

**MGT 3659E**  
**FOUNDATIONS OF STRATEGY**  
**FALL 2026**

**LECTURER:** Reemon Silverman  
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**CLASS ROOM:** COB 202  
**CLASS TIME:** 2:00 – 3:15 T, TR  
**OFFICE HOURS:** By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why are some firms more successful than others? This course provides tools and frameworks for identifying key drivers of superior performance. The first part of the course examines models that are useful in analyzing a firm’s competitive environment. We then consider how the firm’s choice of strategy can create competitive advantage in a particular business, as well as the critical role of internal resources and competencies in sustaining those advantages.

This course combines lectures, class discussion, case analysis, guest speakers, exams and a team project to maximize the learning experience. We begin with foundational concepts from textbook material, enlivened by interactive discussions. Along the way we bring in real world examples and analysis to provide practical context for textbook concepts. Finally, to integrate course concepts, we will engage in classroom debates on a critical current issue faced by select firms. In splitting up into teams, you will further develop your problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration skills.

Because the development of successful business strategies is, by necessity, a collaborative process, we will model that process through our in-class discussions. Active participation from every student is paramount to create a rich, collaborative learning experience.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

<b>COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES.</b> At the end of the course, students should be able to:	<b>MEASUREMENT.</b> The following are the means of assessing students’ ability to accomplish the course learning outcomes:
1. Understand how both external and internal factors contribute to organizational outcomes	Participation in daily class discussions, case studies, writing assignments, exams
2. Approach business challenges by evaluating multiple angles	Participation in daily class discussions, case studies, writing assignments, team project
3. Apply classic strategy tools to modern business environments	Participation in daily class discussions, case studies, writing assignments, team project, exams
4. Research and analyze a company’s key strategic challenges and produce actionable insights and recommendations	Case studies, team project

5. Communicate well-reasoned positions concisely and persuasively, both in writing and in class discussions	Participation in class discussions, case studies, writing assignments, team project presentations
6. Collaborate effectively in diverse teams	Participation in class discussions, team project
7. Apply strategy tools and frameworks to develop a strategy for your own career and life	Personal strategy blueprint

#### HONOR CODE

Please note that you are required to familiarize yourself with and abide by the Georgia Institute of Technology's [Academic Honor Code](#) in all aspects of participation in this course, including the section establishing student responsibilities with respect to academic integrity. As you may remember, compliance with the Academic Honor Code is a condition of enrollment in the College of Business. If I suspect that any student has violated that Academic Honor Code, I will refer the matter to the Office of Student Integrity and the Office of the Dean of Students for appropriate action. **PLEASE NOTE THAT FALSIFYING THE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION RECORDS IS A VIOLATION.**

#### DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

The Georgia Institute of Technology has established policies with respect to disability accommodation through Office of Disability Services. These policies may be accessed at the [Office of Disability Services website](#). Students seeking disability accommodation are specifically referred to the student guide and documentation pages on this website. Students failing to comply with the requirements set forth by the Office of Disability Services will not receive accommodation.

#### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Professional behavior is required in this class and its activities. College-level effort is necessary as is class participation. I seek to create an engaging learning environment in this course, and that is impossible without your participation. Behaviors such as arriving late, sleeping, doing work for other classes, and talking while the professor or other students are talking are not professional. Everyone is expected to be prepared, participate in class, and uphold their group responsibilities.

Laptop usage must be limited to tasks directly related to the material being covered in class. Extraneous activities such as surfing, emailing, working on other class assignments, playing games, texting, and any other activities that might cause a distraction to the class are not allowed and will result in **zero credit** for attendance and participation.

#### EVALUATION

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE ALLOCATION
Attendance	5%
Class participation	15%
Assignments	15%
Team Project	25%
Exam 1	20%

Exam 2	20%
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Your final grade will be based on a combination of attendance, class participation, written assignments, a team project and exams. Please note how heavily class participation is weighted in this course.

#### ATTENDANCE GRADING POLICY

Attendance is required in this course. Attendance grades begin with the percentage of class sessions that you fully attend. Please note that **fully attend** means arriving on time, staying for the entire session, and appearing engaged during the session. I will make upward and downward adjustments to that grade to reflect the number of class sessions in which you fully attended.

Failure to attend class will result in a class participation grade deduction and zero credit for any work performed or due that day. ***Failure to sign in class will also result in no credit given that day.*** Please note that I require all students who are absent for GT athletic purposes or other [Institute-approved absences](#) to give me notice of such absence as soon as the student knows that he/she will be absent. Other excused absences include jury duty, religious holidays, death in the family, and documented illness. Unexcused absences are considered “failure to attend class,” the consequences for which are explained above. Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, I suggest that students see me about catching up on material missed during an absence.

#### CLASS PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Each week, prior to class, you will be expected to read the required readings and any cases I distribute prior to class. Please expect to be called upon in class to discuss these readings and your analysis. Note that participation is essential in this course where the success of each session depends on the preparation and engagement of all students. Your participation grade (15% of your final grade) will reflect the **quality and frequency of your contributions** across approximately 20 sessions. Active participation is expected in at least 50% of classes, including guest speaker Q&As, lecture discussions, case studies, and group presentations. To help with discussion and my recognizing your participation, please **display a legible name card** in every class.

Meaningful participation includes:

- Sharing thoughtful insights that reflect preparation and course concepts.
- Actively listening and building on others’ ideas to advance the discussion.
- Making connections between case materials, theoretical frameworks, and prior discussions.
- Asking questions during team presentations or guest speaker sessions that demonstrate critical thinking.

Frequent comments that add little value, lack preparation, or distract the discussion will not be evaluated favorably. Respect, attentiveness, and collaboration are essential in maintaining a productive classroom environment.

**How grading will work:**

- At the end of each class, students who contributed to the discussion will mark their participation on a sign-in sheet. **Failure to mark participation at the end of class will also result in no credit given that day.**
- Participation in 50% of sessions (10 out of ~20) is the target for full credit.

### **Evaluation:**

- Outstanding (100%): Contributed meaningfully in 10+ classes. Contributions reflect preparation, insight, and active listening. Comments advanced the discussion, connected course material, or helped clarify key points.
- Excellent (90%): Contributed meaningfully in 8-10 classes. Contributions demonstrate preparation and relevance but may lack the consistent depth of "Outstanding" participation.
- Good (80%): Contributed meaningfully in 6-7 classes.
- Below Average (70%): Contributed in 4-5 classes.
- Poor (60%): Contributed in fewer than 3 classes or comments were counterproductive, disrespectful, or demonstrated a lack of preparation.
- F (No show)

### ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments for this course include:

- Case questions, which must be completed in advance of the corresponding case study discussion in class.
- A personal strategy blueprint.
- In-class quizzes, which will be conducted during review sessions prior to exams.

Additional details about these assignments, including grading weights, will be provided on Canvas.

### TEAM PROJECT

Students will organize into teams of 5-6 members within the first three weeks of the course. Teams will then propose which cases they prioritize to debate. Several written deliverables accessed in Canvas will be due in the final two months of the course.

Teams will be assigned a case and a position to take for a classroom "Oxford style" debate. We will have eight teams and cover four cases. Each case will have a key strategic question, and teams are randomly assigned which position to argue for the debate. Team class debates will take place from November 19<sup>th</sup> through December 8<sup>th</sup>. Each class covers one case. Teams will have up to 20 minutes to present their perspective on the strategic challenge. Teams will also have a 5-minute rebuttal time based on what evidence the other team presented. Each team member is required to participate in the presentation. The final 20 minutes will be a classroom discussion about the firm, the case and the challenge presented. More information will be provided in class and Canvas on group assignments.

It is important that group members contribute their time, knowledge and skills fairly to the team report and presentation. Written peer evaluations will be employed to help ensure even distribution of team responsibilities. In rare cases where there is concern about shared contributions, I may adjust individual grades, including applying penalties of up to 50% of the project grade, if warranted. Feedback provided on the peer assessment will be kept confidential.

Your final grade for the project will consist of two parts: 50% paper, 50% presentation.

For a complete rubric, please refer to Canvas.

### EXAMS

Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions and may also include T/F, short answer, or essay questions.

### GRADE SCALE

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59 and below

Students with final grades of 89/79/69/59 who received a grade of 90 or above for attendance will be bumped to the next letter grade. All other grades are recorded as earned. No other final grades will be rounded, except in the case of a grading or calculation error.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

The following text is required for this class: Frank Rothaermel, *Strategic Management*, 2026 Release (McGraw Hill). ISBN: 9781266032790.

We will also be analyzing case studies. Instructions for purchasing the cases will be posted on Canvas.

I highly recommend getting into the habit of reading *The Wall Street Journal*. As a Georgia Tech student, you can access the paper for free via the [Georgia Tech Library](#) catalogue. I also recommend listening to podcasts like *Acquired* and *Invest Like the Best*, to gain more in-depth knowledge of business playbooks.

### METHOD OF COVERAGE OF MATERIAL

Prior to each class period, I expect you to have completed the assigned reading. Classes will be taught using a combination of lecture, class discussions, presentations and the Socratic/case method. I will call upon students to explain and analyze readings, cases, problems and any other material assigned for the class period. Preparation is essential for this class.

### GENERATIVE AI

In this course, generative AI tools like Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini are valuable for brainstorming ideas and exploring relevant examples of our concepts. However, it is not acceptable for these tools – or anyone else – to complete your work for you. It is unethical to copy and paste text generated by AI tools into an assignment you submit as your own work. Any such action will be treated as a violation of the GT Honor Code.

### OTHER COURSE POLICIES

All assignments must be submitted prior to the start of class on the due dates listed on Canvas. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Classes may not be recorded without my express permission.

Please review the [Student-Faculty Expectations](#) agreement.

Please note that this syllabus expresses my administrative policies and intentions for the subject matter for the class; however, I reserve the right to change any of the above-referenced policies and/or the topics and assignments. I further reserve the right to make changes without notice and within my own discretion.