



Department of Economics and Finance

ECON*4800
Competitive Analysis and Strategic Advantage
Fall 2013



Professor: F. Tapon, MacKinnon 738 (ext. 52657) email: ftapon@uoguelph.ca

Office Hours Monday: 3.00– 5:00 pm
 Tuesday: 3.00 - 5.00pm
 Wednesday: 3.00– 5:00 pm
 Thursday: 3:00- 5.00pm

It is your responsibility as a student to be aware of and to abide by the University's policies regarding academic misconduct, e-mail communication, maintaining copies of out-of class assignments, what to do when you cannot meet a course requirement and the drop date for this semester. To better understand these policies, visit:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/economics/node/1115>

We are all angels with only one wing. We can only fly while embracing each other.

Luciano de Crescenzo

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again; because there is not effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumphs of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Theodore Roosevelt in a speech at the Sorbonne in 1910, quoted in R.M. Nixon **Leaders** (New York, N.Y.: Warner Books, 1982), p. 345.

Before I served as a consultant to Kennedy, I had believed, like most academics, that the process of decision-making was largely intellectual and all one had to do was to walk into the President's office and convince him of the correctness of one's view. This perspective I soon realized is as dangerously immature as it is widely held.

Henry Kissinger. **The White House Years**
(Boston, Mass: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 39.

Ideas are a commodity - Execution of them is not.

Michael Dell, CEO and Founder
Dell Corp.

In real life, strategy is actually very straight forward. You pick a general direction and implement like hell!

Jack Welch, former Chairman and CEO,
General Electric

Strategies are intellectually simple; their execution is not.

Lawrence A. Bossidy, Chairman and CEO, Allied
Signal, (**Harvard Business Review**, March-April
1995, p.76)

Business is 5% strategy and 95% implementation.

Percy Barnevik, Former CEO of ABB-ASEA-Brown-
Boveri

People first, strategy second.

Jack Welch, former CEO, General Electric

Our age's fascination with strategy and vision feeds the mistaken belief that developing exactly the right strategy will enable a company to rocket past competitors. In reality, that's less than half the battle.

Ram Charan and Geoffrey Colvin (**Fortune**, June 21, 1999,
p.78)

The other thing that's fantastic that Jack Welch has done that I'm trying to do at Sun has to do with this: The bigger the boat gets, the more crisp, clear, and sparing you need to be about picking strategies and ideas to pursue. For GE, globalization was one, building a boundaryless organization was another, product service was another, Six Sigma quality, and now the Web. There have been just five companywide initiatives in Jack's whole career. My folks will tell you that I've got five initiatives per meeting.

So one thing I'm learning to do is to step back from spewing an idea a minute to focus on driving higher-level issues. For us, that's things like chip development, or availability as opposed to quality. I'm going to pick very few fights going forward, and I'm going to win them. That's the best thing I've learned from Jack.

Scott McNealy, CEO, Sun Micro Systems (**Fortune**, May 1, 2000, p.126.)

There is no business to be done on a dead planet.
David Brower, Executive Director, Sierra Club

COURSE OUTLINE

All the readings for this course are available online at:

<http://www.asres.lib.uoguelph.ca/ares/ares.dll>

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course will consist of a one and a half hour lecture and a one and a half hour workshop most weeks. During the workshop sessions, we will discuss articles covering material studied that week as outlined in the syllabus. All the articles are found on the University of Guelph website at

<http://www.asres.lib.uoguelph.ca/ares/ares.dll>

1. The Course Objectives Include:

- a. Development and reinforcement of a C-level management point of view - the firm from an overall perspective in the context of its environment.
- b. Development of an understanding of fundamental concepts in strategic management: the role of senior executives, the levels and components of strategy implementation.
- c. Integration of the knowledge gained in previous core courses and understanding of what part of that knowledge is useful to C-level executives.
- d. Development of those skills and knowledge peculiar to C-level management. These are the capacity to work in groups; excellent written and oral communications skills; the capacity to think and act entrepreneurially; the capacity to manage people and lead them; a strong commitment to quality in every aspect of your work.

2. Course Performance Measures and Group Work

I will evaluate your performance in **four different settings: a paper presentation, three web presentations, a term paper, and two oral group presentations on the term project**. All the work in this class is **group work** and hence I would like you to form groups of **four students** in the first week of the semester. I have structured the work in this class around 15 groups. Please mix nationalities by including some of the foreign exchange students in this class. It is your responsibility to form or join a group. It is also your responsibility to make the group work effectively. Members of a group that do not perform to the satisfaction of the other members may be asked to leave the group, in other words be fired from the group. Before this drastic step is taken **you must come and discuss it with me. Because group work is shared work I expect each member of each group to contribute an equal amount of effort**. At the end of the semester I will ask each group to fill the **Peer Rating** form found at the back of this outline to inform me of how group members shared the semester's work in this course. **Please note that group members who do not share group work equally will be penalised**. For more details, please read **How to fill the Peer Rating Form** at the end of this course outline. **If problems arise in your group, please come and see me as soon as problems arise so that I may help**.

a. Paper Presentation

A typical Thursday workshop will begin with presentations, by student groups, of the papers (to be found at <http://www.asres.lib.uoguelph.ca/ares/ares.dll>) assigned that week. The schedule for all these presentations is given below in the course outline under the heading of particular weeks. **Each presentation will last no more than 15 minutes**. The readings address various **themes** which I want to stress in a particular week. Some themes are theoretical, some are empirical. In the class presentation of the readings assigned to your group, I would like you to stress these themes, to explain them and illustrate them. In sum, **I expect you to discuss the important ideas outlined in the articles and explain their significance to the class. I am not looking for a summary of the papers**. At the end of this outline you will find some pointers on what I am looking for in a paper presentation.

b. Web Presentations

Most general managers spend very little time reading and even less time writing reports. The vast majority of their interactions with others are verbal. For this reason, **the development of verbal skills is given a high priority in this course.** In Econ 4800 you will do this in web presentations. The classroom will be our laboratory where you can test your ability to convince your peers or explain to them your views. For this reason, **being present and engaged is essential and I will keep track of attendance. Missing workshops will result in a lower participation grade.** Please come and see me, or email me ahead of time, if you are going to be absent from a workshop.

Web presentations are designed to give each group and each member of the group additional opportunities to present material and to speak in front of the class. **I expect each member of the group to speak.** Web presentations last **no more than 5 minutes** and are based on material that you have discovered on the Web that pertains to the topic covered during the week. What you decide to discuss (with a few overheads or PP slides) in 5 minutes is up to you. For example, in Week 2 we study Strategic Thinking. Groups may discuss concepts about strategic thinking such as the genetic foundations of strategic thinking, or show examples of clever (poor) strategic thinking. Web presentations should add to the longer paper presentations and stimulate reflection in our class, thus encouraging everyone to participate actively. You will find on Youtube videos of presentations done by your predecessors in this class. Here is the link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJvp0kGAOh0> (it's addictive so control your selves).

For each group I will post on Course Link the schedule of web presentations (3 per group) shortly after all the groups are formed. Please make sure that you arrive prepared for each workshop. If your group misses a web presentation, the penalty is 6.666 lost points as there are no make-up web presentations.

c. Term Project and Term Paper

One major piece of writing is required in this course. This is a group paper of **no more than eleven, typewritten, double-spaced pages in length (plus exhibits).** In this paper you will analyze the strategic outlook of a business of your choice (many students have, in the past, chosen to study firms in Guelph; I am available for suggestions). The paper will have two parts, **first**, an executive summary of at most 1 page which outlines very briefly your basic analysis and recommendations to the firm you studied. This is a memorandum that can be presented in point form. In the **second** part of your paper (10 pages at most) you will analyze in-depth the strategic situation of the firm and present your recommendations, **as well as** ideas for effective implementation of these recommendations. I expect your analysis and your

recommendations to include a discussion of your firm's environmental impact and, where appropriate, ideas on how to reduce its CO₂ footprint. On the front page would you please give me the exact address of the firm you studied, as well as the name of your contact in that firm, so that I may write to them and thank them for the help they provided you. I want your term paper to follow the plan given on p.17 of this course outline. **I want you to register with me by week 3 (September 26th) the name of the firm that you will study this semester.** Please see details below in Grading Policy.

The term paper is due Thursday, November 28th, 2013 in my office.

d. Oral Presentations on the Term Project

This is an integral part of the course to help strengthen your managerial speaking skills. Each student in Econ 4800 will participate in **two group oral presentations** on the term project. In the **first oral presentation** on the term project, you will discuss the business model of your client firm (point 1 of the plan on p.17 of this course outline). In the **second oral presentation** on the term project, you will present your complete analysis, recommendations, and suggestions for implementation of a strategy for this firm, in other words, points 1-5 of the plan on page 17. In past semesters groups have invited their hosts to their presentations and these business people have even joined the question session at the end of the presentations.

e. Grading Policy

The purpose of grading in Econ 4800, as in all courses, is two-fold. One is to evaluate your performance for purposes of the academic system. The other (**and more important**) is to provide you with feedback on your ability to develop, utilize, and share your ideas and conclusions concerning the topics and situations covered in the course. I encourage you to come at any time and discuss your grades or any other topic with me. I will post all grades on the Econ 4800 website in Course Link.

Your grade for the course will be based on the following components:

Three Web Presentations (each worth 6.666 points)	20%
Paper Presentation	20%
Term Project Presentation 1	5% + 15% (see below)
Term Project Presentation 2	20%
Term paper	20%

Term project presentation number 1: 5 points when you submit to me by the end of week 3 (September 26th) a brief outline on your client firm and have your contact at this firm fill and sign the attached form letter (back of Course Outline).

Term project presentation number 1: 15 points when you present on this firm in week 6. Note that if you present on a different firm from the one that filled the form you will lose 5 points.

I encourage you to come and ask me **at any time** questions about your performance!

f. Other Administrative Details

Here are my expectations concerning class behaviour :

1. Strategic management is practiced and learnt by doing, i.e. “walking the talk”, rather than studying a textbook. In Econ 4800 we walk the talk in the Thursday workshops (most of the time), and four Tuesdays when groups are presenting. Presentations are like an excellent meal prepared by groups of students for us, the rest of the class and me. Every group wants to have a large audience. Hence, this works only if we all attend and give support to the groups that present. As a result, **participation in the Thursday and occasional Tuesday workshops is compulsory. I will keep track of participation. I grant each student in the class one unexplained absence. Beyond one absence, the penalty is 1.5 points unless you bring a medical certificate from a medical doctor.**
2. In the event that for some unavoidable reason, such as a job interview, you have to miss one workshop during the semester, I would appreciate it if you would let me know that in advance, but remember that beyond your “free” absence you will be penalised.
3. I will be happy to discuss the course, your progress, or any other issues of concern to you on an individual basis. Please contact me after class or during office hours or using email.
4. I will not accept late term papers.

5. **The Chris Matthews Prize**

This highly prestigious prize is presented to the three groups with **the highest paper and web presentation grades**, who have matched the impossibly high standard established by Chris Matthews and his group in the winter of 1994. I rarely award this prize because experience shows that it is very hard to meet Chris Matthews's standards. I will decide whether or not to award this prize and to invite Chris Matthews to present it to the winning group depending on class performance.

II. **OUTLINE OF COURSE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

(The numbers on the left of each reading refer to the numbering, by week, of the papers available on

http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/resources/course_reserves_&_e_learning/for_students.cfm

1. **Introduction**

Week 1: Introduction to the concept of strategy and strategic management.

Sept 10: Lecture

- Sept 12:
1. The Perils of Bad Strategy. *Richard Rumelt.*
 2. What is Strategy? *Michael E. Porter.*
 3. Strategic Planning. *John A. Byrne.*
 4. All Strategy is Local. *Bruce Greenwald and Judd Kahn.*

Week 2: Strategic Thinking

Sept.17: Lecture

- Sept.19:
5. Restless Genes. *David Dobbs*
 6. Hidden Flaws in Strategy. *Charles Roxburgh*
 7. Daniel Kahneman: Beware the "inside view". *Daniel Kahneman.*
 8. Strategic Decisions: When can you trust your gut? *Daniel Kahneman and Gary Klein.*
 9. How to Test your Decision-making Instincts. *Andrew Campbell and Jo Whitehead.*
 10. Distortions and Deceptions in Strategic Decisions. *Dan Lovallo and Olivier Sibony*

11. How Strategists Lead. *Cynthia Montgomery.*
12. The Pitfalls of Planning. *Henry Mintzberg.*
13. The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning. *Henry Mintzberg.*
14. Musings on Management. *Henry Mintzberg.*
15. We're Overled and Undermanaged. *Henry Mintzberg.*
16. Strategy's Strategist: An interview with Richard Rumelt. *Dan Lovallo and Lenny Mendoca.*
17. Strategy in a "Structural Break". *Richard P. Rumelt.*
18. The Social Side of Strategy. *Arne Gast, Michele Zanini*
19. Tired of Strategic Planning? *Eric Beinhocker and Sarah Kaplan .*
20. Jack: A Close-Up at How America's #1 Manager Runs GE. *J.A. Byrne.*
21. Covert Leadership: Notes on managing professionals. *Henry Mintzberg.*
22. The Education of Andy Grove. *Richard Tedlow.*
23. Inside Apple. *Adam Lashinsky.*
24. Meet the Third-Richest Man in the World. *Vivienne Walt.*
25. Jeff Bezos: The ultimate disrupter. *Adam Lashinsky.*
26. Collapse: Big Business and the Environment. *Jared Diamond.*
27. Eminence Green. *Susan Casey.*

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Group 1 | will present paper 5-6-7-8-9-10. |
| Group 2 | will present papers 11-12-13-14-15. |
| Group 3 | will present papers 16-17-18-19. |
| Group 4 | will present papers 20- 21-22-23-24-25. |

Web Presentations

2. Making Strategy

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Week 3: | Formulation of objectives and goals |
| Sept. 24: | Lecture |
| Sept. 26: | 28. What do Great Leaders have in Common? <i>Jack and Suzy Welch.</i> |
| | 29. Building Your Company's Vision. <i>James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras.</i> |
| | 30. Leadership Lessons from the Royal Navy. <i>Andrew StGeorge.</i> |

31. Revealing your moment of truth. *Stan Slap.*
32. My Extreme MBA. *Rory Stewart.*
33. The New Coke. *Patricia Sellers.*
34. Why Dream Teams Fail. *Geoffrey Colvin.*
35. The Catalan Kings. *The Economist.*

Group 5 will present papers 26-27.

Group 6 will present papers 28- 29- 30- 31- 32-33-34-35.

Web Presentations

Hand in signed Letter of Commitment from the firm your group will study

Week 4: Industry analysis: Opportunities and threats from the environment.

Oct.1: Lecture

- Oct.3:
36. Strategy under Uncertainty. *H. Courtney, J. Kirkland, and P. Viguerie*
 37. The Secrets of Enduring Greatness. *Jim Collins*
 38. Increasing Returns and the New World of Business. *W. Brian Arthur.*
 39. The Green Machine. *Marc Gunther*
 40. Green Gold. *Marc Gunther*

Group 7 will present papers 36-37-38-39-40.

Web Presentations

Week 5: Self and competitor analysis: Complacency and threats from competitors.

Oct. 8: Lecture

- Oct. 10:
41. Elop's Fable. *Peter Burrows.*
 42. How the Mighty Fall. *Jim Collins.*
 43. Why CEOs fail. *R. Charan and G. Colvin.*
 44. The Problem with Microsoft...*Gary Rivlin*
 45. Wal-Mart's Midlife Crisis. *Anthony Bianco*
 46. The Pepsi Machine. *Katrina Brooker*
 47. Howard Schultz versus Howard Schultz. *Susan Berfield*

Group 8 will present papers 41-42-43.
Group 9 will present papers 44-45-46-47.

Web Presentations

Week 6: First term project presentations.

Oct. 15: Groups 1-7: 8 minutes **maximum** per group. No questions.

Oct. 17: Groups 8-15: 8 minutes **maximum** per group. No questions.

Week 7: Selecting strategy I: Porter's generic strategies

Oct. 22: Lecture

- Oct. 24:
48. There's no quit in Michael Porter. *Geoff Colvin.*
 49. Hidden flaws in strategy. *Charles Roxburgh*
 50. Wal-Mart with Wings. *Kerry Capell*
 51. The Duke of Discomfort. *Felix Gillette.*
 52. Bezos: How Frugality drives Innovation. **Business Week.**
 53. Apple's Supply-Chain Secret? Hoard Lasers. *Adam Satariano and Peter Burrows.*
 54. How market Leaders Keep Their Edge. *Michael Treacy and Fred Wiersema.*
 55. Where Designers Rule. *Jay Greene.*
 56. The Only Company Wal-Mart Fears. *John Helyar.*
 57. Target's Inner Circle. *Jennifer Reingold.*
 58. Levi's has a new color for blue jeans: green. *Susan Barfield.*
 59. Big Mac's Local Flavor. *Peter Gumbel.*

Group 10 will present papers 48- 49-50-51-52.

Group 11 will present papers 53-54-55-56-57-58.

Web Presentations

Week 8: Selecting strategy II: Core competencies.

Oct. 29: Lecture

- Oct. 31:
59. Inside Honda's Brain. *Alex Taylor III.*
 60. Amazon's Next Revolution. *Jeffrey O'Brien.*
 61. Why Him? *Stephanie Mehta.*
 62. The Decade of Steve Jobs. *Adam Lashinsky.*

- 63. The Apple ecosystem. *Michael Copeland.*
- 64. His Legacy. *Nancy Koehn.*
- 65. Collins on Chaos. *Jim Collins.*
- 66. Is Herb Kelleher America's Best CEO? *Kenneth Labich.*
- 67. The chairman of the board looks back as Herb Kelleher hands over the controls. *Katrina Brooker and Herb Kelleher.*

Group 12 will present papers 59-60-61-62-63-64.

Group 13 will present paper 65-66-67.

Web Presentations

3. Organizational Structure

Week 9: Business and corporate strategy: Synergy between SBUs.

Nov.5: Lecture

- Nov.7: 68. The plot to destroy America's beer. *Devin Leonard.*
- 69. When to break up a conglomerate. *Laura Corb, Timothy Koller.*
- 70. What is Ed Breen Thinking? *Nicholas Varchaver.*
- 71. Wishing upon a death star. *The Economist.*
- 72. The Secrets Apple Keeps. *Adam Lashinsky.*
- 73. Larry Page. Fortune Interview. *Adam Lashinsky.*

Group 14 will present papers 68-69-70-71-72-73.

Web Presentations

Week 10: Strategic alliances, joint ventures and takeovers.

Nov.12 : Lecture

- Nov. 14: 74. Pack Mentality. *Paul Hochman.*
- 75. The Five Types of Successful Acquisitions. *Marc Goedhart, Tim Koller and David Wessels.*
- 76. See Jack. See Jack run Europe. *Thomas. Stewart.*
- 77. Hold my hand. *The Economist.*
- 78. The insourcing boom. *Charles Fishman.*
- 79. Past lessons for China's new joint ventures. *Stephen Bosshart, Thomas Luedi and Emma Wang.*
- 80. Not Exactly Counterfeit. *Roger Parloff.*

Group 15 will present papers 74-75-76-77-78-79-80.

Web Presentations

4. **Strategy Implementation**

Week 11: Second term project presentations

Nov. 19: Groups 1 - 5 (**15 minutes maximum per group: 12 minutes presentation; 3 minutes for questions**).

Nov. 21: Groups 6 - 10 (**15 minutes maximum per group: 12 minutes presentation; 3 minutes for questions**).

Week 12: Continued

Nov. 26: Groups 11- 15 (**15 minutes maximum per group: 12 minutes presentation; 3 minutes for questions**).

Nov. 28: This class is cancelled to make up for Thanksgiving Monday Oct 8.

Hand in peer rating forms (one form per group signed by all) Thursday November 28th, 2013, with your term papers.

You will be asked to complete an evaluation of this course at some time during the last two weeks of the semester. The Department of Economics policy regarding the conduct and use of these evaluations will be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/economics/academics/courses/course-evaluation>

PEER RATINGS
ECON*4800 Competitiveness and Strategic Advantage

GROUP NUMBER: _____

RATINGS:

If your grade for **group work** is a 100%, how would you allocate this mark to reflect the amount of effort expended by each group member? For example, in a group of 4, each member participating equally would receive a weighing of 25% for a total of 100%. Please file **one form per group**. **Each member should sign this form to show agreement**. Also please read p. 12 on How to fill the Peer Rating Form.

	<u>Names</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Signature</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS:

How to fill the Peer Rating Form
(Due Thursday, November 28th 2013)

1. Ideally, your group functioned well and you shared the work load equally, i.e. in a group of 4, you assigned each other 25% for effort.
2. In cases where the work load was not shared equally, the student (s) who has (ve) the highest percentage **will receive the unaltered total mark** for all the work in this course. In other words this is **not** a zero-sum game where some gain what others lose. The other student(s) who have not shared equally the work load will receive **discounts from the assigned grade**. The discounts are calculated as follows.

For example, assume the following effort distribution:

Student 1	40%
Student 2	40%
Student 3	10%
Student 4	10%

Students 1 and 2 will receive their full unaltered grade for all the work in this course. Students 3 and 4 will each receive 10%/40% of the full unaltered grade (which incidentally means that they will fail the course; this is why I insist that you come and see me long before the situation becomes irretrievable).

3. Each student in the group must sign the group sheet and return it to me on November 28th, 2013.

What I am looking for when grading group presentations

Speaking effectively and forcefully in front of a public is one of the most important skills needed by business executives who aspire to senior positions. An effective presentation explains, clarifies, and inspires. Here are some guidelines outlining things I look for in a group presentation. In addition, watch this video (9.18 minutes <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qs0NLw-PpMo>) of a great hero of mine, Gustavo Dudamel. Look at his face and that of his musicians all kids from the barrios of Caracas. Can we stir the same enthusiasm?!

1. (10 points) How does the group look? Professional or sloppy?
2. (10 points) Have they introduced themselves to the audience, so that we know who is who? I expect to see your full names on your first slide.
3. (10 points) Do they have an outline of their talk, so that we understand clearly what they are trying to achieve; do we know who will present what part of the presentation? On the outline I expect to see the full names of each presenter next to the topic they will be discussing. In addition, I expect to see your full name on each slide that you are presenting. In other words, **I expect to see your names 3 times (1.in your introduction of the group; 2. On the outline of your presentation; 3.on each person's slides).**
4. (10 points) Do the members maintain eye contact with us in the audience, as if they were speaking to each of us individually?
5. (10 points) Are their voices lively and clear, or monotonous and dull?
6. (10 points) Is the presentation visually attractive, unusual, clever so that our attention is engaged all the time and we retain most of their message?
7. (100 points) Do they present the material and the message slowly and clearly? Is it interesting and significant? Do they make good use of course concepts?

Plan You Must Follow for Your Term Paper

1. **Business Model** (here you explain what this business does)
2. **Value Proposition** (here you explain what makes this business different from others)
3. **Quality of Management** (here you explain why this management team seems well/poorly suited to the work they need to accomplish).
4. **Strategic Analysis**
 - 4.1 Assessment of societal and industry trends:

Where are growth opportunities?
Are there disruptions on the horizon that the firm can take advantage of?
 - 4.2 Assessment of risks associated with the business.
 - 4.3 Assessment of how these uncertainties could affect the firm's strategy and their impact on performance.
 - 4.4 Porter's Five Forces Model. Please NO SWOT. I do not like it (it's obsolete).
 - 4.5 Core Competencies? (Note that most firms do not have any, so I expect few groups will have anything to write on this section)
5. **Recommendations and Implementation** (Note that your recommendation must follow logically and directly from your analysis; please make an effort in showing how this happens).

September 26, 2013

Dear Senior Executive,

I would like thank you for volunteering your time to work with my ECON*4800 Strategic Management students. It is crucial that these students have the opportunity to apply the theories and concepts they are learning in the classroom to the business world. Experiences with small-business owners provide a different vantage point for my students which enables them to broaden their knowledge.

In order to ensure that my students take the work they do in your company seriously, I require them to give you this letter, to ask you to sign it and to return it to me with your contact information. I would like to be able to contact you should any issues arise.

My students and I hope that you may be able to join us in class at the University of Guelph for the presentation on your company on November 19, 21, 26 or 28, 2013.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Gratefully yours,

FrancisTapon
Professor
Department of Economics and Finance
University of Guelph

ftapon@uoguelph.ca

(519) 824 4120 ext. 52657

Name
Business
Phone
E-mail

The Department of Economics and Finance *Learning Objectives* (skills and knowledge competencies) for this course:

Skills:

- 1. Written Communication**-each method of evaluation in Econ 4800 requires some writing: three web presentations require writing material for Power Point presentations; one paper presentation requires extensive writing for a 15 minutes Power Point presentation; two term project presentations require writing for two Power Point presentations (8 minutes and 18 minutes); finally an eleven page paper on the term project requires writing.
- 2. Oral Communication/Presentation**-Econ 4800 uses presentations very heavily. There are three web presentations; one paper presentation; two term project presentations. The students become extremely good at teaching interesting material to the class.
- 3. Problem solving in a Real World Context**-Econ 4800 stresses the ability to think empirically by looking at businesses from the view point of C-level executives. We use many business examples throughout the semester; the readings we use illustrate the themes we cover in the course. Students do Power Point presentations on these themes; I dictate the theme and they come up with an effective way to teach this idea to the class. Econ 4800 stresses the ability to think in terms of multiple as opposed to single causes. In business things happen that originate in many different places, for example, the idea for a new strategy stems from the many influences on the CEO's thinking. As Philip Tetlock wrote in *Expert Political Judgment* I want my students to think like foxes rather than like hedgehogs. The hedgehog knows one big thing and applies it to every problem he encounters. The fox knows many small tidbits on many topics and applies them when the occasion presents itself.
- 4. Group work**-all work in Econ 4800 is done in a group (three of four students depending on class size). This is challenging for some. I help whenever called upon. Typically, each group spends many hours in my office (yes ALL the 15 groups come in turn). It allows me to get to know them very well which helps me guide them in their career choices. Group work creates an incomparable class culture. In 2006, I created a class presentation prize (the Chris Matthews Prize) named after a former student who took this course in the winter of 1994. He

taught me what a great presentation should look like and that one should take risks in presenting rather than play the game to avoid losing (I am hinting at a theme I teach in behavioural strategy where I show how one's own biases influence our views of the world). I award the Chris Matthews Prize whenever the class is worthy of it. Chris Matthews is the managing director of a most successful airline logistics business. He comes to my class accompanied by former students who work for him to award the Cup and to discuss the qualities of a great business executive. He also hires from my class.

5. **Computer skills**- all presentations in Econ 4800 (six in total) require very serious skills in doing Power Point presentations with online access, sound and very complicated graphics.

Knowledge:

1. **Understanding of Specific Markets**-In Econ 4800 we study many different industries and firms. I provide the themes and explain in class what these themes mean to industries and firms in Canada and abroad. Students, many of them back from coop terms, offer additional examples and different situations that they have lived through; for example, this semester, some were coming back from working at RIM (Fall 2013) and used course concepts on why firms fail to analyse RIM chances of success.
2. **Historical context**- all the examples we use in Econ 4800 are placed in their historical context to understand why they happened as they did. We do this in lectures, presentations, and the term project.
3. **Economic Policy and Regulation**-one major idea in Econ 4800 that underpins all other material is the sustainability of industrial activity and the urgent need to reduce our carbon footprint. We use this concept in lectures, presentations and the term project.