Elizabethtown College
Department of Business
BA 497
International Business Seminar

INSTRUCTOR:  Dr. Hossein Varamini
SEMESTER:  Spring 2010
OFFICE:  Hoover 223
OFFICE PHONE:  361-1278
E-MAIL:  varaminih@etown.edu
WEB-PAGE:  http://users.etown.edu/v/varaminih
OFFICE HOURS:  M W  2:00 - 3:30
                Th  3:45 - 5:00
                F  11:00 – 12:00
                And by appointment

PREREQUISITE:  Senior International Business Majors

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE:
As a capstone course in international business, the course is designed to provide both the theoretical
perspectives and the practical applications of global business. The course will integrate concepts,
principles and practices from prior courses in accounting, management, finance and marketing to
prepare students for a successful career in international business.

Special emphasis will be on a strategic management approach to international business issues,
development of the modern international economic system, role of multilateral and national
institutions in the management of that system, and the increasingly important nexus between
international commercial relations among nation states and the operations of international enterprise.
We will examine the range of considerations faced by business and government as they interact in the
international marketplace, including governmental actions to influence the terms of trade and
investment, and the operation of multinational corporations. Furthermore, given that culture and cross-
national ethics and social responsibility are recurring themes in international business and
management, you are encouraged to consider how culture and ethics impact international business and
managerial decisions with respect to every topic included in this course.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:
After successfully completing this course, students will be able to

1. Explain the global environment in which businesses must compete.
2. Integrate concepts covered in core business courses.
3. Explain how international strategic alternatives for firms are identified, evaluated and
   implemented.
4. Demonstrate group decision-making process by working on cases, simulations and other
   projects.
5. Recognize some of the ethical issues in international business and to analyze the consequences
   of unethical business decisions.
6. Effectively communicate, both orally and in writing.
7. Explain the role of cross cultural communications on business decisions.
8. Demonstrate acceptable presentation skills (e.g., demonstrates confidence and poise through
   body language, eye contact, vocal tone).
REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:


3. Harvard Business School Cases, available for this course online (www.HBSP.com).


RECOMMENDED COURSE MATERIALS:


5. Thomas Friedman, The World Is Flat.


7. Morrison, Conaway, and Borden, Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands.


10. The Economist, Business Week, Financial Times and/or international business periodicals.

11. Reliable Internet sources.

COURSE FORMAT:
Active learning is the essential part of this capstone course. It is something that you do, not something that is done to you. Therefore, instruction in the course will rely primarily on presentation by students, class discussion of the readings and cases, with some videos and guest speakers thrown in to keep things more lively and interesting. But the learning that occurs – what you eventually take away from the course – is a function of what you put into the course. Active involvement through participation in case and lecture discussions is essential for you and your classmates, to derive maximum benefit from this course. My goal in this course is to serve as the facilitator of the learning process and to challenge you to learn as much as you possibly can about the major concepts in international business.
Furthermore, according to a recent survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the top skills/characteristics employers are seeking among college graduates are communication skills, integrity, teamwork skills and interpersonal skills. This course is, therefore, designed to enhance such skills in our students.

We will rely on the main textbook and the supplementary required readings to discuss different topics of this course. I expect to present some of the issues in international business and I also anticipate presentations of various topics by students in the class. We will analyze several Harvard Business cases which will help us apply the course materials to the real world. We will also spend some class time on current issues so that you will have opportunities to apply the various theoretical perspectives to the solution of practical business problems. We will select the current issues for class discussion primarily from *The Business Week, The Economist, The Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times*; so you are expected to read their reports on important international business events and be ready to discuss them in class. In addition, a variety of short videotapes and presentations by guest speakers with extensive experience in international business will give you a vivid presentation of the issues that an international manager is likely to face.

I strongly encourage all students to carefully read the assigned materials before each class. You should always be prepared to participate in class discussions and contribute your fair share in team projects.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Harvard Business Case Analysis:** We will use international business cases as well as other written assignments to illustrate and to bring into sharper focus certain topics that are covered by the readings and our discussions. Cases are examples of businesses attempting to cope with actual situations. In the cases, the general managers must determine what the issues and answers are which will help address the critical matters facing the firm and its manager(s).

   Students are expected to analyze and present Harvard Business cases as group projects. Each member of the group is expected to provide equally shared work. A separate handout provides guidelines and study questions for each case.

   This requirement has two components:

   a) **Written Report:** Each group will be randomly assigned one case for a comprehensive analysis. I will collect the written report at the beginning of the class when the case is to be presented. This part has 75 points.

   b) **Oral Presentation:** In addition to a written case analysis, each group is responsible for the oral presentation of its case to the class. This part has 25 points.

   During the case presentation, other class members will have the responsibility of raising pertinent questions, “constructively” criticizing the arguments of the presenting group and offer counter-arguments.

**Please Note:**

i) Written case reports must be typed, double-spaced, 6-8 pages long, stapled at left top corner and editorially correct (spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and so on.).
ii) Since the case analyses are group projects, I will give each member of a group the same grade on the work unless I have clear evidence that there is considerable variation in contributions among its members.

2. **Harvard Business Case Briefs:** On days when we discuss a HB case, each non-presenting student will prepare and submit a brief analysis of the case. Each analysis must succinctly address the questions provided for the case and each is designed to sharpen your abilities to make decisions under pressure concerning matters about which you are well-informed. The question(s) will call for conclusions and recommendations rather than mere recitation of case facts.

The case briefs should be about two pages (double spaced) in length and must be typed. **Don't waste time summarizing the case!** Get to the point. In some cases, there is no single "right answer" to some of the questions in the case assignments--different approaches are likely to be feasible and most cases offer the potential for a range of different recommendations. In other cases, you need to provide specific answers, conduct the needed computations and justify your answers based on hard evidence. Logic is the key to a good case analysis.

I will use the following grading scheme to evaluate your Case Briefs: 0 (F)=Analysis not submitted; 1-3 (D)=brief, cursory comment(s) given; 4-7 (C)=evidence of having read the case or assignment; 8-9 (B)=evidence that you thought about and critically analyzed the case or assignment; 10 (A)=significant thought and preparation displayed; critical thinking and synthesis of course and case/assignment concepts are clearly in evidence.

Questions to be considered when writing up each case are given on separate Guidelines for Case Analysis.

This part has 100 points.

3. **Class Participation:** Class participation is essential in this seminar course. Just showing up for class every period will not be sufficient. Your class participation score is based on my judgment of three “P”s: Preparation, Presence, and Participation. I expect that you will participate in topic presentation, class discussions and that your comments and questions will be intelligent and thought provoking. The participation grade is based on the quality of your participation. By quality, I specifically mean the ability to state an idea or recommendation and to explain why you believe your idea is the correct one. Basically, I want to see the ability to develop and present logical arguments. Every day that we meet, we will have either: (a) a case, (b) a topic presentation, (c) an in-class exercise, or (d) a guest speaker. Therefore, **get ready!!**

The bulk of each class day will be spent in discussion – either of the text, articles or case. The bulk of the course is not to lecture directly from the book or the articles (which would simply repeat what you’ve read). Rather, you are expected to read the assigned material and be ready to apply your knowledge and expand on it in class whatever topics may arise. The key is to be able to understand and convey the main ideas in the book and articles and then to be able to expand on those ideas to add your own insight in class discussion.

To make this very important component of your learning as anxiety free as possible, I will allow you to mark your own participation grades. Also, to encourage your participation, your participation grade will be based on whether you were present and participated in class or not. Each day you will grade yourself according to the following scale:
0: Absent from class  
1: In class, but did not participate  
2: In class, but minimal participation  
3: In class and participated by making good comments and/or answering questions  
4: In class, made major contributions (shined!)

You must prepare, in advance, the chapter and/or cases, reading assignments, and questions which are due on that day. You should ensure that you are preparing the right assignment—especially if you are absent on a given day. In any case, the quality of your participation will be enhanced if you are prepared.

Discussing examples from current events are especially welcome and appreciated. You should listen to your fellow classmates, who may have something interesting to say which applies to our discussion. Students are expected to ask questions directed at presenters (i.e., fellow classmates), guest speakers, the instructor, or other students and to offer answers to questions raised by others. Following a visit by a guest speaker or following a field trip, each student will complete a one-page evaluation form which will be distributed in class at the completion of the talk or the field trip. This will be included as participation on those particular days.

While I will attempt to call on different individuals at various points, you should be "proactive" in seeking to participate in the discussion. If, at times, I seem to be calling on the "same individuals," it may be that others in the class are not raising their hands! So, to prevent monopoly situations, come prepared to participate. I like to think of participation as CONTRIBUTION. You must contribute to learning of each other!

We will be involved in numerous LEARNING EXERCISES (e.g., role playing, simulations, case analyses, in-class activities and exercises) throughout the course. You are expected to be fully engaged in these exercises for the benefit of all in the class. Your involvement, engagement, and contribution to these learning exercises will be part of your participation grade.

For students who find it difficult to speak out, I suggest: Prepare something ahead of time. This approach has many advantages:

a. You know what you are going to say.
b. It is likely to be well-thought-out.
c. It can be a jumping-off point. Responses to your comment(s) "fill out" the discussion.
d. You will gain confidence in speaking out. Everyone has something to contribute. How many times have you said to yourself, "I was thinking the same thing—I wish I had said something!" Now you can be the one who says something from which others benefit.

This part has 100 points. Your grade on this part can be lowered by absences.

4. Topic Presentations: Students in small groups will be responsible to make presentations to class on pre-assigned topics. These presentations should be prepared based on materials from
the textbook and the supplementary readings related to the topic. The presenting group is expected to lead the discussion on the assigned chapter/topic and develop appropriate strategies to get other students involved. The group, for example, should plan to organize a debate on the topic and/or bring additional articles to class for discussions. Non-presenting students for each topic are also expected to read all the assigned materials and prepare for class participation. This requirement has 100 points.

Each presenting group is expected to prepare three questions with complete answers from their assigned readings for distribution to class. Some of these questions will be included in each of the exams.

5. **Simulation:** *The Business Strategy Game* provides an opportunity for student teams to formulate and implement a strategy for a simulated athletic footwear company. Teams must decide the company’s primary competitive weapon(s) (e.g., low cost, advertising, or quality) as well as its product line (broad or narrow) and geographic (one or multiple countries) scope. Decisions will be made weekly, and the quality of these decisions will be gauged based on their efficacy relative to those by other teams. Teams that understand class concepts AND read the *Player’s Guide* (available online) invariably do better than those teams that just “wing” it.

Students will be organized in teams of three or four members to conduct a simulation throughout the semester. *The Business Strategy Game* will be an integral part of this course. Each student is expected to fulfill his or her responsibilities to the team in the preparation and completion of all parts of this team project. Two quizzes will be given early in the semester on readings assigned from the *Player’s Guide*. Following these quizzes and two practice decisions, each team makes strategic decisions for several weeks. The team’s score will depend, in large part, on how well your team competes in the World Athletic Footwear Industry. Additional grade factors include: your individual quiz scores, your team’s written report (similar to an Annual Report) and the presentation following the completion of the game and your peers’ evaluation of your performance as a member of the team. Written peer evaluations will be used at the conclusion of the game to verify individual performance.

During the last part of the semester, each team will prepare a well written *Annual Report* to summarize, evaluate and justify the team’s decisions. Each team will also give a short presentation, followed by a brief question and answer period. This presentation should describe your team’s overall strategy, some of the specific tactics used, successes and failures, adjustments made and plans for the future.

The Business Strategy Game has 100 points. Preparation of the Annual Report for your company and your oral presentation will have 50 points. More information and sample Annual Reports will be provided to students in class.

6. **Major Field Test in Business:** This is a nationally standardized test in the field of Business, prepared by the Educational Testing Services (ETS). The test is a two hour, 120 multiple choice questions covering accounting, economics, management, quantitative techniques, finance, marketing, legal and international areas. You will be ranked in your class based on the national percentiles. This test is *mandatory* for all students in this course. This test will be given on **Thursday, Feb. 11, 2010** and it will count for 50 points.
7. **Exams:** Three examinations will cover the material included in the readings and/or in class discussions. The following is the schedule for the exams:

Exam 1  Thursday, March 4, 2010  100 points  
Exam 2  Thursday, April 15, 2010  100 points  
Final Exam  Friday, May 14, 2010 (11:00 – 2:00 p.m.)  100 points  

Questions on exams will be based on textbook and supplementary readings. Exams could be any mixture of multiple choices, computation problems, short answers or essay questions.

As a rule, make-up examinations and incompletes will not be given. Students missing any one of the examinations will not be permitted to make it up unless:

a. notification was given PRIOR to exam, and  
b. only if the student can produce evidence of extraordinary circumstances verified by a College official.

**GRADING:**  
The breakdown of the grade for the course is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>HB Case Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>HB Case Briefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>a. The Business Strategy Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>b. Annual Report &amp; Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Topic/Chapter Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Major Field Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>900</td>
<td>Total</td>
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Grading will not be more stringent than the following: (total points and %)

- 900 - 837 (100 - 93) A  
- 836 - 810 (92 - 90) A-  
- 809 - 783 (89 - 87) B+  
- 782 - 747 (86 - 83) B  
- 746 - 720 (82 - 80) B-  
- 719 - 693 (79 - 77) C+  
- 692 - 670 (76 - 73) C  
- 656 – 630 (72 – 70) C-  
- 629 – 603 (69 – 67) D+  
- 602 – 567 (66 – 63) D  
- 566 – 540 (62 – 60) D-  
- 539 – 0 (59 – 0) F  

**STATEMENT ON DISABILITY:**
If you have a documented disability and need reasonable accommodations to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements, you must:

1.) Contact the Director of Disability Services, Dr. Kristin Sagun, in the Center for Student Success, BSC room 228 by calling 361-1227.  
2.) Meet with me within two weeks of receiving a copy of the accommodation letter from Disability Services to discuss your accommodation needs and their implementation.
REMINDER: Students must bring to my attention accommodations they may use in order complete this course. Students will be accommodated as law requires, but remember, by law, initiation must be made by the individual student, not the instructor.

PLEDGE OF INTEGRITY:
All students in this course are expected to adhere to the Pledge of Integrity, as outlined in the College catalog.

a. All exams are closed book and closed notes.
b. Each of your Simulation Reports must be the result of the work by members of the group.
c. Each HB case analysis must be the result of the work done by members of the group.
d. You may discuss the HB cases and other assignments with others in this class, but your case briefs should be the result of your own work.
e. The use of any references (books, articles, web sites, etc.) in your written assignments must be correctly, clearly, and completely identified.

Any violation of the Pledge of Integrity will be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set forth in the Student Handbook. Appropriate classroom decorum involves treating others with respect in the classroom, arriving on time, and not leaving early unless absolutely necessary. If you must leave early, please advise the instructor before the class session. If you know you will have to miss class, it is considerate to advise the instructor of your anticipated absence.

POLICIES:
1. Be prepared to participate in all class discussions and activities. You are expected to read the assigned chapters and prepare answer to cases before coming to class.

2. Come to class on time. As a matter of courtesy, I ask you to be in your seats and ready to work at the beginning of class. If you must miss class, it is considerate to inform me ahead of time whenever possible.

3. Turn in all assignments on time. All assignments are due at the start of the class on the day that they are to be turned in to me. If you need your assignment to actively participate in class discussions, bring a photocopy along to class.

4. In the event of a missed class for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining the information you missed during your absence.

5. No provision is made for earning extra credit in this course. You should treat each assignment as an opportunity to do your best work. Make-up assignments are not to be expected.

6. All case briefs, HB case analysis or other reports should be typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins all around and editorially correct (spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and so on). A copy of each graded assignment, with the instructor's comments, may be kept on file.

7. Please make sure to turn off your cell phones during the class meetings.

8. Please do not use plastic holders when you turn in your papers. A simple staple in the upper left hand corner is all that is necessary.