MBAC 660
MARKETING STRATEGY
LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY MBA PROGRAM
SPRING, 2012
Thursdays 7:15 – 10:00 PM
Hilton 107

INSTRUCTOR

Robert Winsor, Ph.D.
Hilton 313
(310) 338-7413
FAX: (310) 338-3000
E-Mail: rwinsor@lmu.edu (please put “MBA 660 Student” in Subject Line)

OFFICE HOURS

Wednesdays and Thursdays: 2:00pm to 4:15pm, and 10:00 to 10:45 pm

REQUIRED TEXTS

Additional Material as required by the instructor

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The primary focus of this course is upon competitive strategy within the marketing and business environment. As such, this course is designed to prepare students to:

1. Understand, critique, and apply basic theories and models of competitive marketing strategy and competitive thinking;

2. Think analytically and critically regarding commonly accepted marketing and business strategy tools and techniques;

3. Develop original and practical ideas concerning strategic and competitive issues.
For some topics covered in other strategy classes, further discussion will be pursued in this class and is warranted in order to 1) address specific issues related to marketing, 2) clarify the contributions of marketing in that particular area, or 3) expose weaknesses or fallacies inherent in these concepts. Nonetheless, this course has been designed specifically such that overlap between this and other MBA classes is minimized. As such, a particular emphasis will be placed upon evolutionary competitive strategy within the context of various environmental and market conditions.

**Course Description:**

This course provides an in-depth analysis of competition and competitive strategy in the context of business from both theoretical and applied perspectives. Whereas numerous business classes discuss competitive environments, this course focuses exclusively on theories and strategies that can be used to achieve and enhance competitive advantage in the business marketplace. Competitive models, strategic metaphors, and concepts from game theory are explored in detail. Most importantly, the notions of competitive evolution and interdependence are emphasized and extensively explored. These concepts are then illustrated as they are commonly applied in the business world to enhance an enterprise’s market position. Additionally, the great dangers of applying “cookbook strategies” or off-the-shelf solutions to competitive situations are explained and illustrated.

**Learning Objectives:**

The overall objective of this course is to provide students with a thorough understanding of the basic theories of how competitive advantage is achieved in marketing and business, and the tools necessary for constructing unique competitive strategies within the context of highly competitive markets. More specifically, this course is designed to achieve the following learning objectives:

1. Understand, critique, and apply basic theories and models of competitive business strategy;

2. Develop logical thinking habits and the capacity to think analytically and critically regarding commonly accepted business strategy tools and techniques;

3. Develop original and practical ideas concerning strategic and competitive issues;

4. Understand the inter-relatedness of strategic actions in a competitive context and the manner in which these inter-relationships affect strategic outcomes;

5. Understand the evolutionary pattern of strategic development, and the historical context of this evolution over history;
6. Differentiate between unique strategies and off-the-shelf strategies, and understand the great importance of this distinction;

7. Understand how effective competitive business strategy strives for relative advantages in the marketplace, rather than absolute advantages;

8. Understand how strategic decisions are interdependent, and how decision-making in strategic situations is necessarily complicated because one must take into account the actions taken, or likely to be taken, by others;

9. Be able to craft unique competitive strategies from basic elements introduced in the class;

10. Be able to evolve existing strategies in order to meet new competitive threats.

COURSE POLICIES, METHODOLOGIES, AND EVALUATION

Methodology:

This course will incorporate a systems approach to learning. That is, the course will rely upon an integrated system of computer-assisted lectures, course notes, and independent reading/learning in order to maximize learning, reasoning, and class-participation concerning the marketing strategy process. Class lectures will be presented using a computer-assisted PowerPoint format. Students will be responsible for purchasing “Competitive Strategy: A Practical Guide, 2012” (Parts A & B), which contain copies of the PowerPoint slides presented in class, short cases, and other material as deemed relevant to class. These books are designed in order to maximize student efficiency by allowing students to absorb class and lecture material without the need to draw every graph, figure, or table presented in class. These workbooks also maximize the professor’s efficiency by allowing the course lecture to progress at a rapid rate without inordinately lengthy pauses for student note-taking. Students are expected to bring the relevant workbook to every class period and to take notes regarding the material presented. Please note that the material in these workbooks will not be made available to students in electronic form (e.g.: in a digital file or on “MYLMUConnect”) due to copyright issues.
Grading:

Grades will be assigned based upon performance on two examinations. Overall, grades will be assigned based upon total points earned in the class as follows:

- **Midterm Examination**: 100 points possible
- **Final Examination**: 100 points possible

**TOTAL**: 200 POINTS POSSIBLE

Final Grades may be adjusted (curved) upward, but will never be curved downward.

Make-Up Examination Policy:

Students who miss the midterm examination for any reason will be allowed to take a Make-up examination. However, this make-up exam may be more difficult than the originally scheduled exam and will be scheduled during finals week at a day/time convenient to both student and instructor. The final exam must be taken.

Attendance:

Attendance and participation are expected and encouraged. There is a strong correlation between students' attendance behavior and their performance in this class, since knowledge tends to be cumulative, and since lecture material is heavily weighted in the exams. However, no formal attendance or participation record will be taken. If you miss a day of class, do not ask the instructor for class notes or any other material concerning what was covered. Obtain the lecture notes from a classmate.

Instructor Office Hours:

I will endeavor to be in my office during the hours listed above. During these hours, I will be delighted to meet with you and discuss whatever is of concern to you. If it is impossible for you to see me during these hours, I will be happy to meet with you during other hours that we can mutually agree upon.

HONOR POLICY

Loyola Marymount University is a community dedicated to academic excellence, student-centered education, and the Jesuit and Marymount traditions. As such, the University expects all members of its community to act with honesty and integrity at all times, especially in their academic work. Academic honesty respects the intellectual and creative work of others, flows from dedication to and pride in performing one's own best
work, and is essential if true learning is to take place. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following: all acts of cheating on assignments or examinations, or facilitating other students’ cheating; plagiarism; fabrication of data, including the use of false citations; improper use of nonprint media; unauthorized access to computer accounts or files or other privileged information; and improper use of internet sites and resources. Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the “LMU Honor Code and Process” which appears in the LMU Bulletin 2010-2011 (see http://www.lmu.edu/about/services/registrar/Bulletin/Bulletins_in_PDF_Format.htm.)

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR AND UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

As an LMU Lion, by the Lion’s code, you are pledged to join the discourse of the academy with honesty of voice and integrity of scholarship and to show respect for staff, professors, and other students. Each instance of disruptive or unprofessional classroom behavior will result in 10 point deduction from your final grade. The decision as to whether a behavior is disruptive or unprofessional rests entirely with the Professor. Examples of disruptive and unprofessional behavior include: consistently arriving late for class; repeatedly engaging in conversations with fellow students during class time; text messaging, web-surfing, or any other use of any electronic devices (including cell phones); offensive comments or behaviors toward other individuals, etc.

Electronic Device Policy:

The goal of the professor is to create a classroom environment that is maximally conducive to learning and positive student interaction. As a part of this protocol, no electronic devices of any type may be used during class time. This prohibition includes PDAs, Blackberries and similar IM or texting devices, notebook or other computers, iPods, iPads, cellphones, smartphones, etc.

Examination Security Policy

Any student who, for any reason, leaves the classroom with any copy of an examination will automatically fail that examination. This penalty will be enforced even for accidental retention of the examination.
SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Americans with Disabilities Act:

Students with special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Daum Hall Room 224, 310-338-4535) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit http://www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the “LMU Honor Code and Process” which appears in the LMU Bulletin 2010-2011 (see http://www.lmu.edu/about/services/registrar/Bulletin/Bulletins_in_PDF_Format.htm.)

TENTATIVE NATURE OF THE SYLLABUS

If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision; students are responsible for any changes or modifications distributed either in class or by email.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

During the semester, relevant course material may be distributed via email. This material may include revisions to the syllabus, revisions to the course calendar or examination dates, or other pertinent course content. These communications will be emailed only to your student email address as listed on PROWL and as provided by the LMU registrar’s office. It is the student’s responsibility to check his or her student email account regularly, or have these emails automatically forwarded to a personal email account.
PERSONAL TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

In teaching this course, I have four primary objectives. These are:

1. My first and foremost priority in teaching is personal integrity and fairness in grading and in the treatment of students' needs. Please respect this priority and work with me to insure its implementation.

2. The creation of an environment that is conducive to learning and that encourages attendance, participation, discussion, and enthusiasm.

3. A focus on thinking and understanding, and insight.

4. Finally, I endeavor to create a classroom environment that is open to (but not uncritical toward) a diverse range of ideas and debate regarding issues related to course topics. Toward this goal, I present myself as a channel or catalyst of ideas rather than solely as a source.

Please be considerate enough to work with me in this class toward reaching these objectives. I need your help in making this class work.
# MBAC 660

## COURSE SCHEDULE FOR SPRING, 2012

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>LECTURE #</th>
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<td>JANUARY 12</td>
<td>A Foundation for the Study of Competitive Business Strategy</td>
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<td>The Environmental Determinism Perspective of Competitive Business Strategy</td>
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<td>The Strategic Choice Perspective of Competitive Business Strategy</td>
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<td>FEBRUARY 2</td>
<td>Toward the Development of an Evolutionary Perspective of Competitive Business Strategy</td>
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<td>The Critical Factors of Business Strategy: An Overview</td>
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<td>Competitive Strategy and the Environment</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td><strong>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</strong></td>
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<td>MARCH 1</td>
<td><strong>SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>General Approaches to Business Strategy</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>General Approaches to Business Strategy (Continued)</td>
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<td>A Deeper Analysis and History of Sloanism</td>
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<td>A Deeper Analysis and History of Sloanism (Continued)</td>
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<td>APRIL 5</td>
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<td>The Military Metaphor of Competition</td>
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<td>Game Theory and Competitive Strategy (Continued)</td>
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<td>MAY 3</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAMINATION (Regular Class Time)</strong></td>
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