to name a few. In this course we will examine real corporations from varied perspectives in order to diagnose strategic problems.

This 3-credit course represents a case study approach to business decision-making that integrates functional and organizational disciplines. It examines a series of complex industrial situations in depth to determine in each instance the strategy and policies a firm should follow for its long-run survival.

Some of you may have had some work experience, and this may have led to you watching strategy unfolding in your organization. We hope that you will bring your insights to bear in making this a rewarding experience for all of us.

The course will involve substantial in-class interaction, a lot of research and a great deal of writing. In short, it will make substantial demands on your time and effort. Please study this outline carefully, and plan your time for the semester (or bail out) accordingly.

Also, this is a 100% online class. All communication will be online. Please be sure to log on to your Blackboard website *at least 5 times a week*. We will have 14 on-line sessions in the winter semester. Areas of Blackboard that need to be checked:

- Announcements
- Syllabus (this document will be uploaded there).
- Course documents (class notes will be posted here, as well all your presentations)

- Discussion (Essential for class participation)
- Assignments (all assignments and tests will be posted here)
- Group pages (for group work)
- I will send all email only to your wpunj.edu accounts.

Prerequisites: MGT 2000, MKT 2100 and FIN 3200

III. **TEXT:** We do not require a textbook. We will make extensive use of library resources to get material for the course.

**IV. ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

Your performance in the course will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Participation in discussion boards - 10%	Presentation uploaded as PowerPoint- 10%
Individual write-ups - 15%	Final write-up – 35%
Exams - 30%	

**Participation:**

This is an online class, so discussions will be on-line. I will be initiating discussions on a variety of issues with you through the discussion-boards on the web. You will be required to contribute regularly and substantially to the online discussion groups. Over the period of the course, I will expect you to participate at least 30 times in the discussion groups.

**Presentations:**

I will divide the class into 5 groups for presentation. I will assign each group an article from the *Harvard Business Review* to read. In your presentation, you will be required to do two things. First, you will summarize the article you read. Second, you will relate it to a particular company that I will assign to each group. Each group will submit a 20-slide PowerPoint presentation on the subject. You will mail the presentation to me, and I will publish it on the Blackboard site for your classmates to share. These presentations will be due to me by January 10.

The 5 articles/companies we will be studying will be:

1. *Strategies for learning from failure*, and Apple.
2. *How to make the most of your company's strategy*, and Google.
3. *Stress test your strategy*, and Intel.
4. *Finding your strategy in the new landscape*, and Pfizer.
5. *Strategy tools for a shifting landscape*, and Walmart.

The *Harvard Business Review* is accessible from our library database titled *Business Source Premier*.

### **Exams:**

We will have one test, worth 30% of your grade.

### **Written assignments:**

I will offer you 5 written assignments. You may submit any 3, which I will grade for 5 points each. The write-ups should all be 2 typewritten pages (or less, never more), and professionally produced.

Some general guidelines on writing:

- Please spell-check your documents. I *will not* read a document that has more than 3 spelling errors.
- Adhere to prescribed space limits. Conciseness is a virtue.
- End every case analysis with *definite* prescriptions for the organization under review. Do not be afraid to take a stance.

### **Research report:**

Each one of you will be required to submit a 2000 word write-up at the end of the semester on a topic that you will choose. You can choose one from the following topics:

- Book Review of “In the Plex: How Google Thinks, Works, and Shapes Our Lives” by Steven Levy
- An analysis of the LIBOR crisis of 2012
- Identity Theft in the United States
- Income Inequalities in the United States

In the report, I will expect you to combine the insights you have derived from the course with your own research. Extensive research will be needed for this. You will have to submit one draft to me, which I will mark and give back so that you can improve your writing ability and your grade. You may wish to use a second iteration, but one round of draft-and-rewrite is mandatory.

This report will be due on the last day of class. In the end, I will look for a professionally produced effort, and the experience will hopefully enhance your performance as a report-writer in your jobs as well. Please be original. Copying from other sources or cutting and pasting from Internet sources will be grounds for failure in the class.

## V. CONTEXTUAL COVERAGE:

- Global:** I explicitly welcome all perspectives that are different from dominant, US-oriented perspectives.
- Ethics:** Issues of justice are of paramount importance in strategy. We will be tolerant of all diverse viewpoints, including those that are critical of dominant perspectives.
- Technology:** We will study technology companies intensely, and you will be expected to make use of electronic resources to do research (Mergent, ABI-Inform, Bloomberg, Lexis-Nexis etc.). *We will be using Blackboard intensively; I intend to post all the assignments as well as class notes on Blackboard during the course of the semester.*

**VI. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:** The University has an obligation as an educational institution to be certain that each student's work is his/her own. Dishonesty in such academic practices as assignments, examinations, or other academic work cannot be condoned. A student who submits work that is not original violates the purpose of William Paterson University and may forfeit his/her right and opportunity to continue at the University.