

**STGY 5903A**  
**Strategic Concepts**  
**Fall 2023**

**Instructor:** Prof. Sujit Sur  
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**Office:** 5056 Nicol Building  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Class Meeting:** Tue, 11:35 am – 2:25pm, NI 3040 (in person).

**Course Calendar Description:**

In accordance with 2023-2024 course calendar (<https://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/courses/STGY/>): An overview of business models and key strategic concepts facing firms in a global environment. Core functional area concepts in accounting, marketing, operations, and HR are introduced and integrated through simulation. Skills in managing teams, meetings, business planning and presenting business plans.

**Course Description:**

This course provides students with the conceptual tools necessary to assess firms' business models and strategies. Specifically, the course focuses on the application of the following key strategic concepts and frameworks: business model, value chain, core competence, competitive advantage, internal/external analysis, organizational structure, etc.

Business managers need to make critical decisions that transcend functional areas. Through a series of case studies and an online business simulation, this course provides students with experiential learning opportunities to develop a holistic organizational perspective that integrates subsequent specialized functional area courses such as marketing, operations, human resource management, accounting and finance. Furthermore, as the first component of the *Integrative Foundation* in the MBA curriculum, this course introduces students to the connections between strategy, business ethics, and the global business environment.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

- An understanding of fundamental aspects of business models and strategies
- Application of conceptual frameworks to the analysis of practical business problems
- An understanding of the role of diverse functions such as finance, marketing, operations, and human resource management in determining firm performance
- Familiarity with the elements of business plan preparation
- Development of critical thinking skills
- Development of communication skills
- Experience in managing teams

**Course Prerequisites:**

None

**Required Materials:**

A group of articles, including cases, has been compiled for the course and is available in the “ARES Reserves” on Brightspace. Instructions for accessing the material are available on Brightspace. It is important that students complete their reading assignment, including the cases, according to the course schedule at the of this document.

Business Simulation

A coursepack that contains an online simulation – *Venture Strategy* – has been created at the Harvard Business Publishing. Students must create an account using their Carleton email address at the publisher’s website to access the simulation. The link to the simulation and detailed instructions for registration are available in ARES.

**Final Exam Date:**

N/A

**Drop Course Policy:**

The deadline for academic withdrawal is October 01, 2023.

**Grading Scheme:**

Business Plan for Marketplace Simulation and Presentation (written business plan 20% + presentation 10%)	30%
Presentation to the Board	15%
Marketplace Simulation Performance	5%
Individual Case Analyses and Reflections	15%
Individual Class Participation	10%
Final exam	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Each component of your grade will be assigned a percentage score. Your final course grade will be a weighted average of each of these components.

Business Plan and Presentation

This exercise requires students to think through and organize a comprehensive plan that integrates high-level strategic thinking and tactical and financial details. The executive team will present the business plan to venture capitalists (VCs) during the Venture Capital Fair (VC Fair) in Week 8. A meeting with the VCs demands the executives to articulate their strategy effectively and gives the firm an opportunity to receive additional funding to implement its strategy in the second half of the simulation. Detailed guidelines will be distributed in due time.

Presentation to the Board

This team presentation, which will be given to the whole class during the last meeting of the course, provides a closure to the simulated competition. In this presentation, executives will review their original business plan and the firm’s performance after the VC Fair, assess the company’s prospect and strategy,

and discuss the lessons they have learned from the simulation. Detailed guidelines will be distributed in due time.

#### Marketplace Simulation Performance

The Balanced Scorecard, a critical feature of the simulation, will be used to determine a firm's overall performance. Marketplace will generate a final score for each firm based on its financial performance, market performance, marketing effectiveness, manufacturing productivity, human resource management, investments in the firm's future, asset management, creation of wealth, and financial risk. The algorithm that generates the score takes into account a team's ranking in its respective game and how well the team performs in relation to those from past games.

#### Individual Case Analyses and Reflections

Each student is required to submit case reports and reflections as assigned. In a case report students analyze a firm's external and internal situations and formulate recommendations based on the strategic challenges facing the company. This individual assignment facilitates theoretical and practical learning by encouraging students to apply relevant concepts taught in the class to real-world problems. It also helps students develop deeper insights into the case material and prepare them for in-class discussion.

Therefore, a report must be submitted before the corresponding case is discussed in class. The case reports should be prepared using the "Case Analysis Worksheet" provided in Brightspace. The page limit is two pages. "Guideline Questions for Case Studies" posted on Brightspace provide additional assistance for completing this assignment.

Additionally, each student is required to submit individual self-reflections integrating the assigned readings to their work experience and/or aspirations. The reflection exercise is to hone reflection as well as metacognition skills. The process is further explained in the "Guidelines to Reflection and Metacognition" resources posted on BrightSpace.

#### Individual Class Participation

Participating in class discussion, especially case studies, is a critical component of this course. Diverse opinions, disagreements, and debates can enhance our perspectives. Critical analysis and constructive criticism are prerequisite to both learning and action. In this course, I view my role as more of a facilitator/coach of the class discussions/presentations than a lecturer. I strive to create a "riskless" environment in which students can freely test their ideas and improve their reflection, critical thinking, metacognition and communication skills. Every student is a co-creator of classroom learning experience, and it is important not to take comments personally and keep an open mind. The participation mark will be determined by the quality and quantity of one's in-class contributions. The table below presents the four-point scale by which I evaluate one's contribution in each class.

Contribution		Examples
None	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absent, not prepared for or not involved in class discussion</li> </ul>
Basic	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to queries about case facts</li> <li>• Shows basic understanding of course concepts</li> <li>• Seeks or offers clarification of points raised by others</li> </ul>
Moderate	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers clear, concise analysis relevant to class discussion</li> <li>• Applies theoretical concepts to case materials</li> <li>• Builds on peer comments to advance class discussion</li> </ul>

Advanced	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduces original perspective/ideas and supports them with theoretical concepts and case facts</li> <li>• Reflects deep and nuanced understanding of course concepts</li> <li>• Synthesizes perspectives to suggests managerial implications</li> </ul>
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### Final exam

A written exam that assesses your mastery of key concepts will take place during the final exam week. This will be a case-based exam. You will be given access to the final exam case three days before the scheduled date of the exam. You will have three hours to answer essay questions based on the case.

### **Additional Information on the Marketplace Simulation:**

#### Team Formation

The executive teams will be formed via a sports-type draft on the first day. Each team will typically consist of four to five students. Procedural details will be explained in class.

#### Role on the Executive Team

Successful firms effectively divide up the responsibility and share the workload. You will need to take on one or two of the following roles:

- VP Marketing
- VP Sales Management
- VP Human Resource
- VP Business Analytics
- VP Manufacturing
- VP Finance and Accounting

There should also be one person to lead the team – the President of the company. This person should also take on one of the functional roles. One of our goals is to develop leadership skills of all students. For this reason, every member should serve for a period as the president. The president's job is to manage the schedules and meetings, oversee the assignment of tasks, monitor overall performance (balanced scorecard) and help the team in every way possible to achieve a strong business performance.

#### Executive Briefings

The Chairperson of the Board (instructor/teaching assistant) will meet periodically with each team (20-25 minutes). There will be one executive briefing for each of the six quarters in the simulation. During these executive briefings, the team will review its:

- performance during the prior quarter
- strategic analysis
- strategy for the upcoming quarter and going forward
- financial projections for upcoming quarter.

Students must be prepared to defend the analysis and the logic behind their decisions. The briefings are to be led by the President and a written agenda is required. The agenda should contain each topic to be addressed, the person responsible for it and the amount of time allocated to the topic.

#### Peer Evaluations

Three peer evaluations are to be completed throughout the simulation. Significant deviation in performance below the norm will be used to adjust individual grades for the activity being evaluated. That

is, the grade on the Business Plan, Presentation to the Board and Simulation Performance could be adjusted depending upon the feedback the instructor receives from the rest of the team.

#### Questions to the Business Coach

The HELP files in the software contain all of the directions you will need to participate in the business simulation. Nonetheless, there is a tendency for students to ask the instructor/coach for help rather than look in the HELP files. With the number of students currently playing the game, it can become a very large burden. For this reason, the instructor/coach will charge \$10,000 to answer any question already addressed in software.

#### Workload

The lecture part of the course requires a normal workload for any reading and lecture course. Once the simulation begins, the work will vary according to the activities within the exercise. During the first three quarters of play, students report spending 2 to 3 hours of work per week. However, it can increase to 8 to 10 hours during the preparation of the Business Plan.

Following the venture capital fair, most students report spending 1.5 to 2 hours of work per week. This reduction of time is due to familiarity with the software, game procedures, and market, and having a plan of action that requires modification rather than creation.

#### Time Management

Time management will be vital to your success in participating in the Venture Strategy simulation. There is more work than any one person can do. Also, it is not wise for everyone to participate in all aspects of the business. Too much time would be wasted. Therefore, it is necessary to divide up the work. There are suggestions on how to divide up the responsibility in the help files within the software. Feel free to depart from these guidelines based on individual preferences, experiences, or workloads that would allow a more equitable allocation of tasks. Also, do not hesitate to reallocate responsibility if conflicts arise or the workload is unevenly distributed.

The president should preside over each executive meeting, making sure that the discussion does not wander from the business at hand. Each team meeting should begin with an agenda and a timetable. Meetings should not last more than two hours. Long drawn-out meetings are not productive and raise frustration levels about not getting things done and usually are a symptom of poor preparation by individual. The meeting should conclude with a set of action items for each executive. The outcome of these actions should be reviewed at the start of the next meeting.

To facilitate executive meetings, each team member should prepare his/her work in advance. The executive should know the ins and outs, problems, and tradeoffs of his/her area of responsibility. When the executives meet, each executive should have a plan of action to recommend to the team. The executive should be prepared to thoroughly discuss the options open to the company and be flexible on the final decision of the executive team based on the cohesiveness of the overarching strategy.

#### **Late Assignments:**

To ensure fairness for all students, penalties will be applied to late assignments: Failure to submit an assignment on time will result in an initial penalty of five (5) percentage points, followed by an additional (2) percentage points per day thereafter. For example, an assignment that would normally merit a grade of 80% would receive a grade of 75% if submitted after the deadline on the due date, 73% if submitted

the following day, and so on. Requests for extension will be considered in cases of illness, family emergency, or other exceptional circumstances.

**Preparation and Participation:**

Refer to the *Grading Scheme* section for more details.

**Contribution to Program Learning Goals ([MBA](#)):**

MBA Learning Goal	Not Covered	Introduced	Taught but Not Assessed	Taught <u>and</u> Assessed
<b>MB1 Leadership and Collaboration</b> <i>Graduates will be equipped for leadership and collaboration.</i>				✓
<b>MB2 Communication</b> <i>Graduates will be effective communicators</i>				✓
<b>MB3 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving</b> <i>Graduates will be skilled in critical thinking and problem solving.</i>				✓
<b>MB4 Functional Knowledge</b> <i>Graduates will have functional knowledge of all areas of business.</i>				✓
<b>MB5 Global Business</b> <i>Graduates will have an appreciation of the global environment of business.</i>		✓		
<b>MB6 Ethical Reasoning</b> <i>Graduates will be skilled in ethical reasoning and decision-making.</i>		✓		

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Course Sharing Websites:

Materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

### Recommended Calculator for Examinations:

If you are purchasing a calculator, we recommend any one of the following options: Texas Instruments BA II Plus (including Pro Model), Hewlett Packard HP 12C (including Platinum model), Staples Financial Calculator, Sharp EL-738C & Hewlett Packard HP 10bII

### Group Work:

The Sprott School of Business encourages group assignments. They provide you with opportunities to develop and enhance interpersonal, communication, leadership, followership and other group skills. Group assignments are also an effective way to learn integrative skills for putting together a complex task. Your professor may assign one or more group tasks, assignments, or projects in this course. Before embarking on a specific problem as a group, it is your responsibility to ensure that the problem is meant to be a group assignment and not an individual one.

### Letter Grades:

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar (p 34), the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59	F = Below 50
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56	
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52	

Grades entered by Registrar:

WDN = Withdrawn from the course  
DEF = Deferred

### Academic Regulations:

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/>

### Requests for Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

- **Pregnancy**

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more

details, visit the Equity Services website: <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

- **Religious Obligations**

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

- **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

- **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support/>

- **Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, to both the individual student and the university, that result from participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: <https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/>

### **Academic Integrity:**

Violations of academic integrity—presenting another’s ideas, arguments, words or images as your own, using unauthorized material, misrepresentation, fabricating or misrepresenting research data, unauthorized co-operation or collaboration or completing work for another student—are a serious academic offence, weaken the quality of the degree, and will not be tolerated. Penalties may include; a grade of Failure on the submitted work and/or course; academic probation; a refusal of permission to continue or to register in a specific degree program; suspension from full-time studies; suspension from all studies at Carleton; expulsion from Carleton, amongst others. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy which is available, along with resources for compliance at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>



**Centre for Student Academic Support:**

The Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS) is a centralized collection of learning support services designed to help students achieve their goals and improve their learning both inside and outside the classroom. CSAS offers academic assistance with course content, academic writing and skills development. Visit CSAS on the 4th floor of MacOdrum Library or online at: <https://carleton.ca/csas/>

**Other Important Information:**

- Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
- All final grades are subject to the Dean's approval.
- For us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid CARLETON address. Therefore, in order to respond to your inquiries, please send all email from your Carleton cmail account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you can do so by visiting <https://carleton.ca/its/get-started/new-students-2/>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Agenda/Readings	Pre-class Prep
Week 1, Sep 12	Introduction	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schoemaker, P., Krupp, S., &amp; Howland, S. 2013. Strategic leadership: The essential skills. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 91(1/2): 131-134.</li> </ul>	Job application form for simulation team formation
		Form teams for the simulation	
Week 2, Sep 19	Business model	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Johnson, M., Christensen, C. M., &amp; Kagermann, H. 2008. Reinventing your business model. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 86(12): 50-59.</li> <li>Amit, R., &amp; Zott, C. 2012. Creating value through business model innovation. <i>MIT Sloan Management Review</i>, 53(3): 41-49.</li> <li>Almquist, E., Cleghorn, J., &amp; Sherer, L. 2018. The B2B elements of value. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 96(2): 72-81.</li> </ul>	
	Case study	<u>Case:</u> MoviePass: A Netflix for Moviegoers?	
Week 3, Sep 26	SWOT: External environment	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steenburgh, T. &amp; Avery, J. 2010. Marketing analysis toolkit: Situation analysis. Harvard Business Publishing.</li> <li>Porter, M., 2008. The five competitive forces that shape strategy. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 86(1): 78-93.</li> </ul>	Q1 decisions (Sept 19)
	Executive briefing	Key decisions and results of Q1 Plan for Q2	
Week 4, Oct 03	SWOT: Internal environment	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steenburgh, T. &amp; Avery, J. 2010. Marketing analysis toolkit: Situation analysis. Harvard Business Publishing.</li> <li>Collis, D., &amp; Montgomery, C. 2008. Competing on resources. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 86(7/8): 140-150.</li> <li>Barney, J. 1995. Looking inside for competitive advantage. <i>Academy of Management Executive</i>, 9(4): 49-61.</li> </ul>	
	Case study	<u>Case:</u> Cola wars continue: Coke and Pepsi in 2010	
Week 5, Oct 10	Competitive advantage	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ghemawat, P. &amp; Rivkin, J. 2006. Creating competitive advantage. Harvard Business Publishing.</li> <li>Porter, M. 1996. What is strategy? <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 74(6): 61-78.</li> </ul>	Q2 decisions (Oct 3)
	Executive briefing	Key decisions and results of Q2 Plan for Q3	
Week 6, Oct 17	Business plan	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Magretta, J. 2002. Why business models matter. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 80(5): 86-92.</li> <li>Rich, S., &amp; Gumpert, D. 1985. How to write a winning business plan. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 63(3): 156-166.</li> </ul>	Q3 decisions (Oct 10)  Peer evaluation #1 (Oct 10)
	Executive briefing	Key decisions and results of Q3 Business plan	
Fall Break Week, Oct 23 – Oct 27			

Week 7, Oct 31	Case study	<p><u>Case:</u> Trade Joe's</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eisenhardt, K., &amp; Sull, D. 2001. Strategy as simple rules. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 79(1): 106-116.</li> </ul>	A draft of executive summary. A draft of pro forma income statement (Q4-Q6)
	Executive briefing	Preparation for the VC fair	
Week 8, Nov 7	Venture capital fair	<p>Business plan presentation to venture capitalists</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collins, J. 2001. Level 5 leadership: The triumph of humility and fierce resolve. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 79(1): 66-76.</li> </ul>	Business plan (Nov 9) Peer evaluation #2 (Nov 9)
Week 9, Nov 14	Case study	<p><u>Case:</u> The LEGO Group: Envisioning Risks in Asia (A)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bingham, C., Eisenhardt, K., &amp; Furr, N. 2011. Which Strategy When? <i>MIT Sloan Management Review</i>, 53(1): 71-77.</li> </ul>	Q4 decisions (Nov 14)
	Executive briefing	Key decisions and results of Q4 Plan for Q5	
Week 10, Nov 21	Case study	<p><u>Case:</u> UBits: Feed Your Skills (A)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lovullo, D., &amp; Sibony, O. 2006. Distortions and deceptions in strategic decisions. <i>McKinsey Quarterly</i> (1): 18-29.</li> <li>Rumelt, R. 2011. The perils of bad strategy. <i>McKinsey Quarterly</i> (June): 30-39.</li> </ul>	Q5 decisions (Nov 21)
	Executive briefings	Key decisions and results of Q5 Plan for Q6	
Week 11, Nov 28	Case study	<p><u>Case:</u> Engie Fires CEO: Was Performance the Only Issue?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smith, K. 2012. 20 Questions Directors Should Ask About Strategy. Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada.</li> <li>Friedman, M. 1970 (13 September 1970). The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits, <i>New York Times Magazine</i>: 122-126.</li> </ul>	Q6 decisions (Nov 28)
	Executive briefing (optional)	Key decisions and results of Q6 Issues related to Presentation to the Board	
Week 12, Dec 5		Presentaiton to the Board	Peer evaluation #3 (Dec 7)