

YORK UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
School of Administrative Studies
AP/ADMS 4900 - Management Policy: Part 1
Winter 2026
Section 'S'

INSTRUCTOR: Jon Kerr (jonkerr@yorku.ca)
Office Hours: Tuesdays by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to expose students to the many facets of business strategy and how they contribute to variance in firm performance (i.e., we seek to answer the question: why do some firms outperform while others fail?). Strategy and policy identification, formulation, and evaluation are developed through readings, interactive lectures and case discussions. Emphasis is upon integration of the Bachelor of Commerce subject areas students have become familiar with during the program and frameworks for the analysis of the strategic problems of general management.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course examines the strategic management process - identifying, formulating, evaluating, and implementing viable business strategies. The emphasis is on issues that affect the success of the entire organization. Accordingly, we will view the enterprise holistically, but will draw upon, and integrate into our analysis, your understanding of the various functional areas of business.

It is assumed that students are interested in the challenge of strategic management and solving strategic problems. To increase your competence in this area, extensive use of the case study method is employed. This allows us to practice our business decision-making skills in simulated general management roles. To maximize the learning experience, it is essential that all students be prepared to discuss the assigned cases.

In addition to learning about strategic concepts, you can expect to further develop your abilities in sizing up complex business situations and identifying core problems and issues. Through the case studies, you will have the opportunity to analyze qualitative and quantitative data, both internal and external to the firm, and assess what implications it may hold for the firm's success. You will learn to identify and critically evaluate existing and alternative strategies and gain the confidence to recommend specific courses of action. Finally, you will gain an understanding of the issues involved in effectively implementing a change in strategic direction, including addressing the issue of control.

COURSE FORMAT

This course is scheduled to be offered by way of in-person learning, including all lecture sessions and exams.

The course will initially focus on theory and insights from the textbook and other sources. We will work with cases starting in Session 2 and become more dependent on a case-based approach over time. You should expect to actively engage throughout the term by leading and/or participating in case discussions, presenting detailed case analysis, and critically assessing the work of your peers.

We will strive for a balanced approach in terms of sharing responsibility for achieving the course objectives and having some fun in the process.

PREREQUISITES AND ENROLMENT POLICY:

Prerequisites: 78 credits including AP/ECON 1000 3.00; AP/ECON 1010 3.00 and AP/ADMS 2320 3.00 (or equivalent). Course credit exclusions: None. PRIOR TO FALL 2009: Prerequisites: 78 credits including AK/ECON 1000 3.00; AK/ECON 1010 3.00 and six credits in management science. Course credit exclusion: AK/ADMS 4900 3.00.

Students are personally responsible to ensure that they have the required prerequisites as stated in the course outline or in the course calendar. Students who do not have the prerequisites are at risk of being dropped from the course without notice at any time during. The department will not be responsible for refunds resulting from students being dropped from a course due to a lack of the appropriate prerequisites. The responsibility is yours. Should students have any questions about the enrolment policy, please contact the School of Administrative Studies (Room 282, Atkinson Building). Instructors do not handle enrolment related issues. Due to the nature of this course, permission for late enrolment beyond the add without permission date shall not be granted.

REQUIRED TEXT

Hitt, M. A., Ireland, R. D., Hoskisson, R. E. & Harrison, J.S. (2024). Strategic Management: Competitiveness and Globalization: Concepts & Cases, 14th Ed. Cengage. E-book access = \$78

CASE STUDIES

Case studies for each session are identified below. Students can purchase the assigned cases through the Ivy Publishing web site: <https://www.iveycases.com/Default.aspx>. Estimated cost = \$60

OTHER

Report on Business, Financial Post, The Economist, Canadian Business, Harvard Business Review, or some other source for reliable business news (try for once per week if you can)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1 – January 6th

Lecture: Course information
What is strategic management? The strategic management process/framework
Strategy and organizational performance (metrics)

Text: Chapter 1

Session 2 – January 13th

Lecture: Strategic thinking - SWOT, analytical models, economic scenarios
Generic competitive strategies (cost leadership, differentiation, focus)
Competitive parity, advantage (temporary/sustainable), firm/industry lifecycles

Text: Chapter 4

Case: Coral Divers Resort (Product Number: 9B08M041)

Session 3 – January 20th

Lecture: Environmental analysis - Porter's five-forces model, macroenvironmental analysis, etc.

Competitive rivalry – drivers, analysis, action, responses, outcomes, co-opetition
Strategic groups
Text: Chapters 2 and 5
Case: Extraordinary Journeys: Wild Times in the Safari Industry (Product Number: 9B18M164)

Session 4 – January 27th

Lecture: Internal environment – RBV, VRIO/N analysis, ABV, dynamic and adaptive capabilities, distinctive/core competence
Value-chain/net analysis
Intellectual and social capital
Managerial preferences
Text: Chapter 3
Case: Porter Airlines (Product Number: 9B10M039)

Session 5 – February 3rd

Lecture: Organizational analysis and design - structure, processes, control
Strategic leadership - leadership styles, organizational culture
Managing change - types of change, change tactics.
Text: Chapters 11 and 12 (not covered on midterm)
Case: Victoria Heavy Equipment (Product Number: 9B08M037)

Session 6 – February 10th

Lecture: Corporate vs. business level strategy
Growth strategies (modes and directions)
Diversification – The multi-business firms
Vertical integration, mergers, and acquisitions
Text: Chapters 6, 7.1-7.4 and 9.1-9.4
Case: Sony Corporation's Aibo: An Intelligent Decision? (Product Number: 9B18M036_P)

Session 7 – February 24th

Lecture: Exam review
Case: TBA

Saturday, February 28th – 10 AM – 12 PM (noon)

MID-TERM: This common midterm for all sections of ADSM 4900 covers the material from sessions 1 through 6 unless otherwise indicated in the exam information circular. Students are responsible for the assigned readings whether covered in class or not. There will be no questions specific to the cases discussed in class. Details and pre-exam guidance will be provided in advance of the exam.

Session 8 – March 3rd

Case: Urban Axes: First Mover in US Experiential Entertainment (Product Number: 9B21M021)
Groups: Presentation prep.

PRESENTATIONS

Session 9 – March 10th

Due: Groups presenting – Groups 1 and 2
Groups critiquing – Groups 3 and 4

Session 10 – March 17th

Due: Groups presentations – Groups 3 and 4
Groups critiquing – Groups 5 and 6

Session 11 – March 24th

Due: Groups presentations – Groups 5 and 6
Groups critiquing – Groups 1 and 2

EXAM

Session 12 – March 31st

Final Exam: In class - case study – open book

COURSE GRADING

Mid-term Exam	30%	Short answer, scenario-based questions
Group Assignments	30%	Presentation, critique
Participation	20%	In-Class Participation
Final Exam	20%	Case Study Exam

MID-TERM EXAM

This exam will be based on the theories, constructs and other content presented in the textbook. The exam will include primarily scenario-based, short-answer questions and will draw from the text material in chapters 1 through 7 and 9. You will be responsible for the specified material whether it has been covered in class or not. You will not be responsible for the specifics of in-class case studies as part of this exam but how we applied course concepts to those cases must be understood. This exam covers a lot of material, so keeping up with your readings will be essential to your success! You will be given specific guidance in terms of what material to focus on for exam purposes. This will be posted well in advance of the exam together with sample exam questions.

GROUP WORK

Working in groups has proven to be an effective means in accomplishing this course's objectives. Accordingly, the class will divide itself into groups of 5 or 6 students (names of group members are due in session 3). Groups are expected to meet regularly, review the assigned cases prior to each session, and work cooperatively to complete the group presentation and critique assignments.

Group Presentation

- ◆ For the group presentation, you will be assigned a case that requires rigorous analysis of all factors in the strategic management process. You will be required to formulate a strategy and recommend specific implementation details. Finally, you will make a formal presentation of your recommendations (30-minute maximum). You should expect some challenging interaction from your classmates, who will also critique your work.
- ◆ More information on the presentations and the assigned cases will be provided one week prior to the due dates.

Group critique

- ◆ For the session when your group is assigned to critique another group's presentation, you will be responsible for identifying both the strengths and weaknesses of their analysis and argumentation. You will do this right after the other group's presentation by making a brief (10-minute maximum) presentation. You will then facilitate a more inclusive discussion amongst your classmates. This means that you will have to be as knowledgeable about the assigned case as the presenting group is!

Group Grade

- ◆ The group grade is determined as follows: presentation ☞ 23%, critique ☞ 7%
- ◆ Please note that your classmates will participate in the evaluation and grading of your group presentation.
- ◆ Also, group members will participate in evaluating each individual's performance through a peer evaluation process and this will be reflected in individual students' grades.

PARTICIPATION

A high degree of engagement and participation is expected from all students. The frequency and quality of your contributions to the learning process will determine your grade. Students who advance the discussion and add to the collective learning experience will be rewarded. To succeed here, you should have read the assigned chapters from your text and **must** have prepared the assigned case!

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

RELEVANT UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Please refer to the website (<https://sas.laps.yorku.ca/students/>).

Course Policies: All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- Student Rights & Responsibilities
- Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Please also review the following course policies:

Deferred Exams: Deferred standing may be granted to students who are unable to write their final examination at the scheduled time or to submit their outstanding course work on the last day of classes. Details can be found at <http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/deferred-standing>

Academic Honesty: The Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies considers breaches of the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty to be serious matters. Suspected breaches of academic honesty will be investigated and charges shall be laid if reasonable and probable grounds exist. Students should review the York Academic Honesty policy for themselves at: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>

Students might also wish to review the interactive on-line Tutorial for students on academic integrity, at: http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/

Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy: The grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) shall be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and, under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for 'full year' courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course.

Note: Under unusual and/or unforeseeable circumstances which disrupt the academic norm, instructors are expected to provide grading schemes and academic feedback in the spirit of these regulations, as soon as possible. For more information on the Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy, please visit: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=86>

Reappraisals: Students may, with sufficient academic grounds, request that a final grade in a course be reappraised (which may mean the review of specific pieces of tangible work). Non-academic grounds are not relevant for grade reappraisals; in such cases, students are advised to petition to their home Faculty. Students are normally expected to first contact the course director to discuss the grade received and to request that their tangible work be reviewed. Tangible work may include written, graphic, digitized, modeled, video recording or audio recording formats, but not oral work. Students need to be aware that a request for a grade reappraisal may result in the original grade being raised, lowered or confirmed. For reappraisal procedures and information, please visit the Office of the Registrar site at: <http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/grades/reappraisal/index.htm>

Accommodation Procedures: LA&PS students who have experienced a misfortune or who are too ill to attend the final examination in an ADMS course should not attempt to do so; they must pursue deferred standing. Other students should contact their home Faculty for information. For further information, please visit: <http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/exams/deferred/index.htm>

Religious Accommodation: York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. For more information on religious accommodation, please visit: <https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: The nature and extent of accommodations shall be consistent with and supportive of the integrity of the curriculum and of the academic standards of programs or courses. Provided that students have given sufficient notice about their accommodation needs, instructors shall take reasonable steps to accommodate these needs in a manner consistent with the guidelines established hereunder. For more information, please visit the Disabilities Services website at: <http://www.yorku.ca/cds/>

York's disabilities offices and the Registrar's Office work in partnership to support alternate exam and test accommodation services for students with disabilities at the Keele campus. For more information on alternate exams and tests please visit <http://www.yorku.ca/altexams/>

Private Third-Party Tutoring Companies, Academic Honesty and Support Resources

Many private, third-party tutoring companies advertise their services to YorkU students. One way you can help eliminate these advertisements is by changing your eClass profile settings to private (see instructions below). Some of these private companies claim to be affiliated with, or recognized and supported by, York University. Some also claim to help you by providing you with quiz and test answers, suggesting that this practice is safe and permitted by York. These claims are not true. York University has not officially recognized or endorsed any third-party tutoring service. When you are provided with quiz, test and exam answers, you run the risk of violating the university's academic honesty policy. Students have been caught using these services to cheat and gain unfair advantage over honest students. The cheating students and "tutors" have received academic dishonesty punishments ranging from failing courses, to being expelled, to losing their YorkU degrees. Officially supported resources to help students learn course material will be provided by YorkU officials, such as your professors and your department. These services are offered at no cost to you as a student. Your professor will likely provide weekly office help hours to meet with students and if you are a first- or second-year student and would like help with course material, make sure you join one of our weekly Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS). If you require help with any of your numeracy-related courses that involve math, statistics or Excel, drop in online to meet with one of our peer tutors at the Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele (SNACK). If you are ever unsure of whether a resource is allowable or endorsed by YorkU, please feel free to email the Department of Economics at lapsecon@yorku.ca and they would be happy let you know.

To hide your email address in eClass: Step 1: Click your name on the top-right of the eClass website, then click "Profile" on the drop-down menu; Step 2: Under "User details" click "Edit profile"; Step 3: From the "Email display" drop-down menu choose "Hide my email address from non-privileged users"; Step 4: Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the "Update profile" button.