

**WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY**  
**College of Business**  
**Department of Marketing and Management**  
**Business Strategy and Policy**  
**MGT 460, Summer Winter 2014-2015**

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I.     **PROFESSOR:**                                 Raza Mir  
       **OFFICE HOURS:**                         24/7 by email.  
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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 online 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*. Areas of Blackboard that need to be checked:

- Syllabus
- Course Material (class notes and readings will be posted here)
- Discussions (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 300, MKT 310 and FIN 320

III.    **TEXT:** We will not use any textbook in this course. However, there will be several readings that you will be assigned. I will be uploading some of my notes as PowerPoint slides under the "Course Material" section of your Blackboard site. In addition, you will have to read and review one book (a list is provided under "research report"). You can either buy the book, or get it from your local library.

#### IV. ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

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

Participation in discussion boards - 20% Individual write-ups - 15% Exams - 30%	Presentation uploaded as PowerPoint- 10% Final write-up – 25%
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##### **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 a large US-based corporation to each group. Each group will submit a 20-slide PowerPoint presentation where they analyze the strategy of the company, and combine it with a review of a business book about the company. In this presentation, I ask the group to do 3 things. First, I want a history of the company you are assigned. Second, I am looking for an understanding of the book, and how it deals with the company. Finally, please focus on the company's 2013 performance, and suggest ways in which it can improve in 2014 and 2015.

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 one week before the last day of class.

The 5 companies we will be studying will be:

1. *Apple (Book: Steve Jobs)*
2. *Google (Book: In the Plex)*
3. *Amazon (Book: The Everything Store)*
4. *Twitter (Book: Hatching Twitter)*
5. *Facebook (Book: The Facebook Effect)*

The assigned books will also form a part of the final project. No need to buy these books if you can get them from your local library (though they are all good, and reasonably priced).

##### **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. This is a book report on one of the 5 books mentioned below (these are the same books mentioned in the presentation, and you can either choose the same book that you read for that assignment, or a different one). In this write-up, you will review the basic ideas in the book for 1000 words, and use the second 1000 words to reflect on it, i.e. tell me why this book is useful for business students. Here, in the second half of your report, I expect you to combine the insights you have derived from the course with your own research. This report will be due on the last day of the course. 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.

Here are the 5 books from which you need to choose:

1. *Steve Jobs* by Walter Isaacson
2. *In the Plex: How Google Thinks, Works and Shapes Our Lives* by Steven Levy
3. *The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon* by Brad Stone
4. *Hatching Twitter: A True Story of Money, Power, Friendship, and Betrayal* by Nick Bilton
5. *The Facebook Effect: The Inside Story of the Company That Is Connecting the World* by David Kirkpatrick

### 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:** In the online course, I will intend to post all the assignments as well as class notes on Blackboard during the course of the semester. In addition, I will ask you to access library databases to get assigned readings, and submit your work using PowerPoint or equivalent presentation software.

**VI. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:** In an online course, issues of academic integrity are paramount. Please do not plagiarize, cut-and-paste, or misrepresent other people's work as your own. *Epecially, please do not write or submit the assignments or the book review without doing the entire reading beforehand.* 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.