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Southampton Institute**Unit Reference**

Unit Title:	<u>Contemporary Business Issues</u>
Credit Points:	20 CATS
Level:	Three
Parent Course:	BA (Hons) Business with Information Management
Faculty:	Business School
Level (on parent course):	3
Date Validated:	25 th May 2000

Total student workload: 150 hours

Class contact: 48 hours Typically comprising a programme of lectures, seminars and surgeries

Directed leaning: 60 hours

Independent learning: 42 hours

The total student workload is based on the unit being delivered over a three term academic year. If the unit is delivered over one semester, the total student workload will remain unchanged but will be delivered over twelve teaching weeks.

On those occasions when formal class contact might not take place, for example during the examination period or sickness of student/staff, the amount of directed learning and independent learning will increase proportionately.

PREREQUISITES

None

UNIT DESCRIPTION

This unit examines some of the most important contemporary issues faced by business organisations at the start of the new Millennium, raising students' awareness and preparing them for the challenges which they might face in a decision making role in their business career. The content of the unit, by its nature, cannot be too prescriptive and will need to be modified as new issues assume significance. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that for the next few years contemporary issues challenging businesses will include: Green issues, Ethics, Flexible working/portfolio management, Demographic change, Globalisation, Gender issues, Trading blocks and agreements.

These issues, as well as any new developments, will be delved into and their origins, current impact and the likely direction in future will be analysed and evaluated.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the unit students should be able to:

Understanding and Knowledge

1. Identify contemporary business issues, analyse and discuss their relevance to businesses and their operations in the modern world.

Skills and Other Attributes

Cognitive

1. Critically assess the implications of a contemporary issue within a given situation.

Practical and Professional Skills

1. Research, analyse, report and make recommendations on dealing with the above implications.

Transferable and Key Skills

1. Communication- Written and oral (Report, Presentation)

AREAS OF STUDY

Notwithstanding new developments affecting business operations, the areas of study will include green and environmental issues, consumerism, GM food, Ethical considerations in domestic and international business, globalisation and pressures on businesses to become global, changes in demographic and social-cultural factors (growing size of the retired population, increasing role of children in the household purchase decision, declining size of the family unit), equal opportunity issues (age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background), the role of trading blocks and international organisations, e.g. WTO, in promoting/hindering trade.

TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGY

The unit will be delivered by means of a combination of lectures and student centred seminars. The lecture programme will provide the theoretical and conceptual underpinning and the seminars will provide practical application of the theoretical and conceptual content.

ASSESSMENT

Weighting

60%	WRIT	An individual assignment
40%	PRES	A group presentation. Attendance Marks will be deducted for non-attendance at presentations by other groups.

Coursework marks will be aggregated to give one overall mark.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

The unit will be assessed by a combination of individual assignment and group presentation aimed at measuring students' attainment of the stated outcomes. The assignment will typically include analysis, evaluation and interpretation skills and will be based on a relevant contemporary issue. However, different topics will be selected at random for different groups of individuals. All assignments and presentations will be marked according to the same criteria.

INDICATIVE READING

Core text

Recommended Reading

Evans, M., Moutinho, L., (1999) Contemporary Issues in Marketing, Basingstoke: MacMillan Press

Magazines, Journals, Papers

The Economist
The Financial Times

Author Ebi Murandi, 2001

Unit Title: Critical Management Thinking

Credits: 20

Level: 3**Delivering Faculty: SBS****6. Delivering School: Management****Parent Course: BABS****Parent Level: 3****Total Student Workload: 150 Hours****Made up of:**

Class contact:	40 hours
Directed reading	20 hours
Independent Learning	90 hours

Prerequisites: None**Unit description**

Business and management institutions are frequently criticised for the lack of academic neutrality in the design and delivery of their teaching and learning programmes, as they inevitably adopt managerialism in a wholehearted and uncritical way. Academics from Social Sciences and humanities comment that this renders much of the content of such programmes superficial and unscholarly. In this unit, we seek to question two rarely challenged positions implicit in managerialism:

A The aims and objectives of managers are primarily focused on efficient and effective use of resources

B That individual and social well being is largely, if not entirely, dependent upon effective management of resources

Consequently, many management courses in Business Schools are uncritical of management behaviour and most of its consequences. A few notable exceptions – organisational studies, industrial relations and ethics etc. – can be taught in radical or critical ways, but are frequently not. This unit aims to expose students to thinking about the human experiences that result from managerialism, capitalism and industrialism. It does not purport to offer a direct alternative, rather it enable students to reconsider issues and questions that they have already encountered, from a different perspective.

The aim is to help students prepare for a variety of roles and tasks where technical business knowledge, obtained from management subjects, is less important than the ability to be comfortable with irresolution and ambiguity, be critical and creative in thinking and a willingness to adopt unsafe criteria. Such roles as product champion change manager, devils advocate entrepreneur and naïve dissenter have been identified in the literature.

Learning Outcomes:

A: Knowledge and Understanding:

1. To build up knowledge of techniques used to understand logical weaknesses in managerial arguments
2. To develop a deep understanding of a non-managerialist perspective
3. To explore the impact of a particular business activity from a non-managerial perspective

B: Cogitative Skills

1. To develop strong critical skills
2. To contrast different paradigms and identify the importance of value judgements in reaching conclusions
3. To develop curiosity and creativity in business affairs

C: Practice and Professional Skills

1. Articulate business issues more precisely
2. Develop rhetorical skills necessary to argue for change

D: Transferable Key Skills

1. Present arguments in a coherent fashion
2. Critique arguments effectively

7. Areas of Study

The operation and critique of arguments

Non-managerialist perspectives, including Feminism, Environmentalism, Existentialism, Postmodernism, Marxism

8. Teaching and Learning Strategy

9. Related to learning outcomes

10. A Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge of the techniques relating to logical argument and skills are developed through a reading programme, with supplementary lectures on epistemology. The non-managerialist perspectives are introduced in single lectures, and each student selects one to develop at greater length.

B: Cognitive Skills

Critical skills are developed in a weekly workshop that applies the techniques explored in the reading programme. Critical evaluation is also made of the narrative in films, such as *The Truman Show*, to develop the epistemological arguments. These abilities are tested in multiple choice / short answer tests.

Independent reading develops knowledge of a non-managerialist perspective. This deeper knowledge is used to review a topic studied from a conventional approach – often the undergraduate dissertation – as the main assignment.

C: Practice and Professional Skills

The weekly workshop sessions introduces a variety of business literatures that the students use to hone their critical skills. Each student to makes an unassessed presentation of their main assignment as work in progress with preliminary conclusions

D: Transferable Key Skills

The weekly workshops and interactive sessions are used to develop these skills.

11. Assessment

Individual Extended Essay

Weighting: 70%

Assessment type: assi

Multiple choice and short answer test (s)

Weighting: 30 %

Assessment type: exam

12. Assessment Strategy

The unit has two elements of assessment. Firstly, in an extended essay (up to 5000 words) the student contrasts managerialist and a non-managerialist perspective of a particular issue. The student is required to identify differing conclusions, and the origins of these from value judgements and epistemologies. The implications for management actions should be considered.

The second element is a short answer / multiple choice exercise that contains questions about non-managerial perspectives, and examples of arguments similar to those examined in the weekly workshop sessions.

Strategy to Learning Outcomes										
	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	D1	D2
Extended essay		*	*	*	*				*	*
Test	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Required Text

A, Thomson Critical Reasoning a Practical Introduction Routledge, 1996

Additional Sources

Milton, K. (ed) (1993) *Environmentalism*, Routledge.

Rachels, J. (1993) *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 2nd ed, McGraw Hill.

Donaldson, T. & Werhane, P. (1996) *Ethical Issues in Business*, 5th ed, Prentice Hall.

McDonagh, P. & Prothero, A. (eds) (1997) *Green Management*, Dryden.

Author

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Southampton Institute**Unit Reference:** STR102**Unit Title:** Strategic Management**Credit Points:** 20**Level:** 3**Parent Course:** BA (Hons) Business Studies**Faculty:** Southampton Business School**Level (on parent course):** 3**Date Validated:** 18 May 2001**TOTAL STUDENT WORKLOAD:** 150 hours

Class contact: 48 hours

Directed Learning: 30 hours

Independent Learning: 72 hours

Where normal timetabled sessions do not take place, additional directed learning may be provided, and/or students are expected to undertake additional independent learning.

PREREQUISITES

None

UNIT DESCRIPTION

Organisations exist in constantly changing business environments which, therefore, impose new constraints and create fresh opportunities. Successful organisations seem to be able to adapt to these changing environments and yet still achieve objectives that satisfy stakeholders' interests. The *Strategic Management* unit provides a basic understanding of the process by building on the business units in *Level One* and *Level Two*, to provide a perspective of the way in which managers operate at a strategic level.

An important part of this unit is to provide a critical understanding of the problems associated with the synthesis and implementation of strategy. The unit is, therefore, strongly supported with the use of case material.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion, students should be able to:

Understanding and Knowledge

1. Critically examine case study material concerning the analysis, selection and implementation of strategic management; relating these to current theory and presenting their analyses in both written and verbal form.
2. Research and critically evaluate strategic management in the context of a specific company / sector; highlighting any methodological weaknesses and presenting their analyses as part of a case study appraisal.

13. Skills and Other Attributes

Cognitive

1. Critically interpret case study material and apply the appropriate theoretical knowledge.
2. Critically evaluate in-depth research of key business sectors and important topic areas.

Practical and Professional

1. To analyse qualitative and quantitative data and evaluate findings, within an appropriate analytical framework.

Transferable and Key Skills

1. Communication: present written information in a professional and accurate format
2. Communication: present oral information in a professional and accurate format.

AREAS OF STUDY

This unit will use case studies to exemplify the analysis, selection and implementation of strategic management within different business environments and situations. The series of case studies provides a focus for students to apply a range of management theories and models, in order to provide a framework for the critical understanding of strategy.

Currently, it is envisaged that such areas as the following will be studied:

1. *Classical Strategy* – the planning process, auditing techniques, strategy formulation and strategic implementation

2. *Critiques of Classical Thinking* – including the works of such authors as Mintzberg, Morgan, Stacey and others
3. *Modern Classical School* – encompassing the Resource-based view, core competencies, strategic intent, strategic architecture, the learning organisation and quality.
4. *Processual School* – encompassing strategic typologies, logical incrementalism, power and structure and strategic trajectories.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

Reflecting the applied nature of strategic management, students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. The series of case studies and range of models / theories presented for discussion are intended to provide a resource from which students can construct a personal – but credible – analytical framework, in order to demonstrate a critical understanding of strategic management.

Strong emphasis will be placed upon: student discussion; reflecting upon case study examples; synthesising theoretical models / theories with commercial imperatives; developing credible, critical, arguments and recommendations.

ASSESSMENT

Weighting

40% Coursework

30% GPRS Group presentation in which students apply strategic management thinking to the critical evaluation of the strategy [current and recommended] of a real company.

70% GPRE Group report, linked to the presentation, in which students critically appraise the current and potential strategic management of a real company.

Both coursework assessment marks will be aggregated, to obtain one coursework mark.

60% Examination

Having critically analysed a pre-issued case study, students will be asked unseen questions in order to demonstrate their ability to analyse, select and implement strategy.

Students are required to pass both the overall coursework and the examination, with a minimum of 35 percent, in order to pass the unit.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Formative assessments will prepare students for the summative assessments. Integrating coursework and examination, the assessment strategy will measure the students' attainment of the stated learning outcomes.

	Coursework	Examination
Understanding and		
Outcome 1	√	√
Outcome 2	√	√
14. Cognitive Skills		
Outcome 1	√	√
Outcome 2	√	√
Practical and Professional		
Outcome 1	√	√
Transferable and Key		
Outcome 1	√	√
Outcome 2	√	

INDICATIVE READING**Core Text**

Johnson, G. & Scholes, K. 1999 *“Exploring Corporate Strategy: texts and cases”*, 5th Ed., London, Prentice Hall.

Recommended Reading

The unit encourages students to develop a diverse reading programme, but the following are key recommendations:

Clarke-Hill, C. & Glaister, K. 1995 *“Cases in Strategic Management”*, 2nd Ed., London, Pitman.

Grant, R.M. 1998 *“Contemporary Strategy Analysis”*, 3rd Ed., Oxford, Blackwell.

Segal-Horn (Ed.) 1998 *“The Strategy Reader”*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Whittington, R. 1993 *“What is Strategy & Does It Matter ?”*, London, International Thomson Business Press.

Newspapers and Journals

Current quality papers

Directed journals, both academic and industry based, such as:

Harvard Business Review
Management Today
Journal of General Management

McKinsey Quarterly
Long Range Planning
Journal of Management Studies

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