
MANA 4395
Strategic Management

2026, Spring, Section 001
COB 211: TuTh 2:00 – 3:20 p.m.



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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 9-2pm, Thursday, 9-2pm, 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: MANA 3311 or MANA 3315, BLAW 3301, FINA 3311, MARK 3311, MANA 3370, MANA 3312, should be complete prior to taking the course. Corequisite: MANA 3305, should be taken prior or concurrently with MANA 4395."

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:

Capstone course that integrates accounting, economics, law, finance, management, and marketing in the solution of an organization's problems. Focus on the problems and perspectives of the firm's top management team as they attempt to achieve and retain competitive advantages.

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 4395 001(Spring 2026):
<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1377104>.

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. 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., Woodwark, 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%
Discussions, Quizzes & Other Assignments	20%
Exams	35%
Class Project	35%
Project Assignments	10%
Final Project	25%
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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. Discussions, Quizzes & Other Assignments (20%)

This course includes five 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.

These discussions will begin in the classroom but will also include an online component. This will be explained in greater detail prior to the first discussion.

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.

Discussions 3, 4, and 5 will focus on broader topics in strategic management. 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 focus on several critiques of what is typically taught about management and business in business schools,*
- *Discussion 4 will address questions about value creation and value transfer,*
- *Discussion 5 will challenge you to reflect on the relationship between the core principles of strategic management and broader societal welfare.*

Discussions will take place in class and on the Canvas discussion board. More details will be provided prior to our first discussion.

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. Exams (35%)

There will be two exams during the semester. A final exam will also be given. I will use either your average on the two semester exams or your score on the final exam, whichever is higher, to calculate your final course grade. Exams will be comprised of a combination of multiple-choice and short essay questions.

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 narrowly focused—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 – <http://www.headway.co>
- 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 assignment 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 another company that doesn't appear on this list, 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 workshop these cases. More details will be provided later in the course.

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).

My office hours this semester are 9-2pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please let me know if you're stopping by at a specific time just to make sure I'm not already scheduled with another student. If you need help outside of office hours, 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 (712-432-1500, access code 603666) or Zoom (Meeting ID: 324 012 3269). You're also welcome to drop by my office outside of office hours: 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.

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-rev122025.pdf>