

# STRATEGIC THINKING FOR CFO

## [4 module, 2023]

**Artem Kudryavtsev**  
Visiting professor

[Artem.Kudr.rus@gmail.com](mailto:Artem.Kudr.rus@gmail.com)

**TAs:** Maryana Lazaricheva

[MLazaricheva@nes.ru](mailto:MLazaricheva@nes.ru)

### Course description

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This course focuses on some of the important current issues in strategic management. It will concentrate on modern analytical approaches and on enduring successful strategic practices. It is consciously designed with a technological, disruptive and global outlook since this orientation in many ways highlights the significant emerging trends in strategic management.

The course is intended to provide the students with a pragmatic approach that will guide the formulation and implementation of corporate, business, and functional strategies and challenges.

Throughout the course, we will discuss the appropriate methodologies, concepts, and tools pertinent to strategic analyses and will illustrate their use by discussing many applications in real-life settings.

### Course requirements, grading, and attendance policies

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Grading is based on:

- Class participation+Group presentation (25%)
- 4 graded assignments (40%)
- Final Take-home exam (35%)

#### Cases (mini group)

Four cases write-ups are required. In essence, your paper should demonstrate that you have carefully analyzed the case and have a coherent view on how the company should proceed. Be clear and concise. Your writing style has an important impact on your ability to communicate your ideas. The rest of the write-up essentially argues why that position is correct. At the end, you should list concisely (as a list) the 4 to 5 issues or potential problems with your recommendation. Case discussions should be about 2-3 pages, double-spaced, excluding exhibits. In guiding the case analyses, you can follow the questions that will be given for each case.

#### Class participation

Your active participation in the discussion in class is considered very important in this course. Prior preparation of the cases and assigned readings are essential. By making 25% of your grade dependent on your participation in class we hope to encourage you to feel responsible in making this course work. Class attendance is required. Two meaningful questions/notes/comments will suffice.

### Group presentation

The presentation should provide you with an opportunity to illustrate the application of one of the frameworks we developed in class to an industry and firm of your choice and evaluation of one possible or factual strategic move. The analysis will take the form of a presentation supported by a few PowerPoint slides. The group is to find a nice example of the particular issue (competitive advantage, strategic interactions, standards etc.) and to apply the concepts in the readings and class to the example.

You are welcome to review your topic with me to make discussion beneficial to the rest of cohort. (Highly recommended)

### Take-home exam

35% of the final grade will be for an individual take-home (**not** a group) case analysis, due on or before **10<sup>th</sup> of May**.

The format of the paper should be text and exhibits. The paper should be no more than 15 double-spaced pages of text and 10 exhibits. Length is not a virtue and students should "spend the time to make the document shorter."

## Course contents

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### Session 1

**Introduction. Value chain. Industry analysis. Competitive advantage. Russian post, Tesla strategy discussion.**

Case: in class discussion

Readings: "The secret Tesla motors master plan" and other  
ROTH chapter 3, 4

### Session 2

**Type of markets.**

**Game theory. Competitive dynamic. Niche markets. Entry.**

**Shimano case**

Case: Shimano and the high-end road bike industry (Stanford SM-150)  
(due before session)

Readings: Thinking strategically, Part II  
ROTH chapter 5, 6

### Session 3

**Disruptive technologies. Innovations. Technology strategy. Industry life cycle.**

**Tesla case**

Case: Netflix (McGrawHill MH0043)  
(due before session)

Readings: ROTH chapter 7

#### **Session 4**

**Diversification. Outsourcing. Vertical and horizontal integration. Strategic alliances.**  
**Group presentations**

Case: Group presentations

Readings: ROTH chapter 8, 9

#### **Session 5**

**Economics of information. Standards wars. Platform competition.**  
**Netflix case**

Case: Performance Indicator (HBS 9-702-480)  
(due before session)

Readings: TBD

#### **Session 6**

**Strategic view on org structure, incentives, corporate culture.**  
**Performance Indicator (Golf Balls) case**

Case: The a2 Milk Company (HBS 9-719-424)  
(due before session)

Readings: ROTH chapter 11

#### **Session 7**

**Customized to needs and interests of students.**

Case: none

Readings: TBD

### **Description of course methodology**

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This course will use a combination of readings, group case studies, case in-depth analysis by professor, lectures, non-gradable quizzes and one group presentation.

### **Course materials**

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#### **Required textbooks and materials**

Frank T. Rothaermel **Strategic management** third edition or later (**ROTH**)  
Dixit, Nabeluff **Thinking Strategicaly** (или Диксит, Нейлбафф **Теория Игр**)

#### **Additional materials**

TBD

Besanco, Dranove, Shanley, Stern **Economics of Competitive Strategy (ECS)** optional

**Academic integrity policy**

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Cheating, plagiarism, and any other violations of academic ethics at NES are not tolerated