

School of Government

STRA 501
STRATEGY: THEORY AND POLICY
(15 Points)

Trimester One 2008

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

Course Coordinator: **Dr Lance Beath**
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Module Dates, Times and Locations

Module One: Tuesday 19 February 2008 8.30am – 6.00pm

Module Two: Tuesday 15 April 2008 8.30am – 6.00pm

Module Three: Tuesday 3 June 2008 8.30am – 6.00pm

Locations: Classes will be held on the Pipitea Campus of Victoria University and you will be advised of your classroom one week prior to each module by email.

Course Objectives

STRA 501 is a review of the literature of strategic studies to establish the theoretical and policy bases on which the modern practice of strategy rests. Examples of theory and policy relevant to both the New Zealand public and private sector will be discussed.

The course aims to help participants:

- Develop an understanding of the history of strategy and the multidisciplinary nature of contemporary strategic studies. The course will discuss key concepts and theories from the past as well as developments in the modern literature of strategy (readings will be based on papers by Rumelt, Schendel, Teece, Williamson, Porter, Henderson, Mintzberg, Quinn, Hamel, Prahalad, Gray, Luttwak, Garnett, Kenichi Ohmae, Rapoport, Schelling, Zeckhauser, Makridakis and others);
- Understand the links between strategy and security, the criticisms that are levelled at traditional 'hard power' strategic studies courses and the responses to these criticisms;
- Develop an understanding of the economic foundations and theory of modern strategic policy and practice and the links between strategic and public policy;
- Understand the elements of contemporary strategic analysis and strategy of choice theory (strategic analysis as a topic for strategy practitioners will be developed further in the companion tools-based first trimester course STRA 502 Strategic Analysis);
- Understand the various classes of strategy (grand strategy, emergent strategy, stretch versus fit strategies, logical incrementalism) and develop an appreciation of the applicability and appropriateness of different classes of strategy in particular circumstances;
- Understand the current New Zealand whole-of-government context for strategic policy, how statements of intent and linkages to whole-of-government outcomes are derived and operationalised, and what use can be made of SOI's to drive strategic planning and management;
- Lay the foundations for creating a distinctive strategy for New Zealand as a transitional and still relatively fragile economy making its way in a world of new and complex interdependencies;
- Contribute to the task of creating a new synthesis between the traditional strategic and security studies field of geopolitics and the modern business practice literature of strategic management and consulting;
- Begin to develop strategic thinking skills through class discussion and readings and involvement in individual exercises, case studies and assessments (strategic thinking skills will be further developed in the second trimester companion course STRA 511 Strategic Thinking);

- Learn how to apply these skills for competitive positioning and future advancement at the level of the individual, family, organization and business unit and, more broadly;
- Demonstrate the ability to apply modern strategic theory and practice in the New Zealand private and public sector contexts.

Course Structure

The course structure follows the learning objectives set out above. There are 10-11 main topic areas paralleling the course objectives, with 5-6 topics covered in each of the first two teaching modules.

Learning Commitment

The learning objectives set for each course are demanding and, to achieve them, candidates must make a significant commitment in time and effort to reading, studying, thinking, and completion of assessment items outside of contact time. Courses vary in design but all require preparation and learning before the first module. Regular learning is necessary between modules (students who leave everything to the last moment rarely achieve at a high level). Expressed in input terms, the time commitment required usually translates to 65-95 hours (excluding class contact time) per course.

Readings

There are no set texts for this course but students may find it useful to have access to *The Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts and Cases* by Henry Mintzberg, James Quinn, Robert James, Joseph Lampel (Ed) and Sumantra Ghoshal (Ed) (Prentice Hall, 2002).

There are two reading packs for the course, one for Module 1 and one for Module 2. In each reading pack, readings are grouped with reference to the main learning objectives and topic areas. Readings are marked to indicate which are regarded as being 'key' and therefore likely to be discussed in class (meaning that for these readings, course members may be called on to assist the course coordinator in leading a discussion). Other readings (not marked as being 'key') are included to meet more specialized tastes or because of their place and importance in the literature of strategic studies. With the exception of the key readings, there is no expectation that course members read closely and study all of the assigned readings, though some general familiarity is encouraged in order to facilitate class discussion and debate.

Assessment Requirements

The following are the assessment requirements:

- One essay of 2,000 words (30%) based on a close analysis and critique of any one of the key readings assigned for Topic One: Introduction to Strategic Studies. The key readings are listed at the front of the reading pack for Module One. The ***due date and time for the finished essay is 5.00pm, Tuesday 12 February 2008.*** This date has been set so as to give the Course Coordinator one week to read and mark the essays in advance of Module One.
- A case study comprising a report of 3,000 words, an annotated bibliography and a seminar presentation (combined weighting 70%), conducted on either a group or individual basis, in which class members have an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply the literature of strategic theory and policy to the resolution of a current problem in either the New Zealand private or public sectors. ***The due date for the annotated bibliography is 5.00pm, Tuesday 8 April 2008. The annotated bibliographies will be presented and discussed at Module Two on Tuesday 15 April 2008. Case studies will be presented and discussed at Module Three on Tuesday 3 June 2008. Final reports are due at 5.00pm, Tuesday 17 June 2008.***

Please submit ALL assignments IN HARD COPY to:

Francine McGee,
School of Government,
Victoria University of Wellington,
Level 8 Reception,
Rutherford House,
23 Lambton Quay,
P.O. Box 600,
Wellington.

Students should keep a copy of all submitted work.

Penalties

The ability to plan for and meet deadlines is a core competency of both advanced study and public management. Failure to meet deadlines disrupts course planning and is unfair on students who do submit their work on time. It is expected therefore that you will complete and hand in assignments by the due date. Marks may be deducted where assignments are submitted after the due date. For out of town students, two calendar days' grace is given to allow for time in the post.

If ill-health, family bereavement or other personal emergencies prevent you from meeting the deadline for submitting a piece of written work or from attending class to make a presentation, you can apply for and may be granted an extension to the due date. Note that this applies only to extreme unforeseen circumstances and is not necessarily awarded. You should let your Course Coordinator know as soon as possible in advance of the deadline if you are seeking an extension.

Mandatory Course Requirements

To fulfil the mandatory course requirements for this course, you are required to:

1. Submit all assignments by the due date;
2. Attend all contact sessions of the course.

Communication of Additional Information

Any additional communication during the course will be conveyed to course members by email.

Withdrawal Dates

Students giving notice of withdrawal from this course after **Monday 3 March 2008** will NOT receive a refund of fees.

Students giving notice of withdrawal from this course after **Friday 30 May 2008** are regarded as having failed the course, unless the Associate Dean subsequently gives approval to withdraw.

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 on the ground floor (EA 005). This counter is the first point of contact for:

- 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.

Notice of Turnitin Use

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which identifies material that may have been copied from other sources, including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. At the discretion of the School, handwritten work may be copy typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. You are strongly advised to check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

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 or go to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website www.victoria.ac.nz/fca, under Important Information for Students:

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

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 students 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 penalized 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:
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

Manaaki Pihipihinga is an academic mentoring programme for undergraduate Māori and Pacific students in the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard), Room 109D, and Room 210, Level 2, Railway West Wing. There is also a Pacific Support Coordinator who assists Pacific students by linking them to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria. Another feature of the programme is a support network for Postgraduate students with links to Postgraduate workshops and activities around Campus.

For further information, or to register with the programme, email manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz or telephone (04) 463 6015. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz or telephone (04) 463 5842.