
MANA 5395**Formulating and Implementing Strategy**

2025, Fall, Sections 702 & 704

online



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Office Hours: Mondays, 1-6 pm, Tuesdays, 11-4pm, or by appointment; I am also available on FreeConferenceCall.com (712-432-1500, access code 603666), Zoom (<https://uttyler.zoom.us/j/3240123269>, 415-762-9988 or 646-568-7788; Meeting ID: 324 012 3269), or cell phone (936-250-1475)

I. PREREQUISITES

From the UT Tyler 2025-2026 Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog: "Prerequisite: Should generally be completed in the final semester."

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

In this course, you will learn how to critically evaluate the strategic actions of large corporations and other institutions.

As described in the UT Tyler 2025–2026 Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog:

Students adopt the top management's view of the firm and focus on positioning the firm to gain strategic advantage in the competitive marketplace. Industry analysis, planning and implementation of competitive strategy, evaluation of strategy alternatives, utilization of appropriate controls, and the evaluation of the administrative process are emphasized.

III. COURSE MATERIALS

You must have access to the course on Canvas. The following materials are also required:

Dyer, J., Godfrey, P., Jensen, R., & Bryce, D. (2024). Strategic Management: Concepts (5th Edition), WileyPLUS Card. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ISBN-13: 978-1394161928.

This is our primary text. You must purchase electronic access to it through Canvas (the easiest way to do that is by clicking on the Wiley Course Resources link in the left menu in Canvas and following the prompts). I recommend selecting the option that includes a physical copy of the textbook (although getting a physical copy isn't required).

I've used this textbook for several years (after cycling through several different textbooks). It is clearly written and relatively concise, and an animated "whiteboard" video accompanies each chapter. These whiteboard videos are particularly well done.

Harvard Business School Publishing Course Pack, MANA 5395 060 (Fall 2025):
<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1325872>.

Harvard Business School Publishing maintains one of the most extensive and well-known libraries of business cases in the world. They've been publishing cases for decades, and their materials are widely used in MBA programs and executive education. I've set up a course pack through their site, and we'll be using one case from it this semester. You'll need to purchase access—it costs around \$5. Click on the link above and follow the prompts to access the course pack.

Beal, B., MacMillan, K., Woodward, M., & Schnarr, K. (2016). The Case Project Guide: How to Write a Great Business Case as a Class Project. London, Ontario: Ivey Publishing. Product #IM1051.

I co-authored this guide with four colleagues, and we published it through Ivey Publishing to secure copyright protection and to receive professional credit for formal publication. By distributing it as a downloadable PDF through Ivey, we were able to keep the cost as low as possible (around \$15). You'll need to purchase a copy because your capstone project in this course involves writing your own business case, and this guide will walk you through that process step by step.

Additional readings and materials, if required, will be posted on Canvas.

IV. LATE WORK

If you need to submit late work, please contact me in advance to discuss the situation.

Please review the course schedule carefully and check your Patriots email account and Canvas regularly for updates, announcements, and due dates.

For additional information about university policies, consult the UT Tyler Handbook of Operating Procedures, Section 5.10.2: <https://www.uttyler.edu/hop/>, and the list of student rights and responsibilities available on the Student Services website (under Campus Resources): <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/>.

V. COURSEWORK AND GRADING

A. Summary of Grading Categories

Grades are assigned to the following categories. These categories are weighted as indicated:

Module Reports

10%

Chapter Quizzes & Other Assignments	20%
Online Discussions	35%
Class Project	35%
Project Assignments	10%
Final Project	25%
Total	100%

Tentative Grade Ranges:

90%+ = A
80%+ = B
70%+ = C
60%+ = D
<60% = F

Note: I may lower grade cutoffs (e.g., 89% might earn an A), but I won't raise them above the standard thresholds (e.g., an A will never require more than 90%).

B. Module Reports (10%)

This course is divided into ten modules (see Canvas for details). Each module includes a module report that lets you confirm that you've completed the tasks listed in that module's "Do and/or Deliver" section. You'll find the link to each report inside its corresponding module on Canvas.

C. Chapter Quizzes & Other Assignments (20%)

There's a short quiz for each textbook chapter. These quizzes are comprised of relatively easy true/false questions and are intended to help you stay on track with the reading and reinforce key ideas. They're open-book, so you're welcome to use the textbook or other course materials.

Each question allows two attempts, but there's a 50% score reduction for each question on the second try. Additional details about quiz settings are provided once you access the quizzes on Canvas.

D. Online Discussions (35%)

Overview

This course includes five online discussions. These discussions are designed to give you an opportunity to demonstrate that you've read the course materials, thought critically about them, and can use key concepts and frameworks in thoughtful ways to address different issues in different contexts. They also provide space for the healthy exchange of ideas. Discussions are graded and serve as an important assessment tool. They are one of the primary ways I evaluate your engagement in the course.

Discussions 1 and 2 will be case-based. We'll examine one case from the textbook (Case 4, a case that focuses on Southwest's strategic options after saturating its short-haul

markets) and one from the Harvard Course Pack (Apple's decision to enter the EV market, see Canvas and/or the course schedule for details). These early discussions are front-loaded intentionally to give you a chance to see what a business case looks like and to help you get familiar with how strategic management cases are structured. That matters because later in the course, you'll be writing your own business case as your capstone project.

Because these discussions serve as a substitute for traditional assessments, it's important that I verify your identity and confirm that you're prepared to participate meaningfully. Before joining Discussions 1 and 2, you need to complete a short, timed discussion quiz using the Respondus LockDown Browser with Respondus Monitor. These quizzes consist entirely of open-ended questions about the assigned case and are designed to ensure that you've done the reading and are ready to contribute thoughtfully. You'll have 30 minutes to complete each quiz. During the quiz, you may reference printed copies of the cases and your own handwritten notes.

Discussions 3, 4, and 5 will focus on broader strategic topics. This is a tentative schedule. I may bring in current events or other timely issues, so these topics may change. As of now, this is what I have planned:

- Discussion 3 will challenge you to think about Martin Parker's critique of business schools in *Bulldoze the Business School*. Parker argues that management education is not ideologically neutral. This discussion will ask you to consider whether our textbook is part of the problem.
- Discussion 4 will challenge you to analyze strategy through a "value flow" lens. You'll work through scenarios that highlight the difference between creating new value or transferring or extracting value from other stakeholders. The purpose is to focus attention on the distributive and allocative consequences of firm-level strategic decisions.
- Discussion 5 will challenge you to reflect on the relationship between business strategy and society and on how to distinguish between "good" strategy and "bad" strategy from a societal perspective.

Participation & Grading

Discussions will take place on the Canvas discussion board. I'll post prompts, and you will need to respond to either my prompt or to your classmates' posts. Think of it as a classroom conversation stretched over several days. You should engage thoughtfully, stay on topic, and utilize course materials to ground your responses.

There's no hard post quota, but students who earn full credit typically post 3–5 meaningful contributions. Off-topic, superficial, or low-effort posts won't help your score.

Tips for Success:

- A well-written paragraph is usually enough for a strong post—quality matters more than quantity.

- Read what others have posted before jumping in; connect your thoughts to the flow of the discussion.
- Ask thoughtful questions if you're unsure how to contribute—good questions count.
- You're not expected to answer every prompt; jump into the threads where you can add value.

Discussions are only open for a limited time. Once they close, you won't be able to post. If you miss one and have a valid reason, email me, and we'll talk about how you can make it up.

E. Class Project (35%)

Overview

Your project for this course is to write a decision-based business case. Unlike traditional teaching cases (which often run 20+ pages and cover broad swaths of strategic territory), decision-based cases are significantly shorter and focus narrowly—aside from essential background—on a single, concrete strategic decision. That decision should be expressible as a direct question: “Should Company X do Y?” (where Y is a clearly defined strategic action).

The two cases we'll discuss early in the course—Southwest's strategic options after saturating short-haul markets (Discussion 1) and Apple's decision to enter the EV market (Discussion 2)—are both good models. Each presents a focused decision with clear alternatives. Your case should do the same.

To support you in this process, you'll be using *The Case Project Guide*. This guide walks you through the entire project in manageable steps. You'll submit a series of incremental assignments designed to keep you on track. These are graded primarily on effort: if you complete them thoughtfully and on time, you'll earn most or all the available points. Together, these assignments are worth 100 points.

The final deliverable—your case and a short accompanying teaching note—is worth 250 points and will be graded using a detailed rubric available on Canvas.

How to Download the Case Project Guide

To download the guide, go to the Ivey Publishing website: <https://www.iveycases.com>

In the search bar, type: “Case Project Guide Brent Beal,” then follow the purchase instructions to download the PDF.

I'll also post a direct link to the guide in the Case Project module on Canvas. The cost is minimal (approximately \$15), and the guide is required. We chose to publish it through Ivey to obtain copyright protection and secure formal publishing credit, not to make money.

Teams

You're encouraged to complete this project in teams of 3–4 students. You may form your own team by submitting a request (see the upload link in Module 2 for instructions). If you don't submit a request, you'll be randomly assigned to a team. If you'd prefer to work solo, email me for approval.

Note: Peer evaluations will be collected midway through the project and again at the end. Only students who make meaningful contributions to the assignments should be listed on group submissions.

Project Requirements

Your case must be archival—based on publicly available information (library databases, news sources, analyst reports, etc.), not field-based interviews. If you have access to a company and want to propose a field-based case, contact me first.

For this project, a strategic decision is defined as a decision typically made by an organization's top leadership that involves a significant commitment of resources, is not easily reversed, and has long-term implications for the firm's resources, capabilities, competencies, and/or market positioning.

This semester, all case projects must focus on a company operating in the digital mental health platform space. This is a rapidly evolving and strategically rich submarket within healthcare, shaped by challenges related to growth, platform design, clinical oversight, competition, and regulation.

You must select one of the following companies:

- Talkspace – www.talkspace.com
- BetterHelp (a Teladoc company) – www.betterhelp.com
- Lyra Health – www.lyrahealth.com
- Headway – www.headway.com
- Brightline – www.hellobrightline.com
- Cerebral – www.cerebral.com

Each of these companies faces meaningful strategic choices—around expansion, business model design, clinical strategy, regulatory compliance, and/or growth tradeoffs. Your job is to select one of these firms, identify a clear decision they're facing (or could plausibly be facing), and build your case around that decision. If you would like to use a different company in this same space, please contact me for approval.

Final Submission

Your final case and teaching note are due at the end of the course. You will not be required to publish your case, but if you produce strong work and are interested in publication, I'm open to discussing the next steps and possibly working with you on a submission.

Additional Notes

We will not workshop cases this semester due to time constraints. Several examples of decision-based cases are posted on Canvas.

V. GETTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

If you have a question, check Canvas (module folders, announcements, and the “Questions & Comments” discussion board). If you can’t find an answer there, check your Patriot email (announcements posted on Canvas are forwarded there).

If you still need help, the best way to reach me is by email: bbeal@uttyler.edu. I try to respond to all messages in my inbox at least once a day (on business days), typically in the late afternoon. If you don’t hear back within 24 hours (excluding weekends/holidays), feel free to resend or text me a reminder.

On weekends, you can try texting or calling my cell (936-250-1475) or emailing me at brent@thebeals.net. I will do my best to respond if I can.

For group meetings, I like to use FreeConferenceCall.com or Zoom (Meeting ID: 324 012 3269). You’re also welcome to drop by my office: COB 350.53. If you're making a special trip, please contact me in advance to confirm my availability.

I have a LinkedIn account, although I don't check it much: [bbeal@uttyler.edu](https://www.linkedin.com/in/bbeal).

VI. UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND INFORMATION

An updated electronic version of *University Policies and Information* can be found here: <https://www.uttyler.edu/offices/academic-affairs/files/syllabus-information.pdf>