

# Strategy Execution

Jonathan Giuliano  
j.g@gatech.edu  
scheller.gatech.edu/giuliano

## Overview

Markets, industries, and technologies change constantly – often influencing or reflecting changes in political economy and society, nationally and globally. Within this context, how do and how should executives transform organizations, through strategy execution, to achieve strategic objectives?

In answering that question, this course focuses on (1) developing an understanding of the challenges posed by the changes occurring in business environments and (2) learning concepts, frameworks, methods, practices, and skills critical to leading and managing in rapidly changing and increasingly challenging circumstances.

To translate sound theory to sound practice, this course integrates (1) class discussion of case studies, (2) class discussion of journal articles and videos, (3) classroom exercises, (4) written reports, and (5) your team's project presentation.

## Objectives and Outcomes

Through this course, you should develop your abilities to...

1. Effectively lead and manage strategy execution.
2. Understand and analyze current issues in exercising leadership and managing strategy and organizational change.
3. Establish, lead, and manage organizations with dynamic capabilities to drive or adapt to changing conditions and positions in macro and micro environments.
4. Demonstrate skills to make decisions, communicate, lead, and manage across a diverse set of strategic challenges.
5. Think critically and creatively about current and emergent problems in strategy execution and resolve organizational issues.
6. Pursue opportunities for strategic organizational improvement.
7. Understand and exercise strategic leadership and management skills.

## Office Hours

I am available to talk anytime, including weekends and holidays, so long as there is no conflict with other Georgia Tech student and faculty appointments already on my schedule. If you wish to have a conversation, send an email noting the purpose of and agenda for the conversation and proposing times and dates to talk in person or by telephone or Zoom.

## Email

I often respond to email quickly, though you should always expect that a response may take 24 hours; the exceptions are weekends and holidays (including school holidays), when I often leave email until the next business day.

## Website

Canvas provides the course website for Announcements, Assignments, Files, Grades, and Media Gallery. Check Canvas frequently to make sure that you have current course Announcements. Use Assignments to follow assignment deadlines and to submit your course assignments. The Files folder contains the course syllabus and other files for this course, including articles and case studies. Your scores on Assignments are available in Grades. Media Gallery holds recordings of class sessions.

## Assessment

Your grades are based on your mastery of course material and your performance in two categories: (1) personal performance, which is 90 percent of your course grade, and (2) team performance, which is 10 percent of your course grade. “Personal performance” comprises written session reports and the written personal project report. “Team performance” refers to the team project presentation.

**1. Session Reports:** For each of the first four sessions, write your answers to specific questions on your class-preparation assignments, and submit your report by uploading it to Assignments in Canvas before the deadline. The Schedule (below) lists the questions for each assignment, and note the word limit for each question. You must write all reports as a Microsoft Word file with a standard typeface (i.e., Calibri or Cambria), 12-point font, single-spaced lines, and one-inch margins. Use page numbers. Make sure that the assignment title and your name appear on each page. If you submit your report before the deadline, you earn a score of 95 percent if your report is acceptable and 55 percent if your report is unacceptable; I reserve the option, however, of giving scores other than 95 and 55. In this context, “acceptable” refers to

(1) prevalent standards for MBA students in top programs and (2) my expectations for Georgia Tech graduate students; anything else is “unacceptable.”

**2. Personal Project Report:** Each of you, by yourself, writes a report applying concepts, frameworks, methods, and practices in this course to a strategy execution experience in which you are now participating (i.e., a current project) or you have participated (i.e., a past project) in your work experience. The purpose of this report is for you to demonstrate insightfully your mastery of the content of this course. This report has a limit of 1,500 words, excluding appendices. You must write this report as a Microsoft Word file with a standard typeface (i.e., Calibri or Cambria), 12-point font, and one-inch margins. Make sure that the assignment title and your name appear on each page. Use page numbers. The rubric for this report assesses equally the extent to which your report: (a) presents a strong introduction; (b) highlights excellent analysis, synthesis, and insight; (c) demonstrates mastery of this course by applying concepts and frameworks expertly, (d) proposes a coherent and practical action plan (using the *Technical Note on Action Plans* appropriately), (e) is written and presented clearly, and (f) follows the rules for formatting and submitting this assignment. You may earn a score between zero and 100 percent; however, thus far no report has earned a score higher than 95 percent.

**3. Team Project Presentation:** After each person on your team has completed the personal project report, you should meet as a team, analyze and synthesize your learning from the personal project reports, and, as a team, prepare a voice-over-Microsoft PowerPoint presentation of 10 slides and no more than 10 minutes. Submit this team assignment as one MP4 file before the deadline in Canvas Assignments. The rubric for this assignment, which I use to score your presentation, is this:

- Does the presentation...
  1. List the team name on the cover slide?
  2. List the names of each team member on the cover slide?
  3. Present a strong introduction?
  4. Present excellent analysis, synthesis, and insight?
  5. Demonstrate mastery of this course by applying course concepts?
  6. Demonstrate mastery of this course by applying course frameworks?
  7. Use an appropriate number of PowerPoint slides?

You may earn a score between zero and 100 percent; however, thus far no project presentation has earned a score higher than 95 percent.

## Late Submissions

Assignments that are late submissions lose at least 10 percentage points. If they are less than 24 hours late, 20 percentage points; if 24 hours late and less than 48 hours late, 30 percentage points; if they are 48 hours late and less than 72 hours late, and 10 additional percentage points for each period of 24 hours thereafter that the submissions are late. If you fail to submit an assignment, your score is zero.

## Course Grades

You may earn a course grade of A, B, C, D, or F.

Your score on each of these four assignments constitutes your course grade:

1. Session reports: 50 percent of the course grade
2. Personal project report: 40 percent of the course grade
3. Team project presentation: 10 percent of the course grade

Course scores and course grades follow this table:

90.00 and higher:	A
80.00 to 89.99:	B
70.00 to 79.99:	C
60.00 to 69.99:	D
59.99 and lower:	F

## Extra Credit

There is no extra credit in this course.

## Resources

Course resources comprise the two technical notes and the journal articles and case studies.

In Canvas Files, you can find the two technical notes: (1) the *Technical Note on Case Studies* for guidance in analyzing case-study assignments and preparing yourself to discuss the case studies in class and (2) the *Technical Note on Action Plans* for guidance in preparing action plans in your assignments.

The Executive MBA program provides you with the journal articles and case studies, which you can find in Canvas Files. The Schedule (below) lists the journal articles and case study for each class session.

## Privacy

To preserve student privacy, classroom integrity, and a safe environment to ask questions and express opinions, recording of classes is disallowed. The Office of Disability Services can waive this policy for a student by sending me an explicit recommendation for accommodation.

## **Integrity**

Georgia Tech endeavors to foster a community based on trust, integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, click either of these links:

<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/>

<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>

Any student suspected of plagiarizing or other cheating on any assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which investigates the incident and identifies the appropriate penalty for violations.

## **Accommodation**

If you are a student with learning needs or other needs that require special accommodation, call the Office of Disability Services at 404-894-2563 or click this link:

<http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu>

Make an appointment immediately to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also email me as soon as possible to so that we can discuss your learning needs.

## **Inclusivity**

I am strongly committed to, and actively engaged with, creating an inclusive learning environment in which everyone feels welcome and safe. I rely on your feedback to achieve this goal. I invite you to talk with me about things you feel I should stop, start, and continue doing to allow everyone to feel valued and engaged in our learning community.

## **Expectations**

It is important to establish and maintain a culture of respect, open inquiry, intellectual challenge, mindful and conscientious behavior, and responsibility. Click this link –

<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> – to read an articulation of expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. Professional conduct helps create and sustain the community and environment we value.

## Schedule

### Note

1. Expect that preparation for each class session requires at least four hours; however, some students find they must spend more time to prepare for class.
2. In the schedule below, under *Assignments before this session*, the word *study* means, at minimum, that you: (a) read assignments thoroughly, (b) analyze all the issues critically and creatively, and (c) complete all of this before the start of the class session.
3. Read the journal articles and the case study in the order listed in the schedule for each session.
4. Make sure that you submit your session reports and other assignments before the deadlines in Assignments in Canvas. Note that all session reports are due before 6pm Thursdays.
5. You are encouraged, but not required, to discuss session reports in your teams or study groups before the start of class.

*Session schedules begin on the next page.*

## Session 1

### \_ in the classroom

## Sensemaking and Decision Making

1. Assignments before this session
  - a. Read this syllabus thoroughly.
  - b. Study:
    - i. *Prepare Your Organization to Fight Fires*
    - ii. *A Leader's Framework for Decision Making*
    - iii. *A Leader's Guide to Understanding Complex Organizations: An Expanded 7-S Perspective*
    - iv. *Celeritas, Inc.: Leadership Challenges in a Fast-Growth Industry*
  - c. Write and submit your session report (via Assignments in Canvas) answering these questions. Note the assignment deadline (in Assignments).
    - i. Why is sensemaking important? (100 words, maximum)
    - ii. What disadvantages could sensemaking entail? (100 words, maximum)
    - iii. In which domain, as defined in *A Leader's Framework for Decision Making*, does your organization operate mostly, and why? (100 words, maximum)
    - iv. In which domain does Celeritas operate mostly, and how does this contribute to or detract from whether Celeritas is an effective organization? Use the *Technical Note on Case studies* to guide your analysis. (100 words, maximum)
2. Activities during class
  - a. Review the syllabus.
  - b. Discuss the three articles.
  - c. Discuss the case study.
  - d. Discuss your personal project and your team project.

## Session 2

### \_ in the classroom

## Leading, Following, and Managing for Innovation

### Assignments before this session

- a. Study:
    - i. *What Every Leader Needs to Know about Followers*
    - ii. *Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail*
    - iii. *Accelerate!*
    - iv. *Hawk Electronics, Inc.*
  - b. Write and submit your session report (via Assignments in Canvas) answering these questions. Note the assignment deadline (in Assignments).
    - i. What are the two most important concepts you learned from *What Every Leader Needs to Know about Followers*, and why are these the most important to you? (150 words, maximum)
    - ii. In *Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail*, John Kotter identifies eight stages. In your experience, which two are most important, and why? (150 words, maximum)
    - iii. Publication of *Accelerate!* occurred nearly six years after *Leading Change*. From your experience, what are the two most important concepts that John Kotter explicates in *Accelerate!*, but not *Leading Change*? (150 words, maximum)
    - iv. Of the concepts you discussed in the three earlier questions, which two lend the most insight in your analysis of the case study *Hawk Electronics, Inc.*? What is the action plan you recommend? Use the *Technical Note on Case studies* to guide your analysis and the *Technical Note on Action Plans* to develop your action plan. (150 words, maximum)
2. Activities during class
- a. Discuss the three articles.
  - b. Discuss the case study.
  - c. Discuss your personal project and your team project.

## Session 3

### \_ in the classroom

## Building Bridges between Knowing and Doing: What Works, and Why?

1. Assignments before this session
  - a. Study
    - i. *Bring Your Breakthrough Ideas to Life*
    - ii. *Evidence-Based Management*
    - iii. *Power Play*
    - iv. *Jess Westerly at Kauflauf GmbH*
  - b. Write and submit your session report (via Assignments in Canvas) answering these questions. Note the assignment deadline (in Assignments).
    - i. For each of the three journal articles, what is the one most important constructive criticism (for a total of three constructive criticisms) you would offer to the authors, and why did you select these three? (100 words, maximum)
    - ii. From each of these three journal articles, what are the three concepts or frameworks (for a total of nine) that you can insightfully apply to your personal project? (200 words, maximum)
    - iii. After presenting your analysis of Jess Westerly's performance, what is the action plan you recommend? Use the *Technical Note on Case Studies* to guide your analysis and the *Technical Note on Action Plans* to develop your action plan. (250 words, maximum)
2. Activities during class
  - a. Discuss the three articles.
  - b. Discuss the case study.
  - c. Discuss your personal project and your team project.

## Session 4

### \_ in the classroom

## Strategy Execution through Experimenting, Coordinating, Integrating, and Iterating

1. Assignments before this session
  - a. Study
    - i. *A Step-By-Step Guide to Smart Business Experiments*
    - ii. *How to Design Smart Business Experiments*
    - iii. *Why Businesses Don't Experiment*
    - iv. *Barber Cardiosystems*
  - b. Write and submit your session report (via Assignments in Canvas) answering these questions. Note the assignment deadline (in Assignments).
    - i. After reflecting on your reading of *A Step-By-Step Guide to Smart Business Experiments*, who are (for a current project) or were (for a past project) the most important “customers” in your personal project report? (100 words, maximum)
    - ii. In your personal project report, what is an experiment you plan to run or would have planned to run? Identify issues and how you would manage them. Describe how you plan to employ, or would have employed, coordination, integration, and iteration. (200 words, maximum)
    - iii. In the case study on *Barber Cardiosystems*, what are the most important organizational changes you recommend? Why? What is your action plan? Use the *Technical Note on Case Studies* to guide your analysis and the *Technical Note on Action Plans* to develop your action plan. (250 words, maximum)
2. Activities during class
  - a. Discuss the three articles.
  - b. Discuss the case study.
  - c. Discuss your personal project and your team project.
  - d. Review the course.

## **Session 5**

### **Asynchronous Remote**

#### **Personal Project**

*This is an independent study period for you to complete your personal project.*

**Assignment due at 6pm \_**

- Assignment for this session
  - Write and submit your Personal Project Report (via Assignments in Canvas) before the deadline.

## **Session 6**

### **Asynchronous Remote**

#### **Team Project**

*This is an independent study period for you to work with your team to complete your team project.*

**Assignment due at 6pm \_**

- Assignment for this session
  - Prepare and submit your Team Project Presentation (via Assignments in Canvas) before the deadline.
  - After the deadline, watch and listen to the presentations made by other teams. You can find the presentations in the Team Project Presentations folder in Canvas Files.