Instructor:        Yasemin Kor, Ph.D.  (ykor@moore.sc.edu)

Course Time & Place:  Wednesdays, 5:30pm-8:15pm

Office:        BA 766 (Management Department)
Office Hours:        4:30pm -5:15pm on Wednesdays (or by appointment).

Course Objectives:

A. Each student should develop an understanding of the key theories, issues, and contributions in the field of strategy management.

B. Each student should develop the skills necessary to evaluate, critique, and ultimately contribute to the literature on strategic management.

C. Each student should develop at least one creative idea to be developed into a research paper during the semester.

D. Each student should develop an awareness and knowledge of alternative approaches used in empirical research in strategic management. Students should take note of various empirical settings, common and unique datasets, and the research methods employed.

Course Material:

Most of the course material will consist of journal articles. They are available through the USC online library system. Also, I will provide print copies of a few older articles. We will also read several chapters from the Mahoney (2005) book, which is a great addition to your personal library.

Course Requirements (100 Points)

(1) Class Participation & Discussion Leadership 20 points
(2) Weekly Papers & Paper Critiques 20 points
(3) Research Paper 30 points
(4) Exam (take-home) 30 points

To complete this course, you will prepare individual and participate in class discussions. You are responsible for all assignments that are in the syllabus. Everything needs to be turned in on time.

(1) Class Preparation and Participation (20 Points):

The course will be taught using a seminar style. Everyone should thoroughly prepare all of the readings assigned for each session. Everyone should be prepared for a discussion of these discussion questions:

- What is the research gap the paper identifies and aims to address?
- What are the key constructs and how they are defined?
- What are theoretical motivations (the theoretical logic and whys of the paper)?
- What are some of the key insights, relationships, and findings of the paper?
- What do you find most interesting about the paper? Most puzzling?
- How does this article connect with some of the readings from previous weeks? Is it consistent or contrasting (explain)?
- How does this article compare/contrast with the other readings assigned for this week?
- What are some of the managerial implications of this paper?
- Can you think of one new/future research idea based on this article?

Participation in discussions is critical and an important part of the course. The class participation grade is based on your regular daily class participation. Evaluation of your performance will be based on your preparedness (informed participation), self-initiated contributions, and contributing to a productive learning environment (listening, respecting, and giving room to everyone for discussion). In our profession, it is not enough to know ‘in your own mind’; you are also expected to be able to explain to others and have a productive conversation. Silently attending class indicates to me you are either unprepared to discuss the day’s readings, or you are not willing to (try to) contribute to the collective learning and discovery process. The class climate is a friendly one, inviting expression of diverse ideas; thus, I encourage you to join the conversation and take ownership of your learning.

Discussion Leaders: In most weeks, each doctoral student will be a discussion leader for a specific article. You should read this article closely and be ready to address the questions above. You will start the discussion for this article (e.g., what’s the research gap, what are the key constructs), and I will work with you to co-facilitate the discussion. For this article, you should also prepare a list of discussion questions for the class (5 questions). Email these questions to me at least an hour before class. Also submit a copy of the questions in class.
(2) Weekly Papers & Paper Critiques (20 Points):

You are required to write a weekly paper of approximately 4-5 pages (double spaced) that provides your personal summary, interpretation, and critique of the articles assigned for the week. These weekly papers are due at the beginning of class. Please use 12 point font, and 1-inch margins on all sides.

These weekly summary/critique papers are for your benefit. They will be extremely valuable in preparing for class examination(s), comprehensive examinations, and for future referencing. They will help you develop a repertoire of the key theories, topics, and ideas in the field of strategic management. Directly or indirectly, these summaries will be beneficial throughout much of your career. In addition, these papers will help to improve your writing skills, which are paramount to writing a good dissertation and publishing in academic journals.

In preparing your weekly papers, try to write about two paragraphs on each paper. One paragraph can be more descriptive in nature (for example, research gap, key constructs, key relationships and theoretical logic, and key findings). The second paragraph should reflect your personal interpretation of some of the ideas and findings of the study (what you find most insightful, compelling, or unconvincing, etc.). You should make a good effort to comment on how a particular study connects with, contrasts some of the other papers for the week (or readings from previous weeks, if applicable). You can also discuss managerial implications and any future research ideas inspired from reading the article. You probably won’t be able to provide all of these in two paragraphs, and for some papers you will be inspired to write more than others. But the idea here is that, for each article, you should provide brief descriptive notes (1st paragraph) and personal interpretation and reflection (2nd paragraph). If you find it easier, your descriptive notes can be in an outline format. However, the personal interpretation should be in narrative style. Personal interpretation should demonstrate integrative qualities (connecting papers together).
(3) Research Paper (30 Points):

A paper is due at the end of the semester. This paper can take two forms. One alternative is to write a conceptual or empirical manuscript that could be submitted to Strategic Management Journal, Academy of Management Review or Academy of Management Journal after further revision. This should be a quality manuscript that has been substantially refined, and is ready to send to a national meeting. This paper must be original work, utilize theories from strategic management, and be relevant to the topics covered in the seminar.

The second alternative is to develop a high quality research proposal. This proposal would include justification of the research question, theoretical background and literature review of research on the question (including your value added contribution). The proposal should also present new theoretical development (i.e., hypotheses) and research design to test the question.

To help you structure your work on this major project I would like to have the following items from each student on the dates specified below. The topic chosen by the student needs the approval of the instructor. Do not prepare the paper or go too far before gaining instructor approval.

February 6 2-3 page outline of the proposed paper (this is necessary to gain approval of professor).

April 3 Three copies of a first draft of the paper are due, including supporting references (use AMJ or SMJ reference style). (about 15-20 pages of text, double-spaced, excluding references)

May 1 Completed papers are due. (about 20 pages of text, excluding references and figures)

The first two of the above will not be graded, but rather will be used to provide feedback to the student to facilitate development of the paper. Copies of the first draft will also be given to two other students in class to provide reviews and feedback to the author. I will separately provide feedback. Therefore, each person will benefit from feedback from three people on the first draft.

There will be no incomplete grades given for incomplete papers. If you want to further polish the paper, it can be done after the semester but this work will not be graded using the incomplete grade.

(4) Exam (30 Points):

The exam will cover material discussed during the semester. Exam questions will be similar to those that may be included on doctoral comprehensive exams. The purpose of the exam is to have the student integrate and synthesize the material presented in the semester. The exam may pose 5 to 6 questions and you will be required to write 3 to 4 questions. Therefore, you will have some choice in the questions that you answer. The exam will be take-home.
Sequence of Topics and Assignments:

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CLASS SESSIONS AND READING LIST

SESSION #1 Wed. January 16 What is Strategy?

Lessons From a Blue-Collar Millionaire (Nick’s Pizza and Pub).


Oster, S. (1999). Modern Competitive Analysis, Chapter 4 “Understanding the Impediments to Entry.”

SESSION #2 Wed. January 23 Resources Approach – I (RBV - Theory)


Ex ante Resource accumulation:


Ex-post Resource advantage:


SESSION #3 Wed. January 30 Resources Approach – II (RBV/KBV and Empirical Examples)

Empirical Examples (Ex-ante Resource accumulation and Ex-Post Resource advantages):


Theory:


SESSION #4 Wed. February 6 Strategic Renewal and Path Dependency


SESSION #5 Wed. February 13 Strategic Renewal, Entrepreneurship & Demand-Side Approach


SESSION #6 Wed. February 20 Behavioral Theory, Attention, and Cognition

Background Reading:


Articles:


SESSION #7  Wed. February 27  CEO/Top Management Teams - I


SESSION #8  Wed. March 6  CEO/Top Management Teams - II


Spring Break 😊
SESSION #9 Wed March 20 Agency Theory and Corporate Governance


SESSION #10 Wed March 27 Transaction Costs Theory, Firm Boundaries, and Vertical Integration


SESSION #11 Wed April 3 Strategic Alliances

*** First Draft of Research Paper Due ***

Bring 3 copies of the paper to class.

Readings:

Automotive alliances multiply. This article from Economist can be found at the link below. http://www.economist.com/node/16322641


Marriage at 30,000 feet. This article from Business Week can be found at the link below. http://www.businessweek.com/printer/articles/8015-making-the-worlds-largest-airline-fly

SESSION #12 Wed April 10 Research Paper Development Workshop

Paper critiques are due.
SESSION #13  Wed  April 17  Mergers and Acquisitions


SESSION #14  Wed  April 24  Acquisitions and Diversification Strategy

Acquisition papers:


Diversification:

The Tata Group: Out of India (Economist article available at the link below)
http://www.economist.com/node/18285497

