



"The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do." – Michael E. Porter

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor:	Dr. Tobias Pret
Course Designation:	MGT385-005 – Summer 2026 – Organizational Strategy
Prerequisites:	BIS270; FIL185, FIL190 or FIL240; MGT220, MKT190 or MKT230 all with grades of C or better. Concurrent registration with MGT227
Credit Hours:	3 Credit Hours (Document Last Updated: May 15, 2026)
Time and Location:	• Asynchronous: Study class materials and watch lecture videos in your own time; Quizzes must be taken each Tuesday and Thursday (between 12:05am-11:55pm) • Optional Zoom Classes: Wed May 20, Fri June 12, and Mon June 22 from 9-11am to discuss drafts and teamwork: https://illinoisstate.zoom.us/my/tpret

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Contact Details:	Email: tpret@ilstu.edu (Preferred); Office Phone: (309) 438-3610
Zoom Office Hours:	Mondays 9-11am: https://illinoisstate.zoom.us/my/tpret
About me:	• Born and raised in a small town outside Berlin, Germany • Moved to England to teach carpentry at a school for children with disabilities • Decided to study marketing in Scotland and work as a theater technician • Met my (then) girlfriend (now wife) at summer camp in Connecticut • Took a gap year to experience Costa Rica and learn Spanish • Ran out of money, failed to pick up the language, and decided to move back • Interned for a tour operator, as paid work was hard to find during the recession • Completed my studies and worked in managerial roles for a small travel agency and a climbing arena in Edinburgh, Scotland • Moved to Australia to volunteer on emu, crocodile, and pearl farms for a year • Returned to Scotland to start a PhD in entrepreneurship • Moved to New Zealand to volunteer on more farms while finishing my PhD • Taught at Pace University in New York for three years and became a father • Wanted to get out of the city and live somewhere better to raise our children • Joined the faculty at Illinois State University

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

Textbook:	Dess, G.G., Lumpkin, G.T., Eisner, A.B., and Sauerwald, S. 2024. <i>Strategic Management: Text & Cases</i> (11th ed.), McGraw Hill. ISBN: 9781264124329. You may rent or buy either an electronic version or a hard copy of the textbook.
Library:	https://guides.library.illinoisstate.edu/mgt385

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an advanced course in management and should be taken as a capstone course during the student's senior year. It is designed to help students develop a big-picture perspective of what it takes for companies to succeed. Students will be required to apply concepts from all major functional areas of business including human resources, marketing, accounting, and finance. This course draws on real-life examples of companies engaging in a wide variety of strategic activities. Emphasis is placed on policy formulation, top management decision-making, and the integration of corporate, business-unit and department strategy programs.

COURSE COMPETENCIES

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Assess the situation facing a firm and use systematic analysis to make strategic decisions
- Identify and compare different ways in which companies compete with their rivals
- Apply appropriate quantitative and qualitative techniques in solving business problems
- Participate effectively in groups with emphasis on listening, providing feedback, and resolving conflicts
- Analyze organizational environments to find ways to create competitive advantages

GRADING POLICIES

The assignment guidelines, rubrics, and videos posted on Canvas should be studied in conjunction with this syllabus. Performance will be evaluated on a 1,000-point scale and grades will be strictly assigned as follows:

Individual		
Syllabus Quiz	3%	30pts
Quizzes	35%	350pts
Teamwork		
Case Analysis Group Presentation	20%	200pts
Strategic Analysis Group Report	42%	420pts
Total	100%	1,000pts

Course Grade	Points Equivalent	Descriptive Equivalent
A	900 - 1,000pts	Excellent
B	800 - 899pts	Good
C	700 - 799pts	Satisfactory
D	600 - 699pts	Poor
F	0 - 599pts	Failing

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Syllabus Quiz (3% of total grade):

Your understanding of the syllabus will be tested through a 10-question, multiple-choice quiz worth up to 30 points. You will have 10 minutes to complete the quiz between 12:05am-11:55pm on the due date (see course calendar). Please note that all quizzes are administrated via Canvas using the Respondus LockDown browser (<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=576436663>), which you must install on your laptop ahead of time (as this browser generally does not work on phones or tablets).

Quizzes (35% of total grade):

There are no exams in this course. Instead, you will take a quiz after each chapter covered. Each quiz is worth up to 50 points and will consist of 10 multiple-choice questions. Students who have watched all the relevant lecture videos and read the textbook chapter should have no difficulty preparing for the quiz. You will have 10 minutes to complete the quiz once you started it. Quizzes must be taken via Canvas using the Respondus LockDown browser between 12:05am-11:55pm on the due day (see course calendar). Your quiz score will be revealed to you on the following day. If you would like to find out which specific questions you answered (in-)correctly, please make an appointment to speak with me during my office hours to go through your results.

Although you are scheduled to take 10 quizzes, only the *top 7 quiz scores* will be counted towards your total grade. As such, if you have trouble with a particular subject or if you do not have the time to take all the quizzes, this will not necessarily impact your overall grade as long as you manage to do well in 7 quizzes.

Case Analysis Group Presentation (20% of total grade):

Working in teams of 3-6 students, you will present an analysis of a business case. Teams will be assigned following our optional Zoom Welcome class and team lists will then be posted on Canvas. Your team must choose a case from the options posted on Canvas. Your recorded presentation should be no longer than 10 minutes. During your presentation, you must employ relevant academic models covered in the textbook and lecture videos to analyze the case. There will be an optional Zoom class (see course calendar) dedicated to answering any questions you may have about the presentation.

The video recording of your presentation must be of high quality (i.e., the resolution must be high enough for the audience to easily see everything) and feature both the slides as well as the presenter(s) as they speak. It is recommended that you use Zoom to record your presentation. You must upload the recording to a video sharing platform that is openly accessible to me (i.e., Canvas Studio or YouTube). One team member must submit the link to your recording via Canvas and email me the presentation slides saved as PDF by 9pm on the due date (see course calendar). Presentations will be evaluated using the rubric available on Canvas. Please note that individual grades may be reduced according to team members' peer evaluations, which are due during the final week of classes, as outlined in the Peer Evaluation Policy.

Strategic Analysis Group Report (42% of total grade):

Working in teams (the same teams as for the Case Analysis Group Presentation), you will select a publicly traded company which has faced an issue or significant development within the last five years (e.g., entering a new market or introducing a new product). Your selection must be different from your case analysis and must be shared with me by the due date (see course calendar). You will analyze the firm's strategies and capabilities and make recommendations for how to develop competitive advantages. Your report should be 15-20 pages in total. You will be evaluated based on your ability to employ relevant academic models and analyze information obtained from reputable sources, as indicated in the rubric posted on Canvas.

You will have the chance to receive verbal feedback on a draft of your report during the second to last week of classes. To take advantage of this opportunity, one team member must upload the draft via Canvas on the due date (see course calendar). I will then provide you with verbal feedback, which you should use to improve your work prior to final submission. To treat all students fairly, I will only be able to provide verbal feedback on each team's draft once during the Zoom class dedicated to feedback. The more detailed your draft is, the better feedback I will be able to provide, which should help you develop your work and earn a higher grade. The final report must then be submitted by one team member via Canvas by 9pm on the due date (see course calendar). Grades are subject to peer evaluation, as outlined in the Peer Evaluation Policy.

COURSE POLICIES

“Firing” of Team Members

If you have problems within your group, please let me know as soon as possible. Although it is a rare occurrence, a few students may try doing the least amount of work on team projects. This will force other group members to pick up the slack. Teams are authorized to “fire” unproductive members up to 14 days before their final report is due. Prior to doing so, teams considering this option must speak with me and provide evidence of non-contribution. A student who was fired from a team must complete all group work individually; the assignment requirements remain the same as they are for teams. Similarly, students may voluntarily choose to complete group assignments individually if they prefer to work by themselves.

Peer Evaluation Policy

All group-based grades are subject to peer evaluations, which may reduce individual grades by up to 75% based on the feedback of your team members. You must upload your peer evaluation form via Canvas by 9pm on the due date (see course calendar). It is assumed that any student who chooses not to submit a peer evaluation was happy with all team members' contributions. Such cases will be treated as if the student had submitted a form that assigned full points to all team members.

Late Submissions and Grade Grievances

As in the business world, work must be received on time. All assignments must be submitted via Canvas by 9pm on the due date (see course calendar). Assignments submitted after 9pm, but less than 24 hours late, will incur a penalty of 20% of the grade. Work that is handed in more than 24 hours late will be awarded a zero.

Please note that I generally do not bump grades up and there is no extra credit or make-up work available in this course. Requests to discuss assignment grades will only be accommodated for up to one week from the date on which the grade is issued. All grade disputes must be submitted via email and must include justification for why you believe your grade should be changed. Please note that, if a re-grade is approved, there is a chance your grade may be *lowered*, as I may catch mistakes that I did not previously note.

Special Circumstances

The University may grant special requests for students to be absent for university business or trips. You may also be unable to do any schoolwork due to a medical condition. If any of these circumstances apply, I will work with you as long as you provide appropriate documentation in advance of the absence (for disabling illness, please notify me via email as soon as possible). You must consult with me about such special circumstances at the time they become known; allowances cannot be made for such events after they have occurred. If you are absent due to a [bereavement or extended illness](#) (i.e. 3 or more consecutive class days), the [Dean of Students Office](#) can help. It is located in Room 387, Student Services Building (Campus Box 3090) and can be reached via phone: [\(309\) 438-2008](#) and email: deanofstudents@illinoisstate.edu

Professional Standards

This class adheres to the College of Business's [Mission, Vision, and Core Values](#). All students are expected to follow the [Professional Standards](#). I reserve the right to remove students from my course if they blatantly violate these standards. For those students who attend the optional Zoom classes, we will adopt the same rules and norms as in a physical classroom. As such, you should wear classroom-appropriate clothing; not eat any food during class; stay present (physically and mentally); and treat all class participants with respect. For everyone's benefit, please join the class from a quiet place. Keep your video on throughout the class, unless your internet bandwidth is limited, and mute your microphone whenever you are not speaking. Please stay seated, ideally at a desk, and make sure your background is professional (if necessary, employ a virtual background), so that you do not distract other participants.

Use of Electronic Devices

It is your responsibility to maintain your devices properly. I will not be able to accommodate computer malfunctions that result in your inability to complete assignments on time. You are encouraged to regularly back-up your work and use university devices, such as library computers, if needed. If you have trouble gaining access to a computer or the internet, please contact the [Office of Technology Solutions](#). They have implemented programs to help students get WiFi access and to distribute laptops to those who demonstrate financial need or meet specified eligibility criteria. If you are experiencing technology challenges, please contact the [Technology Support Center](#).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy

You must be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#). Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism. Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site without proper attribution or authorization is another form of plagiarism. The penalty for plagiarism is *failure of the assignment* and any violation will be referred to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#).

All assignments must be your original work. Originality means that the ideas, concepts, and conclusions you present must be your own. While you may base your arguments on existing work, you must always cite your sources of information in APA format. The APA citation procedure requires you to include the last name(s) of the author(s) and the year of publication in the main body of text. The full citation must be provided in the reference list. For more information, please see: <https://guides.library.illinoisstate.edu/apa>

Audio and Video Recording

Any classes that are taught synchronously via Zoom will be recorded. In compliance with federal and state government directives, you will be asked to give permission to be recorded at the start of each Zoom class. Any recordings or materials that I make available may not be reproduced, shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to publicly accessible online environments. You may not independently record this course without my prior authorization. Students who violate these policies may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University's [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Class Communication

I will communicate all important information via Canvas announcements, which are sent to your ISU email account. Please ensure that you set up your notification settings so that you are immediately notified of new announcements. If you do not regularly check your ISU email account, you should have the announcements forwarded to the account that you do check daily. Furthermore, I reserve the right to alter this syllabus as necessary to meet the needs of the class as they evolve. Any such changes will be announced via Canvas.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Life at college can get complicated. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, lost, anxious, depressed or are struggling with personal issues, do not hesitate to call or visit [Student Counseling Services](#) (SCS). These services are free and confidential. SCS is located at 320 Student Services Building, [\(309\) 438-3655](#).

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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 350 Fell Hall, [\(309\) 438-5853](#), or visit the website at [StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu](#)

STUDENT RESOURCES

There are a range of [Student Services and Programs](#) available to you. Please find an overview below.

Academic	Administrative
• Academic Advising • Academic Help, Tutoring, and Coaching • Academic Integrity • Milner Library • Student Access and Accommodation Services • Testing Services	• Admissions • Financial Aid • Registration • Student Accounts • Withdrawals • University Catalog
Communication and Conduct	Personal
• Emergency Alerts • Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act • University Program Board • Social Media Directory • Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution • Tech Alerts	• Career Center • Financial Planning and Analysis • Health Promotion and Wellness • Parking & Transportation • Student Counseling Services • Student Activities and Involvement

A FINAL NOTE

If you find that you are having some trouble in class (e.g., with assignments), please inform me as soon as possible. I will do my best to help students who, despite their genuine efforts, experience difficulties. Please do not raise such problems at the end of the course, or after you have received your final grades. I sincerely want you to succeed, and to do so we must work together to improve your performance during the course.

COURSE CALENDAR				
Week	Day	Date	Topics	Tasks
1	Mon	05/18	Syllabus and Assignment Review	- Study syllabus and assignment guidelines
	Tue	05/19	Syllabus Quiz	- Take Syllabus Quiz
	Wed	05/20	Ch. 1: Strategic Management Optional Zoom Welcome (9-11am)	- Read Ch. 1 and watch lecture videos - Meet your fellow class members (optional)
	Thur	05/21	Quiz Ch. 1	- Take Ch. 1 Quiz
	Fri	05/22	Ch. 2: Analyzing the External Environment • <i>Five Forces and Strategic Groups Models</i>	- Read Ch. 2 and watch lecture videos - Watch videos for these academic models
2	Mon	05/25	Memorial Day – University Closed	
	Tue	05/26	Quiz Ch. 2	- Take Ch. 2 Quiz
	Wed	05/27	Ch. 3: Assessing the Internal Environment	- Read Ch. 3 and watch lecture videos
	Thur	05/28	Quiz Ch. 3	- Take Ch. 3 Quiz
	Fri	05/29	• <i>RBV and Porter's Value Chain Models</i>	- Watch videos for these academic models
3	Mon	06/01	Ch. 4: Recognizing a Firm's Intellectual Assets	- Read Ch. 4 and watch lecture videos - Report Company Selection due by 9pm
	Tue	06/02	Quiz Ch. 4	- Take Ch. 4 Quiz
	Wed	06/03	Ch. 5: Business-Level Strategy	- Read Ch. 5 and watch lecture videos
	Thur	06/04	Quiz Ch. 5	- Take Ch. 5 Quiz
	Fri	06/05	• <i>Industry Life Cycle Model and Porter's Generic Business Strategies</i>	- Watch videos for these academic models
4	Mon	06/08	Ch. 6: Corporate-Level Strategy • <i>BCG Growth/Share Matrix</i>	- Read Ch. 6 and watch lecture videos - Watch videos for this academic model
	Tue	06/09	Quiz Ch. 6	- Take Ch. 6 Quiz
	Wed	06/10	Ch. 7: International Strategy	- Read Ch. 7 and watch lecture videos
	Thur	06/11	Quiz Ch. 7	- Take Ch. 7 Quiz
	Fri	06/12	Optional Zoom Class (9-11am): Questions about Team Presentation	- Optional class if you wish to ask questions about your presentation
5	Mon	06/15	Ch. 8: Entrepreneurial Strategy and Competitive Dynamics	- Read Ch. 8 and watch lecture videos - Presentation Recording due by 9pm
	Tue	06/16	Quiz Ch. 8	- Take Ch. 8 Quiz
	Wed	06/17	Ch. 10: Creating Effective Organizational Designs	- Read Ch. 10 and watch lecture videos
	Thur	06/18	Quiz Ch. 10	- Take Ch. 10 Quiz
	Fri	06/19	Juneteenth – University Closed	
6	Mon	06/22	Ch. 12: Managing Innovation Optional Zoom Class (9am-12pm): Draft Feedback Team Report	- Read Ch. 12 and watch lecture videos - Submit report draft via Canvas by 8am to receive verbal feedback in class (optional)
	Tue	06/23	Quiz Ch. 12	- Take Ch. 12 Quiz
	Wed	06/24	• <i>International Strategies Model and Entry Modes for International Expansion</i>	- Watch videos for these academic models
	Thur	06/25	Finalize Team Report	- Report and Peer Evaluation due by 9pm
	Fri	06/26	• <i>Entrepreneurial Capital Model</i>	- Watch videos for this academic model