EGRMGMT 542
Competitive Strategies in Technology Based Industries (CompStrat)
Syllabus: Fall 2024

Professor: Tony O'Driscoll
e-mail: to15@duke.edu

Office Hours: By Request

1. COURSE BACKGROUND

Why do some companies **succeed,** and others **fail?** The answer often boils down to **Strategy.**

This course is designed to convey the **elements of competitive strategy** with a focus on the special considerations of **technology-based companies.**

Three **core tenets** of the course are:

1. Companies exist to **create, deliver,** and **capture** value.
2. What **customers** find **valuable** changes over time.
3. Innovation – including in the **business model** – is required to continue to stay **viable**.

Students will gain an appreciation for the **strategic considerations** that affect the **success** of technology-based offerings in the marketplace through a systematic exposure to key concepts in the **context**, **analysis**, **formulation,** and **execution** of strategic options.

The course is structured along the lines that a **consulting organization** would follow in developing or refining their strategy for their client. **Live Cases** will provide student "Consultant Teams" the opportunity to develop, refine, and apply their skills to **current and contemporary strategic issues**. **Individual final project** late in the semester will provide an opportunity for each student to explore, analyze and make recommendations on a strategic area of specific interest to them. Finally, student teams will take charge of a company and seek to create, deliver, and capture value in a highly engaging and immersive strategy simulation called **Transform**

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES and FOUNDATION

Broadly, a strategy is a plan for setting long-term goals and putting in place the actions (tactics) for achieving them.

More specifically, it is how you allocate (and reallocate) resources within the firm to achieve desired outcomes, and the most important outcome is the creation of value – often, new value – for customers.

Strategy is how you set your business up for success over the long term. According to McKinsey, strategy is *"An integrated set of hard-to-reverse choices, made ahead of time in the face of uncertainty to create and capture economic surplus."*

At the conclusion of this course, students will have the ability to think critically about business strategy, examine the implications of strategic decisions, consider the effect of strategic decisions on people, communicate strategic recommendations clearly, concisely, and compellingly in written and oral form.

More specifically, students will have the knowledge, comprehension, and ability to apply:
- *Fundamental concepts of strategy*
- *The unique nature of competitive forces in technology-based businesses*
- *The fleeting nature of competitive advantage*
- *The importance of customer value and "Jobs to Be Done"*
- *The key elements of strategic analysis*
- *Classical and contemporary models of competitive strategy*
- *Value Proposition and Business Model Design*
- *Theories and Practices of innovation*
- *Challenges of implementing strategies*

3. COURSE DESIGN

To develop a strong understanding of Competitive Strategy, this course will leverage "Individual and Team Based Learning" and draw upon: Readings, Lectures, Interactive Exercises, Consulting Team "Live-Case Study" analysis and recommendations, Guest Speaker Interaction, and an Individual Final project and an immersive simulation to synthesize all the learnings.

Learning Context:
This course will be a blend of live and remote synchronous learning. Lectures and In-Class Exercises will be recorded to allow for asynchronous virtual viewing after class, but class attendance is mandatory. Case-Study Presentations/Discussions, Interactive Exercises, The Transform Immersive Simulation, and Guest Speaker interaction (as feasible) will be conducted in virtual synchronous modalities.

Team Based Learning:
You will be assigned to a team for the duration of this course. Strategy is heavily dependent on people working together in collaborative teams, bringing diverse perspectives, and applying a wide array of strategic lenses to ultimately arrive upon an optimal strategic recommendation. Throughout the course, we will focus on developing the skills needed to move through successive waves of divergence and convergence to arrive at the best possible strategic recommendation.

In the interest of making sure all team members acquire a full suite of effective strategy skills, and to ensure that the team develops the best possible deliverable, please DO NOT divide up and assign the work each week so that one team member is "specializing" in one area. For example, do not have one member of your team be the individual who is responsible for the quantitative analysis while another is responsible for the qualitative. Instead, push yourself, and each other, to take on different – sometimes uncomfortable and/or unfamiliar – roles to test

them out. Research has proven that "Acting your way into a new way of thinking" is more effective than "Thinking your way into a new way of acting." Use this course to explore your boundaries and expand your horizons.

Readings:
Students will be provided a copy of the *CompStrat Guide to Strategy*, a document that includes a dictionary-style compilation of key strategy definitions, terms and frameworks, along with recommended readings, websites, and other resources.

The recommended class pre-view materials for CompStrat were carefully chosen to give students a robust reference set with many of the key papers that will provide more detail than contained in the lectures. The student will benefit by reading the articles and using that material to prepare for class discussions.

To minimize Coursepack costs and to maximize your ability to explore areas of interest, you are required to subscribe to HBR Online for the duration of this course which will enable access to many of the referenced papers, an Explainer Video series, and other resources. The cost to access all materials on HBR.org is $12/Month.

Lectures:
A portion of each class period will consist of an interactive lecture that elaborates on topics included in the assigned preview material and introduce additional frameworks not covered in the course readings. The professor will draw upon his extensive strategy consulting experience to share examples and lessons learned from the application of these strategic frameworks across multiple industries and geographies.

Interactive Exercises/Jam Sessions:
Interactive exercises are designed to engage in "Double-Loop" applied learning around key Strategic concepts, frameworks and issues related to the weekly class topic.

Live-Case Consulting Recommendations:
One of the most effective ways to develop strong strategic skills is through case analysis, recommendation development, and the ability to address challenges to your recommendation. Live Case studies are synopses of a current and contemporary strategic challenge that your consulting team will be required to resolve and defend.

Guest Speaker Interactions:
We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to interact with highly experienced strategy leaders from industry. Each leader will deliver a brief overview of their career and the key learnings that have emerged from their experience in leading Strategy.

Final Project:
The final project is an individual exploration designed to assess the student's ability to demonstrate mastery of the course material through application and synthesis of the frameworks, models and tools to a topic of the student's choosing that might include the exploration, analysis and recommendation of a specific company or entrepreneurial opportunity.

Transform! Simulation
We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in a newly develops Strategy Simulation called **Transform!** This simulation integrates "Monopoly" like game play where teams assume the leadership roles (Chief Executive, Chief Strategy Officer, and Chief Financial Officer) and run through successive rounds of strategy formulation and execution with the goal to maximize value creation.

4. DUKE HONOR CODE/COMMUNITY STANDARD

The Duke Honor Code/Community Standard is an integral part of this course.

This means you cannot give or receive any information on any graded assignment. This prohibition applies not only to conversations you might have with members of your section in the course this semester, it also applies to individuals in MEM sections or classes that have met previously, either this semester or in years past. Additionally, you may not receive information on graded assignments from people in other Duke classes, from people outside of Duke, or from any other source (this includes your friends outside of Duke, as well as your family members).

With regard to work designated as an "Individual Assignment" within this course, you cannot give or receive any information on any assignment. Your work must be completely your own.

On work designated as a "Team Assignment," the expectation is that you will actively participate with the members of your team in the completion of the assignments. You cannot, however, give or receive any information on any assignment outside of working with your team members. This includes prohibitions on sharing information with or receiving information from other teams, as well as sharing information with or receiving information from any individuals who are not members of your team.

If there are any questions about how the Duke Honor Code/Community Standard applies, either in terms of the course overall or with regard to a specific assignment, please contact the course instructor directly.

5. COURSE DELIVERABLES AND GRADING

The course material in Strategy builds in a cumulative and integrated manner. Each week builds upon and extends the material delivered before. Therefore, students will have the opportunity to continuously apply their new knowledge of Frameworks, models, tools, and theories to real-world situations.

Course Deliverables:

The following table summarizes how your grades will be determined. The subsequent sections elaborate upon each of these assignments and deliverables.

Course Assignments/Project Deliverables	Type	Scoring	Weight
Tesla Scenarios	Individual	Scaled	10%
Team Live-Case Studies *(5 Live-Case Consulting Team Pitches/Reports – 10 Points Each)*	Team	Scaled	50%
Mini-Case Executive Summary *(1-2 Page Executive Summary of Mini Case Strategy)*	Team	Scaled	10%
Final Project *(Individual Strategic Analysis of a Chosen Company)*	Individual	Scaled	20%
Course Engagement and Team Contribution *(See Below)*	Individual	Percent	10%

Percent Grading:

Percentage grading evaluates your submission on a traditional 0-100% scale. It is applied to Course Engagement and Team Contribution.

Scaled Grading:

Scaled grading is applied to all other the Team Live-Case Presentations and Reports and the Individual Final Project and evaluates your submission as follows:

- **Criterion Based Evaluation:** First, your submission is evaluated against the baseline requirements outlined below.
- **Comparative Performance Evaluation:** Second, your submission will be compared to your peers and ranked-ordered to fit a distribution as outlined below.

Did Not Submit Assignment	Meets Minimum Requirements	Meets Average Requirements	Exceeds Average Requirements	Exemplary Submission
0 Points	*70 Points*	*78 Points*	*86 Points*	*94 Points*
Assignment was not submitted on time.	*Assignment met the minimum requirements (e.g. Length, Time) but demonstrated limited application/use of the course material*	*Assignment met the requirements, was completed as prescribed, and demonstrated an acceptable application/ use of the course material*	*Assignment exceeded requirements, was completed in a differentiated way by demonstrating a clear command/application/use of the course material*	*Assignment far exceeded expectations with a truly exceptional effort demonstrating a unique and/or novel application/use of the course material.*
NA	*Bottom 15% Rank*	*Next 30% Rank*	*Next 30% Rank*	*Top 15% Rank*

Tesla Scenario Building Activity (10% of Grade)
Individuals will identify the biggest STEEP Uncertainties and develop four plausible future scenarios for Tesla Motors applying Horizontal and Vertical Logic to create a clear, concise and compelling narrative to support this analysis

Team Live-Case Studies (50% of Final Grade):
Live-case study assignments based on a current and contemporary strategic issue in the news will be released.

All teams will work on the live-case study assignment playing the role of a consulting company charged with conducting an analysis and developing a recommendation to address the strategic issue.

Two-Three teams (A.K.A. the Consultant Teams) will formally present their analysis to the client during class.

The remaining teams (A.K.A. the Client Teams) will submit a written report of their work and play the role of board members during the Consultant Team Pitches.

Note: Depending on the number of teams in class the number of reports/pitches will vary, but in all cases each deliverable is worth 10 points.

At the beginning of each Class:
- *"CONSULTING" teams will formally present their analysis and recommendations to the "Client" (~15-20 Minute Presentation)*
- *"CLIENT" teams will question, critique, and offer differing perspectives to the consulting teams based on their own written analysis (~15-20 Minute Interaction)*

The purpose of this deliverable is to encourage thorough analysis and creative formulations of multiple strategic options, develop sound recommendations, and engage in spirited discussion, exploration of ideas, and application of tools from the course.

Each team is required to deliver two "Consultant Team" Presentations and three Reports for the term.
The Online class will submit five reports, one for each case.

The Presentations and Reports will be graded on a 50 Point Scale:
- *Clarity of Setup/Executive Summary (5 Points)*
- *Relevance of Research and Findings (5 Points)*
- *Depth of Analysis and Clarity of Interpretation (10 Points)*
- *Strength of Recommendation and Justification (25 Points)*
- *Professionalism of Presentation or Structure and Quality of Report (5 Points)*

Mini-Case Executive Summary
Teams will review a mini-case and develop a 1-2 page Executive Summary of:
- The Situation facing the firm.
- The Complication that they must address.
- The key Question(s) that must be answered by the Strategic Recommendation to address the Complication.
- The Proposed Strategic Recommendations to answer the key Questions.

Final Project (20% of Grade):
The final project, by contrast, an individual exploration designed to assess the student's ability to demonstrate mastery of the course material through application and synthesis of the frameworks, models, and tools to a topic of the student's choosing.

The project itself can take several forms of Exploration, Analysis and Recommendation for:
- A company facing a strategic challenge that might include:
    - *An external disruption*
    - *A marketplace shift*
    - *A competitive move*
    - *A patent expiration*
    - *A change in regulation*
- An entrepreneurial opportunity
    - *A comprehensive strategic analysis (NOT a business plan)*

The Project deliverable will be a **7 MINUTE MAXIMUM** presentation (recorded with PPT charts submitted).

The final project will be graded on:
- *The comprehension of the issues surrounding strategic opportunity/challenge (25%)*
- *The ability to apply the frameworks, models, and tools correctly and appropriately to the project (25%)*
- *The completeness of the proposed recommendation/solution (25%)*
- *The creativity and novelty of the recommendation/solution (25%)*

Course Engagement, Team Contribution (10% of Grade):
You are Lecture Attendance, Engagement (5% of Grade) and Team Contribution (5% of grade) are a critical element of the student learning experience in CompStrat.

You are allowed one excused absence from class, and you are required to participate in the Transform Simulation. For the remaining ten lectures, you will be deducted one point for each class missed, up to a maximum of three absences. In all instances you are required to formally request an absence from class citing a valid reason to your TA's, copying your professor.

Based on your individual and team preparation of the background readings, lecture reviews, and case study analysis, you should come to class ready to contribute to class discussions with both comments and questions.

When considering how you may best contribute to the class engagement, consider the following factors:
- *Is the comment accurate, and does it reflect the background readings and/or case facts, but not merely restating them?*
- *Does the comment/question add new insight to our shared understanding?*

- *Is the comment/question timely and does it advance the comments/questions recently made by others?*
- *Does the comment/question arrive at a positive solution for the situation/issue/opportunity outlined in the case?*
- *Does the comment/question move the discussion along by yielding a new perspective?*
- *Does the comment/question reflect a concern for maintaining a constructive and comfortable classroom atmosphere?*

In addition to Course Attendance and Engagement, all team members are expected to contribute fully to their team's effort in completing team-based assignments/deliverables/feedback.

When considering how you may best contribute to your professionalism as a team member, consider the following factors:

Personal Professionalism:
- *Communication: Am I communicating my ideas effectively?*
- *Teamwork: Am I leading and contributing in a way that leads to high-performance?*

- *Critical Thinking: Am I solving complex problems by applying incisive analysis?*
- *Ethics: Am I approaching every assignment and discussion with utmost integrity?*
- *Humanness: Am I demonstrating that I value people and creating value for people in my interpersonal interactions.*

Teams are required to develop a Team Charter at the beginning of the semester. Team contribution will be evaluated via Team Peer Feedback where aggregate data on performance and contribution for each team member will be gathered, synthesized, analyzed, and – where necessary - debriefed with your TA twice during the semester.

Poor team contribution, based on peer feedback from the two Peer Feedback evaluations will be reflected in the overall Engagement and Contribution score.

Late Assignments:
Students/teams are expected to submit all assignments by the stated deadline. Late assignments (even if it is only by a few minutes) will receive reduced grades. The reduction in the grade will increase as the lateness increases, up to the point where extremely late submissions will receive grades of "0."

6. REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS/COLLABORATION PLATFORM

HBR Online Subscription:
To minimize Coursepack costs and to maximize your ability to explore areas of interest, you are required to subscribe to HBR Online for the duration of this course which will enable access to many of the referenced papers, an Explainer Video series, and other resources.

The cost to access all materials on HBR.org is $12/Month.

Mural Collaboration Platform:
Depending on course teaching format (Physical/Virtual) Teams may be required to use Mural's innovative platform to engage in some collaborative team activities.

Mural is proven to improve team creativity and performance while working collaboratively at a distance and will dramatically improve your team's ability to develop clear, concise and compelling responses to your assignments and deliverables. There is no charge to students for using this platform.

Each team will be provided with their own "Mural" Team Workspace. Specifically developed Mural Templates will be provided within your workspace to facilitate your work on class assignments.

For more information on the platform itself, visit mural.co

7. FACULTY BIOGRAPHY

Tony O'Driscoll is a professor, speaker, author, and advisor whose engaging message emphasizes that the key digital-age differentiator is not technology, but people.

Tony has spent the bulk of his professional and academic career at the nexus of Business, Innovation, Technology and Learning, creating, and implementing strategies that enable organizations to realize the full potential of their most valuable asset: Human Beings.

Dr. O'Driscoll's current appointments as Adjunct Professor at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and Pratt School of Engineering, coupled with his Research Fellow role at Duke Corporate Education afford him the unique opportunity to apply cutting-edge academic research to address increasingly complex business challenges.

During his 18-year corporate career, Tony held several strategic leadership positions. At Duke Corporate Education, he launched the company's Asian operation and led innovation at CE Labs. At IBM, he was a founding member of IBM Global Service's Strategy and Change consulting practice where he consulted at the highest level with business executives on creating competitive advantage in increasingly complex environments. He also served as a member IBM's Almaden Services Research Group where he investigated the changing roles of leadership, innovation, and collaboration as enterprises become more global, virtual, open and digitally mediated. At both IBM and Nortel Networks, Tony had strategic responsibility for crafting and implementing enterprise-level learning, transformation, and human performance improvement strategies.

Dr. O'Driscoll is a frequently invited speaker at both corporate and academic conferences. He has been a keynote speaker, workshop leader, moderator, speaker, and panelist at over 200 national and international conferences. He has also provided expert analysis and interviews to media outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal, Business Week, Wired Magazine, The Financial Times, India Today, Chief Learning Officer Magazine, Training Magazine* and for industry analysts such as Gartner and Forrester.

Tony has authored and co-authored articles for business periodicals such as *Harvard Business Review*, *The Financial Times, Strategy and Business, and Dialogue* and writes a column for *Training Magazine*. He has also published two books on Learning and Organization Performance: *Learning in 3D: Adding a New Dimension to Enterprise Learning* and *Collaboration,* and *Achieving Desired Business Performance.* His newly released book, *Everyday Superhero* proposes a revolutionary People-Centered Transformation (PCT) approach to enable sustained and sustainable organization agility.

Dr. O'Driscoll has contributed to science via publications in journals such as *Management Information Sciences Quarterly, Journal of Management Information Systems, Performance Improvement Quarterly* and the *Journal of Product and Innovation Management*. His current research and practice examine how rapidly emerging technologies are disrupting existing industry structures and business models. He specifically focuses on how to develop leadership systems that enable organizations to adapt and evolve in increasingly unpredictable and turbulent business environments.

Along with his teaching, research and formal speaking engagements, Dr. O'Driscoll maintains an active consulting practice. His client list includes Fortune 500 companies across a broad range of industries including High-Technology, Banking, Biotechnology, Software Development, Gaming, Energy, Retail and Professional Services. For more information visit www.compleximple.com

Dr. O'Driscoll holds an Ed.D. in Organization Learning and an M.S. in Management from North Carolina State University. His B.S. in Electrical Engineering is from Virginia Tech.

FALL 2024 EGRMGMT 542 – Competitive Strategy: Syllabus On a Page (SOAP) – 6 Teams

Class	Topic	Deliverables	Class/Team Notes
(1) Wed, Aug 28	**Introduction to Classic versus Contemporary Strategy Theory**		
(2) Wed, Sep 4	**The Strategy Palette** *Classical, Visionary, Adaptive, Shaping*	**Your Strategy Needs a Strategy** • *Complete Individual Gameplay by 11:59PM on 8/31* • *Complete Individual Reflection Questions by 11:59PM on 9/3*	• *Drop/Add Date: Sept. 6* • *Teams Finalized (6 Teams)*
(3) Wed, Sep 11	**Strategic/Competitive Landscape** *STEEP/Scenarios/Three Layer Model*	• *Tesla Scenarios Individual Assignment Due by 11:59PM on 9/10 in Canvas*	
(-) Wed, Sep 18	**NO CLASS: Simulation Time Credit**		• *Live Case 1 Released Friday*
(4) Wed, Sep 25	**Visionary Approach 1** *Innovators Dilemma/Blue Ocean*	**Live Case 1:** • *2 Consulting Teams: Presentation Due by 11:59PM on 9/24 in Canvas* • *All Other Teams: Reports Due by 11:59PM on 9/24 in Canvas*	• *Live Case 2 Released Friday*
(5) Wed, Oct 2	**Visionary Approach 2** *Jobs to Be Done/Business Model Canvas*	**Live Case 2:** • *2 Consulting Teams: Presentation Due by 11:59PM on 10/1 in Canvas* • *All Other Teams: Reports Due by 11:59PM on 10/1 in Canvas*	• *Case 3 Released Friday*
(6) Wed, Oct 9	**Adaptive Approach 1** *Transient Competitive Advantage, Profit Patterns/Bowling Alley*	**Live Case 3:** • *2 Consulting Teams: Presentation Due by 11:59PM on 10/8 in Canvas* • *All Other Teams: Reports Due by 11:59PM on 10/8 in Canvas*	• *Mini-Case Released Friday* **Team Peer Feedback Round 1** • *Due by 11:59 on 10/11*
(-) Wed, Oct 16	**NO CLASS: Simulation Time Credit**	• *1-2 Page Mini-Case Executive Summary Due by 11:59 on 10/18 in Canvas*	
(7) Wed, Oct 23	**Adaptive Approach 2** *S-Curves /Three Horizons*	***Mini Case Jam Session*** ***Final Project Proposal Due*** *Due by 11:59PM on 10/22 in Canvas*	• *Case 4 Released Friday*
(8) Wed, Oct 30	**Shaping Approach 1** *Co-Opetition /Platforms*	**Live Case 4 Pitch/Jam Session** • *3 Consulting Teams: Presentation Due by 11:59PM on 10/29 in Canvas* • *All Other Teams: Reports Due by 11:59PM on 3/26 in Canvas*	• *Case 5 Released Friday*
(9) Wed, Nov 6	**Shaping Approach 2** *Ecosystem Evolution, Creating Shared Value*	**Live Case 5 Pitch/Jam Session** • *3 Consulting Teams: Presentation Due by 11:59PM on 11/5 in Canvas* • *All Other Teams: Reports Due by 11:59PM on 11/5in Canvas*	• *Decide XFORM Team Roles*
(-) Wed, Nov 13	**NO CLASS: Simulation Time Credit**		
(10) Wed, Nov 20 *Guest Speaker: Christian Rangen*	**TRANSFORM Kickoff**	**TRANSFORM Simulation Preparation** • *Mandatory Training Session*	
(11-13) Nov 23-24 **Saturday/Sunday**	**TRANSFORM Simulation:** • *Saturday: 9-3PM* • *Sunday: 9-1PM*		**Two rounds of Simulation to be run over weekend.** *First team to reach $50B Wins!*
(-) Wed Nov 27	**NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK**		
(14) Wed Dec 4	**Renewal and Course Completion** *Transformation Simulation Debrief Organization Transformation 9-Box Strategy Open Mic*	**Final Project Due** • *Due by 11:59PM on 12/4*	**Team Peer Feedback Round 2** • *Due by 11:59 on 12/5*