MANA 7397: Strategic Analytics

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"I'm excited that you are here. I know you have chosen to invest effort, time and money in my class. I will do my absolute best to ensure you learn, immerse yourself and develop a deep interest in digital strategy and analytics."

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

In every aspect of our daily lives, from the way we work, shop, communicate, or socialize, we are both consuming and creating vast amounts of information. Often, these daily activities create a trail of digitized data that is being stored, mined, and analyzed by firms hoping to create a competitive advantage. Because of the digitization of the global economy we are seeing enormous stores of varied (structured and unstructured) data being generated and collected. Competitive advantage in the 21st century is accruing to companies that can make data-driven analytics and decision-making a core part of the growth strategy, their business development and all aspects of their operations.

Companies like Google, Amazon, Walmart, Uber, and Alibaba have embraced data analytics as a core aspect of their product and operations strategy. There are also many small startups emerging to disrupt existing players through leveraging data. Through case studies on market leaders and innovative startups in diverse industries, we will examine the strategies and operational changes needed to make data analytics a part of your organization's culture and future success.

However, even with the technological advances and developments in customer databases, access to vast amounts of high-quality data, the ability to understand customer behavior and customize business tactics to increasingly fine segments, the promise of implementing data driven decisions has failed to materialize. One barrier to implementation lies in the fact that managers find it difficult to translate data into actionable insights or information. The general objective of this course is to fill this gap by providing students with tools and techniques that can be utilized for making and implementing business decisions.

The case-based approach allows us to discuss details of significant strategic choices. While we will cover some core aspects of business strategy, including external analysis, competitor analysis, and opportunity analysis, we will focus more deeply on digital strategy as it relates to understanding data as a strategic asset within the organization. This will help us understand the process and to think about strategy implementation. The goal is to understand the role of analytics and analytical

approaches in the broader organization.

Note that this is not a statistics or mathematics course. The emphasis of the class will be on applications and interpretation of the results for making real life business decisions.

In particular, we will focus on helping you to:

- Develop your ability to think strategically.
- Acquire familiarity with the central concepts, frameworks, and techniques of strategic management.
- Assess the economic and technological factors that are at the heart of the digital revolution taking place in the economy.
- Understand the difference between traditional business models and new digital business models emphasizing platforms and ecosystems.
- Determine the competitive interactions among firms with different digital business models.
- Demonstrate how to best organize and lead product and service innovation initiatives in the digital and data analytics space.
- Determine how to compete in an economy that is transforming towards hub-based competition among platforms.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The main component of your grade in this course is **class participation via the discussion forums.**

Class Participation/Discussion Posts and Responses

Class participation in the case studies and discussion forums is key to success in this class. Much of the knowledge and skill you develop here will arise from participating in the case analysis and discussions with your fellow students— experiences that will enable you to thoughtfully and respectfully challenge assumptions, broaden perspectives, and reveal insights into the course content. Your class participation grade will be determined by the extent to which you engage in and support these online interactions. **You will have at least one (1) case study each week. There are two (2) case studies in Week 3. You will have discussions threads for each case study. You are required to answer the case questions in your initial post by Thursday at 11:59 pm each week**. This will give your classmates' time to both read and reflect upon your initial posts**. You are also required to respond to at least two (2) classmates' post by Sunday at 11:59 pm each week**.

Case Study Analysis (Initial Posts 15 points each)

There are five (5) case studies. Each case study's initial post is worth 15 points for a total of 75 points. This is 75% of your grade.

Please watch the lectures in Week 1 on how to complete a case analysis. I realize that this is a short course (four weeks) and there is quite a bit of reading. So, I am not requiring a formal

written case analysis, but I do expect your initial post to each question to be thoughtful, thorough, and insightful. The case analyses and the discussions are where much of the learning in this course happens.

Many employers are now requiring prospective employees to complete a case analysis as part of the interview process. This class gives you the opportunity to dive into real cases in a safe environment. I encourage you to take advantage of the unique backgrounds and diverse perspectives you bring to our learning environment.

Class Discussions and Responses (25 points or 25% of your grade)

In the online class discussions, you will be evaluated on the extent to which your questions and comments build on the preceding discussion, and move it forward to generate new insights. Good questions are focused and specific, aimed at inviting the class to dig more deeply into an issue. Good comments go beyond simple statements of opinion, using logic and evidence to offer relevant, focused, and constructive thoughts for the class to consider. Because discussions in large groups can suffer from a lack of continuity, comments that respond to preceding comments are particularly welcome. Please also note that although spirited debate is encouraged, making comments in a way that disparages or belittles others is absolutely unacceptable.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

We will be drawing on the following sources of required reading material for discussion in this course:

- Iansiti, Marco and Lakhani, Karim, Competing in the Age of AI: Strategy and Leadership When Algorithms and Networks Run the World, *Harvard Business Review Press,* 2020.
    - (You can order this book via Amazon or any other popular book distributor) This book was released last January. It is more of a popular press read than a traditional textbook. Thus, the UH bookstore does not list it as a textbook. I believe it is an essential read for anyone wanting to pursue a career in the digital space. However, we will use it as background reading to help you understand the dynamics in the case studies.

- Harvard Course Pack: Use this link https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/783427 to purchase the readings and case studies for this course.

- Selected Individual Readings (posted on Blackboard). There is only one. I will post it in Week 2.

Grading

Case Study Analysis (Initial Posts)	75%
Class Discussions and Responses	25%
Total:	100%

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Students with Disabilities:

The Center for Students with Disabilities provides a wide variety of academic support services to all currently enrolled UH students who have any type of mental or physical disability of either a temporary or permanent nature. These services include assistance with course accommodations, adaptive equipment, individualized exam administration, taped textbooks, wheelchair repair, library needs, registration, handicapped parking, accessible housing and transportation, as well as many other needs. If you feed that you may need assistance of this nature, you may wish to call the Center at 713-743-5400. In addition, you should let your professor know about any special needs as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty Policy:

The College of Business Administration is proud of the high quality of our students and our academic programs. We recognize the importance of academic honesty in maintaining our high standards. In the rare situation where there may be a bread of academic honesty, we would appreciate your assistance in bringing the situation to our attention. We will, of course, take appropriate preventative action in all cases. If you have questions about the Academic Honesty Policy, it is included in the [Student Handbook](). The staff of the Dean of Students Office is also available to answer questions.

UH CAPS Statement

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS ([www.uh.edu/caps)](http://www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.
http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html