

Course Syllabus
wayne.smith@csun.edu
[updated: Thursday, August 14, 2025]

Course: BUS 497a
Title: Capstone: Strategic Management (3 units)

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school.”

---Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Program: Bachelors of Science, Management
Other Business and Economics majors
College: CSUN Nazarian College of Business and Economics

Semester: Fall, 2025
Class: 13470
Day/Time: Wed 7:00pm - 9:45pm
(Wed 8/27 - Wed 12/10, 16 weeks)

Location: BB1206

Delivery Format: in-person

Lead Student: Wayne Smith, Ph.D.

Office Room: BB4225

Office Hours: Wed 6:00pm – 7:00pm (and by appointment)

Office Phone: +1 818.677.4524

Email: wayne.smith@csun.edu (Subject Line = “[CSUN Bus497a Wed]”)

Public Web: <http://ocw.smithw.org/2025fall/bus497a-13470/>

Private LMS: <http://canvas.csun.edu/> (will be used later in this course)

Tentative Exams: *Midterm* (Wed., Oct. 15), *Final* (Wed. Dec. 17)

Required Materials (Bookstore):

1. Gamble, J., Peteraf, M., and Thompson, A. (2021) *Essentials of Strategic Management* (8th ed.), McGraw-Hill (ISBN 978-1-264-12433-6).
2. Two (2) “Scantron Form 882” (50 questions each side)

Required Materials (non-Bookstore):

1. Library Materials—the URL is on the course web page

Recommended Materials:

1. Hacker, D., and Sommers, N. (2021) *A Writer's Reference* (10th ed.), Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston:MA. ISBN-13 978-1319332935
2. Wall Street Journal (20-30 minutes daily, in printed or online form)
[<https://libguides.csun.edu/news/WSJ>]

You must bring your required materials, including any instructor-supplied name tag or desk tent card, with you to each class.

Course Description:

This course integrates previous coursework, and introduces concepts and approaches for analyzing, formulating and implementing business interdependencies between the functional areas within organizations, and examining how these are impacted by external factors.

Attendance in class is required. This course is designed on a traditional university schedule. This course requires, at a minimum, three times the number of hours per week outside of class as the number of hours in class.

Also, students who wish to add must attend each class and submit all assigned work.

Course Prerequisites:

This course requires 1), completion of BUS 302, BUS 302L, FIN 303, MGT 360, MKT 304, 2), a passing score (i.e., 8 or higher) on the Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam, and 3), status as a graduating senior (i.e., successful completion of the “graduation check” procedure). All prerequisites will be strictly enforced.

Learning Objectives:

The primary emphasis in this course is placed on acquainting students with the theory and practice of strategy. Naturally, the theory and practice in BUS 497 builds upon the work developed and mastered in all lower-division and upper-division courses, including General Education. Additionally, developing skills,

knowledge, and abilities in strategy requires deliberate, focused practice. Thus, this course involves active learning, experiential activities, seminar (interactive) discussion to help design, implement, and assess the strategy and leadership skills critical to contemporary business and organizational life. The specific objectives are to:

- Given a broad set of information—pieces of which may vary considerably in relevance—students can identify critical issues the organization is facing.
- In identifying critical issues, students draw on and synthesize concepts from a variety of functional areas of business.
- Given a broad set of information—pieces of which may vary considerably in relevance—students can make relevant, valuable, and reasonable strategic recommendations for the organization.
- In making strategic recommendations, students draw on and synthesize concepts from a variety of functional areas of business.
- In making strategic recommendations, students display significant understanding of the resulting implementation issues that managers need to deal with.
- Students use appropriate strategic management concepts and language in effectively communicating about their analyses, including when identifying critical issues and making recommendations.
- Improve skills in the area of management communication, including oral and written communication.

Pedagogical Approach:

The course will use a variety of approaches including lectures, videos, class discussions, assignments, analyses of business news and cases, and in-class, experiential exercises, including extemporaneous debate.

Learning Rhythms and Patterns:

I tend neither to read nor summarize the required reading materials in class. I tend to offer clarifications, differences of perspectives, or explorations of the core material. Additionally, I tend not to use a large number of presentation slides, much less post them online. Students must allocate sufficient out-of-class time to do the required reading in order to participate in class and ask substantive questions as necessary. Students will need to have mastered necessary skills in reading comprehension, retention, and recall. Each class session will generally begin with an opportunity to ask questions regarding the required reading

materials or lecture topics from the previous class session. Each class session is generally oriented around one or two learning themes. The textbook materials support the core ideas of those themes, the peer-reviewed and other materials support key theories and models of those themes, and the non-peer-reviewed and other materials support key ideas in practice or working examples.

Examinations:

There will be two examinations (a mid-term and a final) scheduled in advance. I may give cumulative exams, although I usually exclude specific material. The final exam will cover the chapters covered in class as well as in-class discussions and other non-textbook materials. Due to time constraints, we will not be able to cover each and every aspect of the textbook readings or other readings for class. Nonetheless, you are responsible for all the material (i.e., it is “fair game” for the exam) unless explicitly directed otherwise by the instructor. No make-up exams will be given without a signed note from a medical doctor or public safety agency.

Assignments:

There will be a few individual assignments, and at least two team-based assignments. The assignments will be described in advance and will be available on the course website.

Assignments and reports announced in class may consist of self-assessments, case analyses, or short write-ups. Assignments and reports are due promptly at the beginning of class. Assignments and reports not submitted promptly at the beginning of class (I will make a “last call” announcement) are assessed an immediate 50% point penalty. No assignments or reports will be accepted after the end of the class session without a signed note from a medical doctor or public safety agency. Therefore, if you fear you might miss class or might not be able to turn in your assignment on time, you may give it to another student to turn in on the correct day and at the correct time. Assignments and reports will be generally graded on straightforward point scheme (“scoring rubric”) enumerated within each assignment. In addition, the writing requirements will be scored for each assignment and report as well (in general, I take off 10% for each error in language use and composition).

Be sure to collect your scored exams, assignments and reports (in other words, anything you turn in) and retain them in your records.

Exercises:

There may be one or more exercises in the course. Some exercises are completed in-class, and some are completed out-of-class. Exercises will always be due in-class.

There will be at least two exercises. The exercises are similar to “pop quizzes” that you may be familiar with in other classes; you will need to keep up with the reading, classwork, and assignments.

Participation:

I occasionally ask for volunteers in class. I often provide “Engagement and Commitment” (aka “participation”) points to students for this effort. Additionally, if I call on you and you are either absent or not prepared, you will lose such points. You can also lose such points in other ways, such as not picking up scored/graded assignments and reports. There is extrinsic and intrinsic value to volunteering in class and being prepared for class.

Grading System:

The contribution of each component to the final grades will be based on the following breakdown:

Component	Relative Weight
Engagement and Commitment	16%
Exercises	28%
Assignments	28%
Exams	28%

Weights within the “Engagement and Commitment” (i.e., “Participation”), “Exercises,” “Assignments,” and “Exams” components are distributed evenly. The Department of Management strives for some uniformity in final letter grading distributions. Therefore, students are ranked in class by weighted points. Letter grades are not assigned to any quiz, exam, assignment, or report. For each exam, I will provide not only the mean and standard deviation, but also the relevant letter grade percentiles as well. These percentiles can be used as a guide as to help assess your relative performance in class. Each student has the same opportunity to earn high marks. Students should study diligently and strive for high marks on a persistent basis. All of your work matters. There is no “non-important” work in this class.

Students need to attend every class and be on time. Additionally, you must bring standard 8.5 x 11 notebook paper, and a blue pen or black pen with you to class each day.

Grades will be assigned with plus/minus suffixes.

I have minor hearing loss in my right ear. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand and wait until I call on you. It helps me to be able to see you before you begin your question. Thank you in advance. All audio or video recording of class is prohibited.

Classroom Disruptions:

Please ensure that the audio portion (“ringtone”) of your cell phone is off during class. No interaction with your cell phone, including texting, is permitted during class. If you wish to use a computer in class to take notes, you must sit as far forward in the class as possible (usually in the first row of the room).

Academic Integrity:

Any cheating in or out of class will not be tolerated and will be reported. Cheating could result in a student being expelled from the University. Additional classroom behavior requirements for this class are listed at:

<http://ocw.smithw.org/general/behavior.pdf>

At the start of the semester:

My class roster identifies students by name, CSUN ID, class level, and major. On the first day of class, I know very little about each student. However, I have found that some students benefit by visiting me in my office during scheduled office hours at least once very early in the course. Please do let me know if you fall into one of the following categories:

Differently-abled students. The textbook for this course is available in electronic form for students who are registered with the CSUN Center on Disabilities. Further, all materials in this course have been designed to be accessible as possible to those with visual, aural, motor, and cognitive impairments. If there are additional needs, please let me know as soon as possible.

Military service. If you are either currently in the active service, reserves, or ROTC, or will be attending OCS soon, please let me know. In particular, I want to ensure that the class schedule doesn't conflict your service schedule. I also would like student veterans to self-identify themselves to me as well. Veterans have unique experiences and can make important contributions to a management class.

Student athletes. I try to attend at least one game or meet for each student athlete, even if your sport is in a future semester. Again, you will need to self-identify yourself to me.

International students. Managing expectations is difficult; managing expectations regarding higher education and culture is *extraordinarily* difficult. Please see me as soon as possible if you do not completely understand any aspect of this course, including writing and grading standards.

At the end of the semester:

I do not discuss any aspect of scores or grades via email after the last class session. I don't discuss any aspect of scores or grades after final grades have been posted to SOLAR.

Students who earn an "A" or "B" may request a written letter of recommendation from me. If such a letter is desired, please try to ask me before the end of the following semester. A request for a letter of recommendation begins and ends with a discussion in my office during office hours.

Acknowledgements:

I am the last Ph.D. student to take a class from Peter Drucker. Peter is arguably the most important individual in management theory and practice, ever. I am indebted to Dr. Abe Feinberg for sparking an abiding passion in quantitative methods and, perhaps more important, what we call now "complexity science". I am indebted to Dr. Deone Zell who introduced me to the theory and practice of "social networks."

The first two individuals have passed away. As much as I have learned from these individuals, I have more to learn from my students.