

John Molson School of Business – Department of Management
Contemporary Business Thinking – COMM 210
Section AB- Summer 2017
Tuesday-Thursday 2:45-5:30 / MB 5.265

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Course Description

This course presents a broad survey of the world of business and aims to incite students to develop a critical perspective on business literature. Students are encouraged to explore foundational business writings; expose and evaluate the central ideas for scope, relevance, and managerial utility. The course also fosters students' inclination to keep well informed about contemporary issues in organizations and business.

Learning Objectives

COMM 210 is an introductory course that will expose you to fundamental business theories and develop your ability to apply them to current organizational and business events. Through an in-depth reading of various texts reporting on current business activities and trends, you will learn to think critically about the quality of the arguments presented, uncovering the assumptions underlying them and comparing them with classic and contemporary texts that highlight foundational business concepts.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- ❖ Recognize examples and counter-examples of fundamental business theories in reports of current business activities
- ❖ Perform critical analyses of business texts
- ❖ Construct persuasive arguments using the language of business
- ❖ Demonstrate awareness of and interest in current business events
- ❖ Work effectively in groups

Instructional Methods

A combination of students self-learning, lectures, in-class discussion, and analysis of texts are our primary strategies. In addition, the use of the library and computer sources will extend your knowledge and understanding of business concepts. Written reports will encourage you to develop your own ideas and present a logical and persuasive argument for your point of view. There will also be a series of skill-building exercises during class time which are intended to help you make progress on your term project.

Required Texts

Textbook (available at the bookstore):

Dyer, L. (2010). *Critical Thinking for Business Students*, Second edition, Captus Press.

Foundational business theories: These articles are written by (in alphabetical order): Barney, Chandler, Collins & Porras, French & Raven, Greiner, Handy, Herzberg, Kaplan & Norton, Mintzberg and Tannenbaum & Schmidt. (See the link on Moodle to purchase the HBR articles.)

Business articles: These articles are generally drawn from the business press.

****The textbook and the articles should always be brought to class.****

Grading Scheme

20%	Midterm examination
40%	Final examination
30%	Team project <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 progress reports (5% each)• Final report (15%)• Presentation (5%)
10%	Class assignments, homework and participation

Midterm Examination: The mid-term examination will be on **May 23rd** (90 minutes in-class). No makeup exam will be offered without proper official justifications.

Final examination: The final examination is scheduled for the regular final examination period. You will be given material to prepare on which the examinations will be based. **Please note that you must pass the final to pass the course.**

Team Project: In the **team project**, you will work in a group of five students, applying the concepts discussed in class to new business information. Detailed project information will be available in a series of Capacity Building exercises during the course. Parts of the project are due at the beginning of Class #5 (May 18th) and #8 (May 30th). The final report is due Class #12 (June 13th) and the presentations will be during Class # 13 (June 15th).

Peer Assessment: You will be asked to assess your team members' contribution to the Team Project. The Peer Assessment provides valuable feedback to the students, professor and team members. In addition, peer assessments help JMSB in the AACSB accreditation process. Information on Peer Assessment will be posted on MOODLE. It may also impact your team project grade.

Class participation: The class participation grade is based primarily on the quality of your contributions to class discussions. However, class attendance is also a pre-requisite for a good participation grade. In addition, you will be asked to prepare brief class/homework assignments and complete unannounced quizzes. The evaluation of your peers will be built in your participation grade (see Peer Assessment above).

Information on MOODLE

Throughout the term, vital information will be available on **MOODLE**. It is your responsibility to log on to the course folder regularly so that you are well prepared for the class meetings and other events.

Class Management

You share responsibility for the learning that takes place. Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate! Therefore, you are expected to:

- Come to class on time (at the start and after the breaks)
- Read the assigned readings, think through their implications, and come to class prepared to discuss the materials
- Contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to learning (e.g., turn off your cell phone when you enter the classroom, be mentally present)
- Be an active learner by taking part in class discussions and exercises
- Contribute to the class learning by sharing news, articles and videos relevant to the class
- Give constructive feedback to your colleagues
- Check the course folder on Moodle prior to every class

COMM 210: Schedule

Class	Topic	Read and Prepare for class discussions
1 May 4	Introduction to the Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COURSE OUTLINE posted on Moodle (<i>BRING A COPY TO CLASS</i>) • Dyer, chapter 1: Introduction to critical thinking
2 May 9	Building Successful Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyer, chapter 2: Claims • Dyer, Appendix 1: Business terms and popular expressions, pp. 92-101. • Chandler, A. D. (1990). The enduring logic of industrial success. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, March – April, 2-11. • Samsung: The next big bet, <i>The Economist</i>, Oct. 1st, 2011.
3 May 11	Structure, Function and Growth of Firms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyer, chapter 3: Evidence • Greiner, L. (1998). Evolution & revolution as organizations grow. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, May-June, 3-11. • Aarts, D. (2014). Built for growth. <i>Canadian Business</i>, July, p.51-52, 55-56.
4 May 16	Strategy, Resources and Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyer, chapter 3: Evidence (continued) • Barney, J. B. (1995). Looking inside for competitive advantage. <i>Academy of Management Executive</i>, 9(4), 49-61. • Van Praet, N. (2014). Land-grabber or farming's structure? Quebec's Pangea says bigger is better, <i>Financial Post</i>, May 12. • Macdonald, N. (2008). Open wide. <i>Maclean's</i>, Jan. 19.
5 May 18	Companies' Vision Progress report 1 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyer, chapter 4: Underlying Assumptions • Collins, J. & Porras, J. (1996). Building your company's vision. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, Sept-Oct, 65-77. • Pontefact, D. (2016). How Fairphone – The world most ethical cell phone- stays good. <i>Fast Company</i>, May 12.
6 May 23	Midterm examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mid-term exam includes the topics covered in the first 5 classes • Office hours
7 May 25	Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyer, chapter 5: Causal Claims • Herzberg, F. (1987). One more time: How do you motivate employees? <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, Sept-Oct, 5-16. • lululemon brand doc (2015). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSFrX1wWugA
8 May 30	The Manager's Job, Social Power Progress report 2 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyer, chapter 6: Techniques of Persuasion • Mintzberg, H. (1990). The manager's job: Folklore and fact. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, March-April, pp. 3-16. • French, J. R. & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In: D. Cartwright & A. Zander, Group dynamics, pp. 150-166. New York: Harper & Row. • Austin, B. (2011). The Megabus effect, <i>Business Week</i>, April 7.
9 June 1	Performance, Measurement and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyer, chapter 7: Writing a Persuasive Essay • Kaplan, R. & Norton, D. (2005). The balanced scorecard: Measures that drive performance. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, July. • Keenan, G. (2013). Made (smarter) in Canada: Inside a world-beating factory, <i>The Globe and Mail</i>, March 2.
10 June 6	Managing Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handy, C. (1994). The Sigmoid curve. In: <i>The age of Paradox</i>, Chapter 3, pp. 49-67. Boston: Harvard Business Press. • Chu, J. & Weiss, J. (2013). The Cobbler's Conundrum, <i>Fast Company</i>, Iss.177, p98.
11 June 8	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tannenbaum, R. & Schmidt, W. H. (1973). How to choose a leadership pattern. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, May-June, 162-180. • Toller, C. (2015). The case for letting teams elect their own managers. <i>Canadian Business</i>, Dec 22.
12 June 13	Overview & wrap-up Project report due	
13 June 15	Presentations	
TBA	Final examination	

NOTE: Changes to this document will be announced in class or posted on MOODLE. It is the student responsibility to keep informed of what is said and done in class. Student absence **IS NOT** a valid excuse for not keeping informed.

Assessment of Learning Objectives

The learning objectives are assessed through homework and classwork assignments, quizzes, a group project, and examinations.

Learning Objective \ Learning Activity	Homework and classwork assignments	Group Project	Examinations (mid-term and final)
Recognize examples and counter-examples of fundamental business theories in reports of current business activities.	Class exercises and homework based on fundamental theories and business news or business press articles	Exploration of contemporary issues in organizations or business to find evidence supporting or challenging fundamental theories	Exam questions based on business press articles reporting on organizations or business
Perform critical analyses of business texts.	Evaluating the arguments presented in business press articles or popular business books	Gathering and analysis of secondary sources such as books, articles, and company annual reports	Exam questions based the critical thinking process
Construct persuasive arguments using the language of business.	In-class essay writing exercise, structured debates	Progress reports, oral presentation, group final report	Short-answers and essay exam questions
Demonstrate awareness of and interest in current business events.	In class discussions about current business illustrating fundamental theories	Monitoring of current news pertaining the business issues studied in the group project	Exam questions based on business press articles reporting on organizations or business
Work effectively in groups.	In-class group exercises and discussions	Group project based on the collection and analysis of evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources	Group discussion in preparation for the exams

Academic Integrity

The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism which the Code defines as “the presentation of the work of another person as one’s own or without proper acknowledgement.” This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, internet sites, professor’s course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources.

Plagiarism does not refer to words alone - it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. “Presentation” is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. Finally, if you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism.

In simple words: Do not copy, paraphrase or translate anything from anywhere without saying where you obtained it! (Source: <http://provost.concordia.ca/academicintegrity/plagiarism/>)

Useful Links

1. Academic Advisor: <http://www.concordia.ca/jmsb/programs/undergraduate/bachelor/students/advising-policies/academic-advising.html>
2. Academic Integrity: <http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity.html>
3. Access Centre for Students with Disabilities: <http://www.concordia.ca/offices/acsd.html>
4. CSU Advocacy Centre: <https://csu.qc.ca/advocacy>
5. Counselling and Psychological Services: <http://www.concordia.ca/students/counselling-life-skills.html>
6. Dean of Students Office: <http://www.concordia.ca/offices/dean-students.html>
7. Financial Aid and Awards: <http://www.concordia.ca/offices/faao.html>
8. Health Services: <http://www.concordia.ca/students/health.html>
9. HOJO (Off Campus Housing and Job Bank): <https://csu.qc.ca/hojo>
10. International Students Office: <http://www.concordia.ca/students/international.html>
11. Le Frigo vert: <http://www.lefrigovert.com/>
12. Library Business Research Portal: <http://www.concordia.ca/library/guides/business.html>
13. Library Business Videos:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZvPUsdgzzoe9iBXud67dkRu1GKxvbei4>
14. Library Citation and Style Guides: <https://library.concordia.ca/help/howto/citations.html>
15. Student Hub: <http://www.concordia.ca/students.html>
16. Student Parents Centre: <http://www.concordia.ca/offices/cusp.html/>
17. Student Success Centre: <http://www.concordia.ca/students/success.html>
18. Undergraduate Programs Office:
<http://www.concordia.ca/jmsb/programs/undergraduate/bachelor/contact-us.html>