Preliminary Syllabus

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Office Hours: By Appointment  
Teaching Fellow: TBA

Course Overview
This course focuses on the strategic management and understanding of multi-product, multi-location and multi-business firms. We examine the following topics:

1. Why do we have firms?  
2. What determines firm boundaries?  
3. Why do we have multi-business firms?  
4. How do multi-business firms create or destroy value?  
5. How are multi-business firms managed?

Whereas Business Strategy Analysis focuses on strategically managing individual businesses, Corporate Strategy Analysis focuses on the strategic management of issues specific to the multi-business firm. For example, corporate strategy issues for Disney might include whether or not Disney should own a range of businesses (including theme parks, restaurants, television networks, etc.), how those businesses should be entered (e.g., internal development, joint ventures, acquisitions, etc.), and how they can be synergistically combined to create value. Business strategy for Disney would include issues such as how the ABC network should be positioned vis-à-vis its competitors, or how the competitive advantage of Disney’s theme parks should be maintained.

Course Standards

The greatest value from graduate education is seldom realized immediately upon graduation. Such value is realized over a lifetime, and comes not from having a “bag of tricks” but rather from developing analytical, and problem-solving, skills. One of the most valuable abilities that you can develop and sharpen in graduate school is the ability to think critically and strategically, and to speak and write in a logical and compelling manner.

Accordingly, this is not a lecture course. You are responsible for a large portion of your own development. **You are required not only to attend classes, but also to carefully prepare for each class and contribute actively to class discussion. The compressed nature of the course makes it crucial that you prepare the assigned material for every class.**
Course Materials

- Coursepack available at NYU’s Professional Bookstore
- Blackboard Articles

Evaluation Criteria

This course requires effective class participation and written individual and group case analyses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Case Analysis</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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**Participation.** I will use a number of in-class activities to explore concepts and tools used in the course. Your effort and contribution on these activities will determine your participation grade. **I will cold-call students frequently, and at random.**

Please note that at the end of this course, you will be asked to evaluate class participation. These evaluations will be used to scale individual grades.

**Individual Case Analysis.** You are required to submit one written case analysis. You may choose to submit your analysis of any case we are going to discuss in class. Your analysis is due before the start of the class in which we will discuss the case.

Your case analyses should answer the assigned questions by effectively applying the course frameworks and models. Keep in mind:

- Each case analysis should be no longer than 800 words. Two additional pages can be used for appendices (e.g. tables and figures).
- Course writing guidelines should be followed (see course administration section of the syllabus).

All of your work must be original. You should analyze the case you are given; this means you should not use material that is beyond the scope or time frame of the case. While you may supplement financial information provided in the case (for example, with financial statements from competitors, etc.), you should be careful that the data pertains to the same years covered by the case. Any external information used must be properly referenced. Failure to properly reference any external source constitutes plagiarism. To avoid any confusion over the originality of your work, your team should work alone, and should not utilize any analysis found on the web, performed for previous classes, or from any other source.
**Group Final Exam.** You will work in **groups of 3-4** to submit one final exam utilizing the tools and concepts of the class. The case and exam questions will be provided on the first day of class.

**Course Communication**

A Blackboard website has been created for this course. I will post announcements on the Announcement section of the Blackboard welcome page. Please check at least once a day. I assume that within 24 hours you will see any announcement I post. When I have information I need to get to you more quickly than that, I will also send e-mail.

All assignments must be submitted in Blackboard. Otherwise, e-mail works best for everything except emergencies, when you should both e-mail and call us. Please include “CCN” in the subject line and provide your name whenever you send e-mail.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

See Attached

**OTHER ISSUES**

**Honor Code:** Please remember that you are governed the MBA Honor Code. Moreover, every student is obligated to report any suspected violation of that code. You can find more information on the MBA Honor Code at [http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/scorp/committee.cfm?doc_id=4797](http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/scorp/committee.cfm?doc_id=4797).

**Students with Disabilities:** If you are having trouble in class, I want to know about it as soon as possible. I will do my best to help students who, despite a sincere and solid effort, are experiencing difficulty. If you have a qualified disability and will require academic accommodation during this course, please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD, 998-4980) and provide me with a letter outlining recommended accommodations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Case(s)</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/22a m</td>
<td>9-11am</td>
<td><strong>Boundary of the Firm</strong></td>
<td>Nucleon, Inc CM: Chapters 2 (skim) &amp; 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/22p m</td>
<td>1-4pm</td>
<td><strong>Resources and Rents – Scale and Scope</strong></td>
<td>Walt Disney CM: Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1/29a m</td>
<td>9-11am</td>
<td><strong>Diversification</strong></td>
<td>Vivendi CM: Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1/29p m</td>
<td>1-4pm</td>
<td><strong>Modes of Diversification</strong></td>
<td>Google When to Ally and When to Acquire (BB); Managing Strategic Alliances (BB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1/30a m</td>
<td>6-9pm</td>
<td><strong>Mergers and Acquisitions</strong></td>
<td>Daimler-Chrysler Are You Paying Too Much for That Acquisition? (BB) Economist Article (BB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1/30p m</td>
<td>6-9pm</td>
<td><strong>Creating Corporate Advantage</strong></td>
<td>Cisco/Intel CM: Chapter 8 Economist Articles</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10pm</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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*This schedule is only a guideline. I reserve the right to change the schedule as necessary.*
Course Administration

Student participation and interaction are crucial to the success of this course. The opportunity for students to gain insight into the cases from their fellow students is of tremendous value. This can only be accomplished if you come to class consistently and are prepared to participate with questions and observations.

Assignment Format and Submission
MS Word or PowerPoint must be used. ASSIGNMENTS RECEIVED IN PDF FORMAT WILL NOT BE GRADED. All case analyses should be double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use Times New Roman 12 font.

All case analyses and presentation slides must be uploaded to Blackboard before the start of the class in which they are due. These documents must be in MS Word (PDF files will not be accepted).

When uploading work to Blackboard use the following file naming format:

Your First Name.Your Last Name.Case Name

For example, Elizabeth.Boyle.Intel

Elizabeth.Boyle.Nucleon

For group projects all Last Names of each group member should be included. For example,

Boyle.Liu.Dey.Intel

Late Submissions Will Not Be Accepted Under Any Circumstances
If your assignment is late, it will not be graded.

Use of Electronic Devices
The use of any electronic devices during class is prohibited unless you are instructed to do so by me. This includes laptops and cell phones.

Academic Honesty
Cheating, plagiarism, and/or doing work for another person which will receive academic credit are all impermissible. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help for an assignment or the presentation of unacknowledged material as if it were the student’s own work.

Team Participation Evaluation
You will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the relative performance of your team members at the end of the semester. If all of your teammates agree that one member was a poor performer (e.g. contributed less than the others or was disruptive in some way to the team process, etc.) I will reduce that student’s grade accordingly.
General Writing Guidelines

Be sure to use a good word processing program to check your work. A good resource for questions of grammar is *The Elements of Style* by W. Strunk & E. B. White (NY: Macmillan).

- No more than 25 words should appear on a single slide in a PowerPoint presentation
- Use bullet points to list evidence
- Bullet points should be no longer than 8 words
- Use correct spelling and grammar
- Be concise
- Avoid run-on sentences
  
  *If a sentence crosses more than two lines of text divide it into at least two sentences. 1 point will be deducted from your grade for each sentence that spans more than two lines of text.*
- Use subheadings (sections) to enhance clarity

Case Method, Analysis, and Grading

The case method is an effective way to simulate the types of decisions you will face as managers in the ‘real world’. Your management skills are enhanced by putting you in the manager’s place as described in each case. You will learn the most when you take a position on the decision(s) highlighted in each case. Like the manager that actually had to make the decision(s) presented in each case you will have to make recommendations without all the data you would want. *Remember there are no correct or incorrect answers but there are strong and weak case analyses.*

Strong case analyses will draw on the toolkit we have built in class up to the date of the case. The best case analyses will indicate which models/frameworks are being used and why.

Strong case analyses *will also:*

- Answer the questions asked
- Identify key assumptions
- Emphasize the evidence
- Exclude unfounded speculation and opinion
- Propose solutions that are specific and practical
- Include a brief discussion of alternatives not recommended
- Tables should highlight key points in your analysis
  - Tables in and of themselves are not analyses

Strong case analyses *will not:*

- Focus too heavily on minor (but interesting) issues
- Rehash case data
What I look for when grading a case analysis:

1. Is the analysis logically consistent and structured so that it effectively sells its recommendations?
2. Does the analysis incorporate the relevant tools from our toolkit?
3. Are the major issues identified? Are any assumptions upon which the analysis relies made explicit?
4. Are the criteria for selecting a recommendation stated? Are they appropriate and linked to the analysis? Is the recommendation specific and practical?
5. Do the exhibits (if any) support your argument? Are analyses in the exhibits done correctly?