
Business game. Simulation of strategic decisions.

2021-22

Professor: Elena Golovko

Email: elena.golovko@esci.upf.edu

Office hours: Thursday 11.00-11.30

Course type: Compulsor

Credits: 3 ECTS

Term: 3rd Term

Course Description

The Simulation game is a business simulation designed to bring together the theory and practice of strategy-making in the realistic environment of a dynamic organization and industry. Students are put on the board of directors in a global firm and asked to make real strategic decisions, set and implement strategy and see the impact of their decisions on financial and non-financial measures of performance of the simulated company.

The simulation allows students to apply their knowledge of Strategic management, International business, Marketing, Human resources, Logistics, Accounting and Finance to decision making in a global marketing company. In particular, the Game addresses international strategy issues, such as understanding strategic positioning of a company in a global competitive environment, evaluating its strategic choices and understanding the performance implications of these choices. The simulation also allows students to improve such important skills as analyzing business situations, synthesis capacity, decision-making under time pressure and adopting long-term perspectives. Finally, the game stimulates the development of skills such as teamwork, leadership, negotiation and communication.

Objectives

The objectives of the course are as follows. Firstly, the course is aimed at practicing firm decision-making in the dynamic competitive environment applying the knowledge from different areas of Management. By the end of the course, the students should be able to identify and describe strategic issues faced by a firm and select the right theoretical framework to analyze them. Second, the students should be able to provide an argued analysis of the strategic issue using available information and

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applying appropriate theories. Based on the analysis, the students should be able to select the solution to the strategic issue, provide argumentation for their choice, and reflect on the (expected) outcome of the decision. Secondly, the course is aimed at stimulating and developing such “soft” skills as working in teams (under time pressure and strict deadlines), negotiation and presentation.

Learning Outcomes

- Knowing how to analyze and assess the variables that allow establishing a strategy that leads to the positioning and consolidation of the company in the international market.
- Relate the action to be carried out by each of the company’s areas in the face of a specific situation that affects its market situation.

Competences

BASIC COMPETENCES

CB7. That students know how to apply the acquired knowledge and their ability to solve problems in new or little-known environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their area of study.

CB9. That students know how to communicate their conclusions and their knowledge and reasons that support them to specialized and non-specialized audiences in a clear and unambiguous way.

CB10. That students possess the learning skills that allow them to continue studying in a way that will be largely self-directed or autonomous.

GENERAL COMPETENCES

Instrumental skills

G1. Search, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. Managing the information acquired from its analysis, its assessment and the synthesis of that information.

G2. Relate concepts, knowledge and tools from different areas.

G3. Communicate orally and in writing in English

Personal generic competencies

G4. Leadership and management capacity of multicultural, interdisciplinary, competitive, changing and complex groups.

G6. Put into practice the essential elements to be able to carry out a negotiation.

Systemic generic competencies

G7. Understand an organization with a global perspective.

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G8. Implement initiatives and changes within an organization.

Competencies for applicability

G10. Make the knowledge and skills acquired effective in an advanced way.

G11. Apply quantitative criteria and qualitative aspects in decision making.

G12. Apply the concept of networking through the use of the Internet and other networking techniques.

G13. Organize and manage time efficiently in the development of tasks.

SPECIFIC COMPETENCES

E1. Identify the phases of internationalization of a company (expansion, internationalization, and rationalization of activities).

E2. Mastering the internal analysis of the company to diagnose the viability of starting the first phase of internationalization and consolidating the process

E5. Interpret the current and future situation of the international economic, legal, social, and political environment.

E10. Evaluate the selection of the appropriate country to develop the process of internationalization of the company.

E12. Integrate the corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies of the company in the internationalization process.

E15. Integrate the different areas of the company in business decision making in a simulated international environment.

Methodology

The course consists of 10 sessions, which combine interactive lecture sessions with working with simulation and discussion sessions. Students must therefore assume an active and participatory role from the beginning to the end of the course. This implies attendance to class, working (in a team) on the preparation of each decision during the board meetings phase and actively participating in the class discussion during the discussion sessions. The detailed course scheduled is provided below.

The competences, the learning outcomes, the assessment elements and the quality of the learning process included in this Teaching Plan will not be affected if during the academic trimester the teaching model has to switch either to a hybrid model (combination of face-to-face and on-line sessions) or to a complete on-line model.

Evaluation criteria

The overall grade for this course is based on the following components:

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40% team grade including:

- Performance goal report and game reports for each decision round 20%
- Covides case report 10%
- Presentation of the Covides case 10%

60% individual grade including:

- Class attendance and participation in the class discussions (interactive lectures, mini-cases and game decisions) 20%
- Written assignments on mini-cases done individually 10%
- Final exam, written individually 30%

Students need to obtain a minimum of 4 in the final exam to pass the course. This condition applies to both the regular exam and the retake exam. The final course grade of students that do not obtain a minimum of 4 in the exam will be the minimum between 4 and the final grade computed from the different evaluation elements (with the weights set above).

Students that fail the evaluation of the course will have a retake exam opportunity that will be programmed in accordance with the academic calendar. If a student has to retake the exam, the **maximal grade for the course will be a 5**.

Students are required to attend 80% of classes. Failing to do so without justified reason will imply a Zero grade in the participation/attendance evaluation item and may lead to suspension from the program.

Students who fail the course during the regular evaluation are allowed ONE re-take of the evaluation, in the conditions specified above. If the course is again failed after the retake, the student will have to register again for the course the following year.

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the “Retake” period). In the meantime, the student will get an “incomplete”, which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The “incomplete” will not be reflected on the student’s Academic Transcript.

Plagiarism is to use another’s work and to present it as one’s own without acknowledging the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the “Honor Code,” students acknowledge that they understand the schools’ policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program.”

Calendar and Contents

Week	Session	Session content	Deadlines and assignments
Week 1 31 st March	Session 1	Introduction to the course. Overview: Combating causal ambiguity	
Week 2 7 th April	Session 2	Stakeholders and corporate governance. Diversification and its performance implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two papers to read - Mini case 1
Week 3 21 st April	Session 3	Expansion mode choice. M&As	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two papers to read - Mini case 2
Week 4 28 th April	Session 4	CEOs and expansion. Divestitures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two papers to read - Mini case 3
Week 5 5 th May	Session 5	CSR, HR and innovation decisions and their performance implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two papers to read - Mini cases 4 and 5
Week 6 12 th May	Session 6	Simulation: BM1&2. Decisions and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparatory work: understand the firm, its environment and goals. - Performance goal report
Week 7 19 th May	Session 7	12.00-13.00 Lecture on relevant theories for the simulation. Q&A for the exam. 10.00-12.00 Covides case presentation	BM 1&2 justification of decisions
Week 8 26 th May	Session 8	Simulation: BM3&4. Decisions and discussion	
Week 9 2 nd June	Session 9	10:00-13:00 Covides case presentations	Covides case presentations by teams
Week 10 9 th June	Session 10	Simulation: BM5&6. Decisions and discussion.	BM 3&4 justification of decisions
Before exam:			Covides case report BM 5&6 justification of decisions
Exam date: (TBA)			

Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

The papers for the sessions and the mini-cases will be provided in the beginning of the course.

There is no mandatory text book assigned for the course. The suggested text book is G. Johnson, R. Whittington, K. Scholes, Exploring Strategy, 9th or 10th Edition.

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Bio of Professor

Elena Golovko is an Associate Professor and a fellow of the Center for Innovation Research and CentER at the Tilburg School of Economics and Management, Tilburg University. She also teaches at ESCI-UPF. She received the PhD in Management degree from IESE Business School in Barcelona. Her current research focuses on internationalization strategies of firms, and in particular exports, innovation strategies, and their implications for firm performance.