

VICTORIA MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

MMBA 558 INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Summer Trimester 2006

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

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Class Times and Room Numbers

Wednesdays 20:00pm – 22:00pm
Room GBLT3

Course Objectives

MMBA 558 International Business focuses on the core question of the international business discipline: ‘What determines success and failure of the internationally operating firm?’ Upon completion of this course students will have acquired knowledge and comprehension regarding the following topics: (a) Internationalisation and the nature of the multinational corporation (MNE); (b) forces of global integration, local responsiveness and differentiation and worldwide learning; (c) developments towards the creation of strategic capabilities within the firm; (d) the management and organisation of conflicting demands generated by activities to increase global integration and local responsiveness of the firm; (e) the design of cooperative organisational innovations for international success.

Besides the content related objectives MMBA 558 has a set of objectives which reflect cognitive levels students should aspire to in their pursuit of learning. Thus the *cognitive course objectives* are:

(1) **Knowledge and comprehension** of international business concepts and methods. **Proof** of knowledge and understanding of the most important concepts and methods, especially discussed during the lectures, will enable the student to pass the course.

(2) **Analysis of international business context and application** of frameworks, tools and methods in order to solve problems, demonstrate alternative solutions and construct suggestions concerning international business strategy and implementation. Students who sufficiently demonstrate these

abilities (including what was required in 1. above) will attain final grades in the ‘good’ to ‘very good categories’ (compare: Grading Guidelines).

(3) **Evaluation and Synthesis**. Students who want to achieve grades in the very good and excellent categories (compare: Grading Guidelines) will provide evidence of their learning (covered above in 1. and 2.) and will repeatedly demonstrate cognitive abilities of evaluation and synthesis. Evaluation means, for instance, the student is able to judge the effectiveness of certain strategies in different environments and recommend alternative strategies. Synthesis involves, for example, the design of a strategic proposition, the development of a hypothesis, the synthesis of different approaches in order to generate new solutions.

All pieces of assessment will be directed towards identification of these three groups of cognitive capacities. The course is designed to give each student a transparent overview of the individual status according to the classification of learning goals as stated above.

Course Content

- L1. Introduction to the Course; Profiling and customisation of contents to suit/reflect/utilise the competencies, experiences and knowledge of all participants in this course. [November 15th]
- L2. The Multinational Enterprise and the Internationalisation of Enterprises. The basis for successful internationalisation, comparisons of internationalisation processes and development of a map of mentalities reflecting internationalisation approaches. [November 22nd]
- L3. Changes influencing and creating forces which lead firms to integrate their global operations, versus forces which require the internationally operating firm to address localised institutional issues for successful evolution of their firms. [November 29th]
- L4. Creation of strategic capabilities in order to define meaningful international goals and frameworks for designing means of goal attainment. [December 6th]
- L5. Integrating knowledge through a common case discussion in class: General Electric Medical Systems: How to reconfigure worldwide resources. [December 13th]
- L6. Organisational challenges associated with the global integration and local responsiveness framework. [December 20th]
- L7. Networking of the current knowledge of international business in order to develop understanding of the worldwide learning and innovation dimension of successful international operations. Discussion of the McKinsey & Company Case. [January 10th]
- L8. International expansion and the role of inter-firm organisational innovations (strategic alliances, international joint ventures, virtual corporation, etc. [January 17th]
- L9. Roles and interactions of different managerial levels within the MNE. [January 24th]

L10. The future(s) of organising globally acting firms. [January 31st]

L11. Collaborative presentations and conclusions. [February 7th]

This course is designed in seminar format. Students will lead large portions of the content development based on assigned readings for each lecture. Readings (to be found in the textbook or on Blackboard) are selected to contribute to a specific viewpoint of the subject of each session. The course coordinator will try to assign readings to students who, based on their managerial experience, can be expected to have further insights for discussion.

Expected Workload and Group Work

Students can expect to work an average of 10 hours per lecture week on readings, preparations for presentations in class and for working on reflective papers (assignment). An additional 10 hours should be factored in for work on an own case research (assignment), and about 5 hours should be considered for working on a group presentation in the final session (assignment). Meeting for developing the group presentations might need to be outside of regular working hours (Mo-Fr. 8:30-5:30pm). The group assignment's contribution to the overall grade in this course is 15%.

Readings

Textbook: Bartlett, C.A., Ghoshal, S. & Birkinshaw, J. (2004) Transnational Management. Text, Cases, and Readings in Cross-Border Management. McGrawHill, New York.

This textbook includes a number of seminal articles which contributed to the formation of the discipline of international business. Different readings found in this book will be assigned to selected students for their critical evaluation and will be presented during the lecture for further discussion and syntheses. A number of articles which are not found in the book will be provided via Blackboard.

Assessment Requirements

Overview	Weight	Due Dates
Reflective Papers (Sessions 2 to 10; 9 × 5%)	45%	(due latest 24 hours before the next session)
Case Research Project	40%	(due on the 31 st of January, 2007)
Final Presentation (Group Work)	15%	(during last session, 7 th of February, 2007)

Reflective Papers aim to provide the student with time and purpose to reflect on the learning from previous sessions. Your personal goal, which increases the pedagogical value of this exercise, should be to find an individual approach through which to relate to the contents and class discussions. Making this exercise obligatory provides you with a record of the developments of your thinking and creates opportunities to network new pieces of understanding into your wider comprehension of international business.

In total, you are required to deliver nine reflective papers, which can vary in length but should generally be rather brief and to the point (1000 words, non-obligatory guideline). In these papers you should reflect upon the general topic of the session and how it relates to your developing view on international business. In addition, you should try to relate these reflections to your personal experience/career/view or to an event you have learned through the media (i.e. newspaper article about FDI from India and China into Africa and the growth effects for African economies and firms).

Assessment of these essays will follow the criteria outlined above under '*cognitive course objectives*'. Submissions of these papers will be via Blackboard (follow menu item ASSIGNMENTS).

Reflective papers (on sessions 2 through to session 10 inclusive) contribute each 5% to the overall grade of this course and are due 24 hours before the next lecture, in order to serve as monitor for misconceptions and in order to allow the lecturer to relate the subsequent content more closely to your thinking.

Case Research Project. For this assignment you work on your own research project, which has the objective to develop a case study about a successful internationally operating firm. You identify a company (i.e. Red Bull) which has enjoyed extraordinary growth through international expansion over a significant span of time (i.e. 10 to 15 years). Your case research will become focused by trying to identify what contributed to and what determined the success of this firm through its international expansion. It will be well-rounded with an introduction of the firm, the key drivers within the firm and the external factors which affected the development.

Assessment criteria for this assignment, it bears an overall weight of 40%, will be framed using the cognitive course goals outlined above. This assignment is due on the 31st of January 2007 and it will be submitted via Blackboard (ASSIGNMENTS).

Final Presentation is a group assignment in which you team up with a partner to work on a presentation during our final session on the 7th of February, 2007. During this final presentation you present the synthesised outputs of a discussion between you and your partner related to the larger question of International Business ('what determines success and failure of the internationally operating firm'). In the process of this discussion the remarks of your reflective essays will be beneficial and you might find the opposing opinions of your partner challenging. In the last session we will expect each team to present their 'syntheses' of this course. That can happen in a conceptual way, by presenting your overall theory of international success or it can address some particular and specific aspects of international business. In order to create a focused approach you and your partner will formulate a guiding question (i.e. 'does a network approach to organising the MNC support the realisation of a transnational strategy?'), or a hypothesis (i.e. 'the measure of international success is determined by the groups within the firm who accrue most power'). Assessment, worth 15% of the overall grade, will follow the framework given by our cognitive course objectives and will be informed by written evaluations conducted by the members of the audience.

Penalties

Written assignments should be submitted during the due day via Blackboard. Penalties for late submissions can be avoided by communicating with the lecturer prior to the deadline. Submissions which are late and where the student has not made alternative agreements with the lecturer will be automatically downgraded 5% per day.

Mandatory Course Requirements

In order to pass the course students must submit the case research project report, a minimum of 7 of 9 reflective essays and they must contribute to the final presentation. Further, each individual piece of work (research project report, final presentation, the sum of all reflective essays) needs to obtain a minimum of 40% of the marks available.

Communication of Additional Information

We will use Blackboard as general communication channel, for additional materials, for submission of assignments and reception of feedback.

Referencing

There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce & Administration at VUW has decided to make APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style the common standard across the Faculty. The Commerce and Central Libraries hold the APA Style Guide. You can also access the information from the online VUW library site (<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/library/resources/virtualref.shtml#style>).

GRADING GUIDELINES

Victoria MBA Grading Standards are as follows:

Excellent Category

A- (75 – 79%) to A (80 – 85%) to A+ (above 85%): The learning is demonstrated to a very high level of proficiency, i.e. it is at a standard that makes it exceptional at Master's level.

Very Good Category

B+ (70 – 74%): The learning is demonstrated at a high standard. Students have reached a level that clearly exceeds “competency”.

Good Category

B (65 – 69%): The learning is clearly demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as fully competent.

Satisfactory Category

B- (60 – 64%): The learning is demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as competent.

Marginal Category

C (50 – 54%) to C+ (55 – 59%): The learning is demonstrated to a minimally acceptable level. There may be flaws but these are not serious enough to “fail” the student.

Unsatisfactory / Failure Category

E (0 – 39%) to D (40 – 49%): The learning is absent or performed to a very low level, or the performance is seriously flawed.

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty's Student and Academic Services Office is located on the ground and first floors of the Railway West Wing. The ground floor counter is the first point of contact for general enquiries and FCA forms. Student Administration Advisers are available to discuss course status and give further advice about FCA qualifications. To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Education/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, Education and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building - it includes the ground floor reception desk (EA005) and offices 125a to 131 (Level 1). The office is available for the following:

- Duty tutors for student contact and advice.
- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- Forms for FCA Student and Academic Services (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at www.vuw.ac.nz.

Student and Staff Conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct. The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct.

Academic Grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievances Policy which is published on the VUW website at www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means no cheating. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other student or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalised severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website at www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html.

Students with Impairments

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the Course Coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building, telephone (04) 463 6070, email disability@vuw.ac.nz. The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each Faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Māori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

In addition, the Student Services Group (email student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/.

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and Faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 04 463 6983 or 04 463 6984, email education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.

Manaaki Pihipihinga - Maori and Pacific Mentoring Programme (Faculty of Commerce and Administration)

This is a mentoring service for Maori and Pacific students studying at all levels. Weekly one hour sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade, and Room 210 and 211, Level 2, Railway West Wing. Sessions cover drafting and discussing assignments, essay writing, and any questions that may arise from tutorials and/or lectures. A computer suite networked to Cyber Commons is available for student use.

To register with Manaaki Pihipihinga, please contact one of the following:

Puawai Wereta	Fa'afai Seiuli
Manaaki Pihipihinga Coordinator	Pacific Support Coordinator
Room 210, Level 2	Room 109 B
Railway West Wing	14 Kelburn Parade
Tel. (04) 463 8997	Tel. (04) 463 5842
Email: Puawai.Wereta@vuw.ac.nz	Email: Faafoi.Seiuli@vuw.ac.nz

The Pacific Support Coordinator is also available on the Pipitea Campus, Room 212, Level 2, Railway West Wing, every Thursday, 1-4pm. No appointment is necessary. You can either come in, email or phone with any issue that you need help with. Fa'afai links Pacific students to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria.