COURSE SYLLABUS*

MANAGEMENT 8320: SEMINAR IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Professor: Chris Shook, Associate Professor        Office Hours: M and W, 1-3
Office: 445 Lowder                               and by appointment
Phone: 844-6516
E-mail: shookcl@auburn.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar is intended for Ph.D. students seeking a broad understanding of the research field of strategic management. We will review major theoretical perspectives and the empirical literature supporting these perspectives. We will also identify those areas most in need of additional investigation. One of the major objectives of the seminar is to provide a level of knowledge that will enable a student to write a qualifying paper on the topic of strategic management. Another important objective is to help students identify research topics across multiple disciplines that are linked to strategic management.

COURSE FORMAT

Students are expected to come to class thoroughly prepared to discuss the articles assigned for that week. As your workload grows throughout the semester, the temptation will be great to be a “free rider.” Don't do it -- anyone who has preceded you in a doctoral seminar will tell you that you only get out of it what you put in it. For each set of readings, members of the class will be assigned to summarize each article and lead the discussion. The following questions should help you in preparing to discuss an article:

1. What is the author's basic argument?

2. What are the key relationships the author describes and/or examines? What is the theory underlying these relationships?

3. (If applicable) Is the methodology used appropriate? What are the assumptions and trade-offs inherent in using this method?

4. How useful is this article to scholars? managers? students?

5. How does this piece relate to others you have encountered?

6. What future research directions might be sparked by this article? How might you design a study to pursue these directions?

When you are a discussion leader for an article, you need to come to class with answers to the above questions. My main role in class will be to facilitate discussion and provide
context for the topics being discussed. I will in some cases present "mini-lectures" on a particular topic, theory, or article. Also, guest researchers may be brought into class as appropriate.

**GRADING**

20% of the grade will be based on your contribution to class discussions, both as a discussion leader and as a participant.

20% of the grade will be based on a final examination.

50% of the grade will be based on a conceptual or empirical research paper. A conceptual paper is the type generally found in the *Academy of Management Review*; an existing body of research may be reviewed and then extended, two bodies of literature may be integrated, or a new perspective might be offered to address important research issues. An empirical paper is the type generally found in the *Academy of Management Journal*. Your paper should be about 20-25 pages, including references and any tables/figures.

The literature is full of articles that began as seminar papers; several of them appear on this syllabus. You would be wise to view this paper as an opportunity. I recognize that many students will not focus their doctoral studies on strategy; I am flexible regarding the topics that are within the domain of this seminar. All students will make a presentation of their papers at the end of the semester.

10% of the grade will be based on the written critique that you provide to classmates on the first drafts of their papers. The first drafts will be due @ and the critiques will be due @. (A one-page summary of your paper is due @.)

**STATEMENT RELATED TO POLICIES ON UNANNOUNCED QUIZZES AND CLASS ATTENDANCE:**

Attending class is a key to success in this seminar. Your participation grade is determined by active participation in the seminar. If you are absent it is not possible to participate. Thus, students are expected to attend each session.

**SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students who need special accommodations should make an appointment to discuss the Accommodations Memo with me during my office hours as soon as possible. If scheduled office hours conflict with classes, please arrange an alternate appointment time. If you do not have an Accommodations Memo, but need special accommodations, contact The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 334.844.5943 (Voice T/O).
ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All portions of the Auburn University Honesty Code (Title XII) found in the Tiger Cub will apply to this class.

STATEMENT REGARDING EMAIL AS OFFICIAL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION:
Email is the university-approved form of communication. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that they receive e-mail sent using WebCT.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Note: While the topics for each day are set, the reading assignments may be adjusted slightly from time to time. We may find it useful to add, delete, and/or move around some specific articles based on how our discussions develop. Most of these articles are available electronically via JSTOR, SMJ’s website, or the Academy of Management’s website.

Week 1               Organizational Meeting


Administrative Science Quarterly’s Notice to Contributors. Available at: [http://www.johnson.cornell.edu/publications/asq/contributors.html](http://www.johnson.cornell.edu/publications/asq/contributors.html)

Week 2               Overview of the Field of Strategic Management


**Week 3**  
**What is Strategy?**


**Week 4**  
**Research Programs in Strategic Management: The Case of the Resource-Based View**


**Week 5**  
**Top Managers and Strategic Decision Making**


(One page summary of paper due)

**Week 6**  
**Strategy and Performance**


**Week 7 Strategy and Environment**


(First Draft of Paper Due)

**Week 8 Strategy and Organization**


**Week 9  Organization and Performance**


(Critiques Due)

**Week 10  "Full Paradigm" Studies**


Week 11  Level of Analysis Issues in Strategic Management


Week 12  Theory in Strategic Management


Week 13  Methodology in Strategic Management


Week 14 Paper presentations
Week 15 Paper presentations
Week 16 Final Exam