

**CLASS SYLLABUS**

**BUSINESS CAPSTONE**

Instructor: Richard J. Bennett  
Phone: 860-892-5704  
E-mail: [rbennett@trcc.commnet.edu](mailto:rbennett@trcc.commnet.edu)  
Office: D-209E  
Office hours as posted and by appointment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides students with opportunities to utilize the skills and knowledge acquired in previous classes to address cross-functional issues in a business setting.

At the conclusion of this course the student is expected to:

1. Complete a significant research and writing project.
2. Participate in a cross-functional team analyzing a significant case problem; and developing and presenting findings.
3. Obtain an assessment of the entire educational experience while in attendance at the college.

**TEXTBOOK**

*Strategic Management*, David, Fred R. (Pearson, Prentice-Hall)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Individual Research Paper	300 points
Group Presentation	300 points
Chapter Outlines and Class Briefings	200 points
Assessment Survey	100 points
Resume and Cover Letter	100 points

TOTAL 1000points

EXTRA CREDIT (% score on Assessment Survey) 100 points

**GENERAL POLICIES**

**Assignments.** Assignments must be turned in on time. Late work will not be accepted.

**Disabilities.** Students with documented disabilities may be eligible for reasonable accommodation upon request. If you believe you need accommodation please see the appropriate college officials before an immediate need arises. The instructor has no authority to grant a reasonable accommodation.

**Cell Phones and Texting.** Cell phones and text messaging are banned from the class absent instructor approval. Please make certain your phone is OFF at the start of each class. Disruptions by such devices will not be tolerated.

**Cheating.** Cheating is not tolerated. There are no second chances.

**Extra Credit.** As a general policy there is no extra credit work beyond that described above under Course Requirements.

### GRADING SCALE

Total Course Points	Percentage	Letter Grade
940-1000	94%-100%	A
900-939	90%-93%	A-
870-899	87%-89%	B+
840-869	84%-86%	B
800-839	80%-83%	B-
770-799	77%-79%	C+
740-769	74%-76%	C
700-739	70%-73%	C-
670-699	67%-69%	D+
640-669	64%-66%	D
600-639	60%-63%	D-
599 and below	59% and below	F

### ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

- I. Individual Research Paper.
  - a. Each student selects a topic for a research paper subject to instructor approval.
  - b. Minimum standards for the paper include:
    - i. Ten (10) full pages of text *minimum* with pages numbered at the bottom center of each page.
    - ii. Ten (10) primary sources *minimum*.
    - iii. Standard one inch header, footer and margins.
    - iv. Font size 11; 1.5 line spacing; Times New Roman font.
    - v. Each and every primary source must be cited at least one in the body of the paper and properly footnoted.
    - vi. A separate bibliography (containing the minimum ten primary sources and any other primary sources consulted but not cited) included at the end of the paper as an appendix.
    - vii. A separate cover sheet.
    - viii. Attachments of supporting materials referenced in the body of the paper are permitted but not required.
    - ix. General APA formatting guidelines apply except where they conflict with these instructions.

- c. Due Dates.
    - i. Suggested topic in the form of a brief written synopsis is due by the end of the fourth full week of the semester.
    - ii. A detailed outline is due by the end of the eighth full week of the semester
    - iii. The completed paper is due by the end of the twelfth full week of the semester.
  - d. Grading.
    - i. The research paper will be graded using the attached criteria.
- II. Group Presentation
- a. The class will be divided into teams by the instructor. Each team will include multiple disciplines (e.g., accounting, marketing, etc.) as available. The size of each team will depend on class size.
  - b. Class time will be allocated for teams to meet.
  - c. Each team will select or be assigned a Case Study from the textbook. Based on information contained in the case study and any additional data gathered from outside sources, the team will develop a 3-year strategic plan for the client company. The team will then present their findings to the CEO/Chairman of the client company (the instructor).
  - d. A rehearsal presentation will be made the last class of the next-to-last week of the semester. One week later the presentation will be made a second time and graded.
  - e. The group presentation will be graded using the attached criteria.
- III. Chapter Outlines and Class Briefings
- a. Each class member will be assigned textbook chapters to outline.
  - b. Written outlines are due the date the class briefing is scheduled.
  - c. Each class member will provide a 15-20 minutes briefing on the content of each chapter outlined.
  - d. Outlines and briefings will be graded using the attached criteria.
- IV. Assessment Survey
- a. Each student is required to complete an Overall Assessment of Learning Survey.
  - b. The survey consists of 200 multiple-choice and true/false questions divided into three sections.
    - i. Section 1 is completed by all students and consists of 100 questions relating to the student's General Education coursework.
    - ii. Section 2 is completed by all students and consists of 50 questions addressing basic business skills and knowledge regardless of major.
    - iii. Section 3 is divided into subsections (of 50 questions each) according to major (Accounting, Marketing, etc.). The student completes *only* the subsection pertaining to his/her major. Students with multiple majors complete the section for each program of study leading to a degree; and, selects *one* when returning the completed survey to the instructor to count toward extra credit as described below.
  - c. The following rules apply:
    - i. DO NOT make any marks on the survey in any way.
    - ii. It is expected that the completed survey will represent the student's own individual efforts.

- iii. Students are encouraged to seek out appropriate source material to correctly answer the questions, but students should *not* work co-operatively as a team.
- iv. Failure to complete the survey in the time allotted results in NO POINTS awarded for the assignment and extra credit.
- v. Failure to return the survey results in *automatic course failure*.
- vi. Evidence that the survey has been copied results in *automatic course failure*.

V. Resume and Cover Letter

- a. Each student must submit a Resume and Cover Letter.
- b. The Resume and Cover Letter will be for a position as an entry-level Consultant with a Management Consulting firm.
- c. The Resume and Cover Letter are due the first class period of the second full week of class.
- d. The students receives 50 points upon the timely submission of the Resume and Cover Letter to the instructor.

VI. Extra Credit

- a. Up to 100 EXTRA CREDIT points are available and assigned based on the *percentage score* of the completed Assessment Survey.

## RESEARCH PAPER GRADE CRITERIA

### IDEA

50 points. Excels in responding to assignment. Interesting. Demonstrates sophistication of thought. Central idea/thesis is clearly communicated; worth developing; limited enough to be manageable. Paper recognizes some complexity of its thesis; may acknowledge its contradictions, qualifications, or limits and follow out their logical implications. Understands and critically evaluates its sources, appropriately limits and defines term.

40 points. A solid paper, responding appropriately to assignment. Clearly states a thesis/central idea, but may have minor lapses in development. Begins to acknowledge the complexity of central idea and the possibility of other points of view. Shows careful reading of sources, but may not evaluate them critically. Attempts to define terms, not always successfully.

30 points. Adequate but weaker and less effective, possibly responding less well to assignment. Presents central idea in general terms often depending on platitudes or clichés. Usually does not acknowledge other views. Shows basic comprehension of sources, perhaps with lapses in understanding. If it defines terms, often depends on dictionary definitions.

20 points. Does not have a clear central idea or does not respond appropriately to the assignment. Thesis may be too vague or obvious to be developed effectively. Paper may misunderstand sources.

No points. Does not respond to the assignment, lacks a thesis or central idea, and may neglect to use sources where necessary.

### ORGANIZATION & COHERENCE

50 points. Uses a logical structure appropriate to paper's subject, purpose, audience, thesis and disciplinary field. Sophisticated transitional sentences often develop one idea from the previous one or identify their logical relations. It guides the reader through the chain of reasoning or progression of ideas.

40 points. Shows a logical progression of ideas and uses transitional devices. Some logical links may be faulty, but each paragraph clearly relates to the paper's central idea.

30 points. May list ideas or arrange them randomly rather than using any evident logical structure. May use transitions, but they are likely to be sequential (first, second, third...) rather than logic-based. While each paragraph may relate to central idea, logic is not always clear. Paragraphs have topic sentences but may be overly general, and arrangement of sentences within paragraphs may lack coherence.

20 points. May have random organization, lacking internal paragraph coherence and using few or inappropriate transitions. Paragraphs may lack topic sentences or main ideas, or may be too general or too specific to be effective. Paragraphs may not all relate to paper's thesis.

No points. No appreciable organization; lacks transitions and coherence.

### SUPPORT

50 points. Uses evidence appropriately and effectively, providing sufficient evidence and explanation to convince.

40 points. Begins to offer reasons to support its points, perhaps using varied kinds of evidence. Begins to interpret the evidence and explain connections between evidence and main ideas. Its examples bear some relevance.

20 points. Often uses generalizations to support its points. May use examples, but they may be obvious or not relevant. Often depends on unsupported opinion or personal experience, or assumes

that evidence speaks for itself and needs to application to the point being discussed. Often has lapses in logic.

No points. Uses irrelevant details or lacks supporting evidence entirely.

## **STYLE**

50 points. Chooses words for their precise meaning and uses an appropriate level of specificity. Sentence style fits paper's audience and purpose. Sentences are varied, yet clearly structured and carefully focuses, no long and rambling. Vocabulary is universally appropriate to the audience.

40 points. Generally uses words accurately and effectively, but may sometimes be too general. Sentences generally clear, well structured, and focused though some may be awkward or ineffective. May occasionally deviate from using vocabulary not appropriate to the audience.

30 points. Uses relatively vague and general words, may use some inappropriate language. Sentence structure generally correct, but sentences may be wordy, unfocused, repetitive or confusing.

20 points. May be too vague and abstract, or very personal and specific. Usually contains several awkward or ungrammatical sentences; sentence structure is simple or monotonous.

No points. Usually contains many awkward sentences, misuse words, employs inappropriate language.

## **MECHANICS**

50 points. Almost entirely free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.

40 points. May contain a few errors, which may annoy the reader but not impede understanding.

30 points. Usually contains several mechanical errors, which may temporarily confuse the reader but not impede the overall understanding.

20 points. Usually contains either many mechanical errors or a few important errors that block the reader's understanding and ability to see connections between thoughts.

No points. Usually contains so many mechanical errors that it is impossible for the reader to follow the thinking from sentence to sentence.

## **FORMAT**

50 points. Exceeds minimum length and/or number of primary sources. Each source is cited at least once, and sometimes more than once but always correctly. Correct header, footer, margins, font and font size. Separate cover sheet, bibliography and overall professional appearance.

40 points. Meets minimum length and number of primary sources. Each source is cited correctly at least once. Correct header, footer, margins, font and font size. Separate cover sheet, bibliography and overall professional appearance.

30 points. Meets minimum length and number of primary sources. Each source cited at least once. Incorrect header, footer, margins, font and/or font size. Separate cover sheet, bibliography with a clean and neat appearance.

20 points. Fails to meet minimum length or number of primary sources. Fails to cite all listed primary sources. Incorrect header, footer, margins, font and/or font size. Separate cover sheet, bibliography and acceptable appearance.

No points. Fails to meet minimum length and/or number of primary sources. Fails to cite all listed primary sources. Incorrect header, footer, margins, font and/or font size. Lacks cover sheet and/or bibliography and/or lacks a neat appearance.

## **GROUP PRESENTATION GRADE CRITERIA**

### **ORGANIZATION**

50 points. Information is presented in a logical, interesting sequence which the audience can easily follow.

40 points. Information is presented in a sequence which the audience can follow.

30 points. The audience has difficulty following the presentation because of a disjointed sequence.

20 points. The audience cannot understand much of the presentation because there is no sequence of information.

No points. The presentation lacks any coherent organization.

### **CONTENT KNOWLEDGE**

50 points. The presenter demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) with explanations and elaboration. Presenter answers all questions appropriately.

40 points. Presenter is at ease with content, but fails to elaborate. Presenter is uncomfortable answering questions.

30 points. Presenter is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.

20 points. Presenter does not have a solid grasp of information and is unable to answer questions about the subject.

No points. Presenter clearly lacks content knowledge.

### **VISUALS**

50 points. Presenter uses visuals to reinforce screen text and presentation.

40 points. Visuals are present that relate to text and presentation.

30 points. Presenter uses visuals that rarely support text and presentation content.

20 points. Presenter uses visuals that are unrelated to text and presentation content.

No points. No visuals used.

### **MECHANICS**

50 points. Presentation has no misspellings, grammatical or word usage errors.

40 points. Presentation has no more than two misspellings, grammatical or word usage errors.

30 points. Presentation has no more than four misspellings, grammatical or word usage errors.

20 points. Presentation has five or more misspellings, grammatical or word usage errors.

No points. Presentation has more than five misspellings, grammatical or word usage errors.

### **DELIVERY**

50 points. Presenter used a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms. Presenter appeared confident and made appropriate eye-contact with the audience.

40 points. Presenter's voice was clear and most words are pronounced correctly. Presenter appeared comfortable.

30 points. Audience has difficulty hearing the presentation. Presenter incorrectly pronounces terms. Presenter appears uncomfortable.

20 points. Audience has great difficulty hearing the presentation because the presenter mumbles, avoids eye contact and fails to direct his/her voice to the audience as well as frequently incorrectly pronouncing terms.

No points. Audience cannot hear the presentation. Presenter avoids all eye contact.

**APPEARANCE**

- 50 points. Speaker appears professional in dress and demeanor throughout the presentation.
- 40 points. Speaker wears business attire and presents a polite demeanor.
- 30 points. Speaker wears “business casual” attire and a casual or too-relaxed demeanor.
- 20 points. Speaker wears non-business attire and exhibits occasional poor posture .
- No points. Speaker wears inappropriate non-business attire and inappropriate demeanor.