

MGT 385 Organizational Strategy

Illinois State University · College of Business · Department of Management · Fall 2026

Section: Section 1

Instructor: Joao Fernando Rossi Mazzoni

Meeting Days and Time: Monday / Wednesday, 9:35 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.

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Location: State Farm Hall of Business 354

Office: State Farm Hall of Business 227

Course Dates: August 17 to December 5, 2026

Office Hours: Mon and Wed, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., or by appointment

Credit Hours: 3.00 (Majors Only)

Required Text. Thompson, A. A., Peteraf, M. A., Gamble, J. E., and Strickland, A. J. (2024). *Crafting and Executing Strategy: The Quest for Competitive Advantage (Concepts and Cases)*. McGraw Hill. ISBN 9781264336722.

Teaching Statement

Our strategic management course will create an engaging and interactive learning environment to equip students with essential skills for navigating different and complex business realities. We will integrate theoretical frameworks with real-world applications, moving students from understanding core concepts toward applying, analyzing, evaluating, and formulating strategy through case studies and collaborative projects. Emphasizing ethical considerations, my goal is to guide students to comprehend the broader implications of strategic choices. Through discussions and practical exercises, I will instill a passion for strategic thinking, preparing students for leadership and roles that contribute to the long-term success of organizations in a dynamic global business environment.

Approach and Philosophy

This class will transition from lecture to hands-on. The lecture portions provide the foundational knowledge required to think critically about the impact of existing theories on strategy and how they relate to the business environment. The hands-on portions add an aggregative set of challenges that move you from applying and analyzing frameworks in cases toward evaluating options and creating original strategy, taking you from passive to active strategist.

Education, formal or informal, is the first step to moving ahead. You are your life's entrepreneur. Take charge, be inquisitive, and be ready to push yourself. It is **your** journey.

Course Description and Objectives

Catalog description. Integration of the decision-making processes involved in each of the major functional areas of business.

This course is designed to provide students with the knowledge and practical experience to identify business strategies, contrast them to competitors, and give a course of action for the company in its transformation efforts. The primary focus is to comprehend the tools available to business owners and managers to position their organizations on a value-generating path. Topics covered include opportunity evaluation, industry analysis, and the importance of resources and capabilities in developing strategy. The course will be hands-on, and lectures will

take the student far but not to the finish line. Class participation and peer collaboration are key to a good rhythm in the flow of activities and to student learning.

Learning Goals

Students will be ready to identify value creation and deterrents in current and future business strategies. The knowledge gained will be a foundation to understand better how industries and businesses work and the rationale for decisions made in corporate and entrepreneurial settings, and to connect beyond business to other fields and life experiences. Students will learn to identify possible shortcomings in companies before reaching for cookie-cutter solutions, and to weigh more sophisticated solutions before committing resources.

By completing this class you will learn tested and widely implemented frameworks that some of the world's best companies use to create value and achieve outstanding financial performance. These include:

- Setting the company's direction
- The external environment
- The company's tools and resources
- Generic strategies
- Competitive position
- Competing in new environments
- Corporate strategy
- Ethics, CSR, and sustainability
- Organizational development
- Culture and leadership

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the major frameworks of strategic management, including setting company direction, external-environment and industry analysis, resource and capability analysis, generic competitive strategies, and corporate strategy.
- Apply these frameworks to real companies in order to characterize their competitive position and identify their available strategic options.
- Analyze a firm's external environment and its internal resources and capabilities to determine the sources of value creation, value deterrents, and competitive advantage.
- Evaluate alternative strategies against a firm's specific situation, weighing trade-offs and resource commitments rather than defaulting to cookie-cutter solutions.
- Formulate and present a coherent and actionable strategic recommendation for a company undergoing transformation, integrating ethical, social responsibility, and sustainability considerations while collaborating effectively in a team.

Grading Policy and Grading Scale

At the end of the semester, I will enter your course grade with the University registrar. This grade represents the quality of your work and your engagement in becoming a corporate strategist. Your grade embodies your effort and commitment to your professional future. There will be no rounding, curve adjustment, or other manipulation

beyond your effort. This is the best way to maintain the value of your degree and that of your peers. All grade-related conversations will take place during office hours. The grading scale is shown below.

Grading Scale	A	B	C	D	F
	100-90	89-80	79-70	69-60	Below 60

Grades will be calculated as follows.

Component	Weight
Midterm	25%
Knowledge Assessment Test	25%
Group Project	40%
Class Participation	10%

Group Project. Instructions and milestones will be provided throughout the semester. The final project presentations take place during the last week of classes.

Midterm. There is a midterm exam covering Chapters 1 through 6, taken in class.

Knowledge Assessment Test. There is a second in-class exam, the knowledge assessment test, covering Chapters 7 through 12 and held near the end of the semester. There will be no makeup exams except where required by University policy, such as University-Authorized Activities, documented isolation or quarantine, bereavement, religious observances, or approved disability accommodations. Students must notify me in advance whenever possible and provide appropriate documentation.

Class Participation. Class participation is based on direct engagement during class, which includes answering questions posed in class, contributing to discussions, and taking part in in-class activities. Consistent, active involvement counts toward your grade, and preparation and participation matter in this course and in the business world.

Extra Credit. Extra-credit activities may be offered at various points throughout the semester.

Assignment Expectations

Clear communication is key to business success. If the presentation of your ideas in an assignment needs improvement, it will affect your grade. I am open to illustrations, collages, and videos, but business standards facilitate adoption and growth, so use your time to strengthen professional presentation. Written assignments must be submitted on time. If you would like writing or academic support, ISU offers tutoring and academic-support resources, and I am glad to point you toward them during office hours.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct and any additional syllabus language. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized or unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work as your own, is a form of academic dishonesty under the Code of Student Conduct.

Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site without proper authorization and attribution is a form of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure whether something used in your work requires

attribution, please reach out to me as soon as possible. Allegations of academic dishonesty will be referred to Student Conduct and Community Responsibilities for review under the Code of Student Conduct. Students found responsible for academic dishonesty may also be assigned a grade penalty by the instructor.

By enrolling in this course you agree that required papers, exams, projects, and other assignments submitted for credit may be submitted to an originality-review service such as SafeAssign or Turnitin to evaluate them for originality and intellectual integrity, and that such work may be added to the service's document database.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT may be used in this course at specified times with instructor guidance and permission, so long as the use is properly disclosed through in-text citations, quotations, and references. Please refer to the style manual that aligns with your discipline for attribution guidelines. Any use of generative AI must be responsible and ethical, which means complying with all privacy and data-protection requirements and having appropriate permission to enter data into a tool. Clarify any question about whether data may be entered into a generative AI tool with me before doing so.

Schedule of Classes

The schedule below is expected. Any necessary changes will be announced and explained as far in advance as possible. Group-project milestones are noted on the calendar, and additional detail will be provided throughout the semester.

FALL 2026 M/W COURSE CALENDAR				
Week	Month	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	August	Mon. 17	Introduction and Course Overview	Syllabus review
		Wed. 19	Special Lecture	
2		Mon. 24	Chapter 1. What Is Strategy and Why Is It Important?	
		Wed. 26	Chapter 2. Charting a Company's Direction	
3		Mon. 31	Chapter 2 (continued). Vision, Mission, Objectives	
September	Wed. 2	Chapter 3. Evaluating the External Environment		
	Mon. 7	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS		
	Wed. 9	Chapter 3 (continued). Industry and Competitive Analysis	Project teams formed	
	Mon. 14	Chapter 4. Resources, Capabilities, and Competitiveness		
	Wed. 16	Chapter 4 (continued). Value Chain and VRIN		
	Mon. 21	Chapter 5. The Five Generic Competitive Strategies		
	Wed. 23	Chapter 5 (continued)		
	Mon. 28	Chapter 6. Strengthening a Company's Competitive Position		
	Wed. 30	Chapter 6 (continued) and Midterm Review		
	October	Mon. 5	MIDTERM EXAM (Chapters 1-6)	
Wed. 7		Chapter 7. Competing in International Markets	Project proposal due	
9		Mon. 12	Chapter 7 (continued)	
		Wed. 14	Chapter 8. Corporate Strategy and Diversification	
10		Mon. 19	Chapter 8 (continued)	
		Wed. 21	Chapter 9. Ethics, CSR, and Sustainability	

11		Mon. 26	Chapter 9 (continued)	
		Wed. 28	Chapter 10. Building a Capable Organization and Executing Strategy	
12	November	Mon. 2	Chapter 11. Managing Internal Operations	
		Wed. 4	Chapter 11 (continued)	Project progress check
13		Mon. 9	Chapter 12. Corporate Culture and Leadership	
		Wed. 11	Chapter 12 (continued)	
14		Mon. 16	Course Synthesis and Assessment Review	
		Wed. 18	KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT TEST (Chapters 7-12)	
15		Mon. 23	FALL BREAK	
		Wed. 25	NO CLASS	
16			Mon. 30	Group Project Presentations
	December	Wed. 2	Presentations and Course Wrap-Up	Final deliverables due
FINALS WEEK: DECEMBER 7-11, 2026				

Syllabus Changes

Dates and assignments documented in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Every effort will be made to provide any changes to the class in writing. Verbal notification during a class meeting will constitute sufficient notice.

Course Conduct Policy

Attendance. Students missing more than 25% of scheduled class sessions will not receive a passing grade, regardless of performance. An attendance record is kept for each session, and you are responsible for signing in to mark your presence.

Late work. Late work will drop one letter grade for the first week and will not be accepted beyond that point.

Professionalism expectations for this course:

- Be in the classroom on time.
- No technology use for non-class purposes.
- Be prepared for class.
- Deliver work on time.
- Be respectful of others' contributions to class, by any means. Critique of ideas is acceptable, critique of the person is not.
- Actively participate in class discussions.
- Communicate professionally in language, tone, and respect in all matters related to the class and with everyone.

Classroom Behavior

In the classroom and other learning environments you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, and you should familiarize yourself with the University Classroom Disruption Policy 4.1.17. Disruptive conduct is behavior that disrupts the educational process, such as threatening or intimidating behavior, persistent disruptive conversations, unreasonable interference with class discussion,

repeated interruptions by electronic devices, or refusing to follow the direction of the instructor. Students who demonstrate disruptive behavior may be removed from the classroom for the remainder of that session and may be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

Student Accommodation Statement

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 308 Fell Hall, Office Phone (309) 438-5853, Video Phone (309) 319-7682, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

Absences

Bereavement, active military duty, or serious communicable disease. If you need to miss class due to the loss of a family member, active military duty, or required quarantine or isolation for a serious communicable disease, contact the Dean of Students Office to request that a formal excused-absence notice be sent to your instructors. The Dean of Students Office can send a courtesy notice about other absences, but many absences, including routine illness for which isolation is not indicated, are governed by the attendance policy for this course and are not excused under University policy.

University-authorized activity. If you need to miss class due to a university-authorized activity as defined by University policy, it is your responsibility to inform me of scheduled absences in advance, provide a schedule of all semester absences as soon as you know it where possible, and arrange to complete missed class work. Ultimately you are responsible for any material covered in missed classes.

Religious accommodations. The University provides reasonable accommodations for students' sincerely held religious beliefs or practices except where an accommodation would fundamentally alter the curriculum or academic program. Students seeking religious accommodations should submit a completed request form to Student Access and Accommodation Services, and ten days' notice prior to the proposed start date is requested.

Title IX Assistance

Illinois State University's Title IX Coordinator is available to assist students with facilitating supportive measures and to discuss options as a result of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or stalking. All ISU faculty and staff are responsible for reporting disclosures of these crimes to the Title IX Coordinator so that the student may be contacted about their rights and the resources available to them. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access at (309) 438-3383, EqualOpportunity@IllinoisState.edu, or by mail at Campus Box 1280, Normal, IL 61790-1280. More information is available 24/7 at TitleIX.IllinoisState.edu.

Mental Health and Well-Being

It is common to face challenges in college, whether they relate to academics, identity, relationships, mental health, or other personal matters. If you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, anxious, or simply need someone to talk to, you are not alone and help is available. Student Counseling Services provides free and confidential counseling to all students. You can visit in person at 320 Student Services Building, make an appointment through the Secure Student Health Portal, or call (309) 438-3655. TimelyCare, a free 24/7 virtual mental-health platform, is also available to ISU students. Please do not hesitate to use these services, and feel free to reach out to me if you need help connecting with campus support.

Campus Safety and Security

Illinois State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Please download the SafeRedbirds app, the official safety application for Illinois State University. Consult the information posted in each classroom about emergency shelters and evacuation assembly areas, both of which are indicated on stickers inside every classroom.

Student Basic Needs

The Student Navigator program is a student-led, peer-to-peer initiative in the Dean of Students Office designed to assist students facing economic hardship and basic-needs crises. Referrals are available to resources for food, textbooks, housing, finances, health, and more. For more information visit deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/services/student-navigator.

Video Recording and Photography

Your instructor may record class sessions. Recordings made available at the discretion of the instructor are for use only by students enrolled in the class and only for individual or group study. They may not be reproduced, shared with those not enrolled in the class, or uploaded to publicly accessible environments. Students may not record lectures or discussions or take photographs except with an approved accommodation from Student Access and Accommodation Services or with prior written permission from the instructor.

Equity, Diversity, Access, and Belonging

Illinois State University is committed to creating and maintaining a learning environment that is welcoming, supportive, respectful, inclusive, diverse, and free from discrimination and harassment. University classrooms are among the most diverse learning environments you will encounter, and we will often be speaking across differences of sex, gender, sexuality, race, nation, economic class, religion, age, ability, and political views. This diversity is an asset to our discussions and other learning experiences in this course, and I encourage you to consider the experiences of your classmates to be as valuable as your own. For resources on reporting concerns, please contact the Dean on Duty through the Dean of Students Office.

Constructive Conversations

Scholarly discourse in an instructional setting includes diverse perspectives, and difficult moments sometimes arise in conversations between people with differing opinions. We will work to turn these moments into valuable learning experiences by keeping conversations related to course goals and objectives, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard, listening actively without interrupting and seeking to understand before responding, focusing on ideas and arguments rather than attacking individuals, respecting the privacy of personal disclosures made during discussions, and remaining open to considering different viewpoints and new information.

Land Acknowledgement

Illinois State University was built on the land of multiple native nations. These lands were the traditional birthright of Indigenous people who were forcibly removed and have faced centuries of struggle for survival and identity in the wake of dispossession and displacement. We acknowledge that our campus sits on lands that were once home to the Illini, Peoria, and Myaamia, and later, due to colonial encroachment and displacement, to the Fox, Potawatomi, Sauk, Shawnee, Winnebago, Ioway, Mascouten, Piankashaw, Wea, and Kickapoo Nations. We

also express honor to those Indigenous people who may have been excluded from this acknowledgement due to erasure and historical inaccuracy.

Final Notes

1. This syllabus is a guide to MGT 385. The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule if circumstances require it.
2. Written assignments must be prepared professionally, typed, and use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Treat these assignments as important as any task required of you by an employer.
3. Students are expected to participate actively in all aspects of this class. Preparation and participation matter in this course and in the business world.
4. Expect email responses within 24 to 48 hours, except on weekends and holidays.
5. When emailing me, use your Illinois State email account and include the course ID, your name, and the section in the subject line.