



Course information 2025-26

MN3119 Strategy

General information

MODULE LEVEL: 6

CREDIT: 30

NOTIONAL STUDY TIME: 300 hours

MODE: Locally Taught and Independent Learner Route Only (not available for Online Taught students)

Important

Please note that this course has been replaced by MN3212 Strategy in 2024/25. The last opportunity to be assessed in this course is 2023/24.

Summary

This course is concerned with strategic thinking. It studies situations in which two or more decisionmakers interact in a strategic manner. Understanding strategy situations involving conflict and/or cooperation has proved useful in many areas of economics, business, political science, law, and social psychology. This course is an interaction of game theory, economics and strategic management.

Conditions

Please refer to the relevant programme structure in the EMFSS Programme Regulations to check:

- where this course can be placed on your degree structure; and
- details of prerequisites and corequisites for this course.

You should also refer to the Exclusions list in the EMFSS Programme Regulations to check if any exclusions apply for this course.

Aims and objectives

To enable students to use the analytical tools of game theory and industrial economics to study key strategic problems in corporate decision making.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this course and having completed the essential reading and activities students should be able to:

- Use tools of strategic analysis and game theory to value and analyse strategic options in real life.

In particular, you should be able to:

- Anticipate the actions of a rational (that is, individually profit-maximising) rival and act accordingly.

Employability skills

Below are the three most relevant employability skills that students acquire by undertaking this course which can be conveyed to future prospective employers:

1. Complex problem solving
2. Decision making
3. Creativity and innovation

Essential reading

For full details, please refer to the reading list

Cabral, Luis M.B. *Introduction to Industrial Organization*. (MIT Press, 2000) [ISBN 978-0262032865]
Either Besanko, D., D. Dranove, M. Shanley and S. Shaefer *Economics of Strategy*. (Wiley, 2017)
seventh edition [ISBN 978-1119378761]

Or Saloner, G., A. Shepard and J. Podolny. *Strategic Management*. (Wiley, 2006) [ISBN 978-0470009475]

Shapiro, C. and H. Varian *Information Rules*. (HBS Press, 1998) [ISBN 978-0875848631]

Articles from Economics and Management journals available online to students will complement the textbooks for the majority of chapters in the subject guide.

Assessment

This course is assessed by a three-hour and fifteen-minute closed-book written examination.

Syllabus

Basic game theory: Two-player games. Static and dynamic games and some examples. Equilibrium concepts and solution mechanisms - Nash equilibrium, dominant/dominated strategies, backward induction.

Oligopoly competition: Perfect competition and monopoly. Price competition and the Bertrand paradox. Quantity competition. Reaction functions. Bertrand versus Cournot.

Analysis of market structure: Describing market structure: C4-ratio, Herfindahl index, Lerner index and market power. Market definition – techniques and interpretation.

Collusion: Cartels and antitrust. Cartel stability and the discount factor. Market dynamics and stability of collusion.

Strategic Alliances: Portfolio test. Strategic and business partnerships. Sources of complementarity. Resource accumulation. Absorptive capacity.

Organisation design: Organisational fit, strategy and structure, functional organisation, multidivisional structure, worldwide structure.

Competitive Dynamics: Competitive dynamics, competitive action, resource similarity, market commonality, awareness, motivation, and capability.

Strategic asymmetries: Economies of scale, sources and consequences. Scope Economies: Airline Hubs. Learning or experience curve. Firm strategies with EoScale/Scope/Learning. First-mover advantages. Market structure with increasing returns.

Value chain analysis and vertical relations: Double marginalisation and its remedies. Vertical foreclosure. Retailer competition and investment externalities.

Vertical integration and transaction cost: Make or Buy. Contracts. Relation-Specific Assets and HoldUp. Economic Rents and Quasi-Rents.

Entry and entry deterrence: Structural determinants of entry. Entry barriers and exit barriers. Entry deterrence. Identifying entrants.

Research and Development: Market structure and R&D intensity. R&D rivalry. Monopolists' and entrants' R&D incentives. Risk choice of R&D. Benefits of the patent system. Sleeping patents. Spill overs.

Technology adoption: Pre-emption games. Option value and future technological generations. Technology diffusion: Heterogeneity, epidemic, and population ecology approaches.

Network Effects: Direct and indirect network effects. Systems goods. Excess inertia. Excess momentum. Firm strategies with network effects. Standards Battles.

All topics are supplemented in the subject guide with specially written case studies.