

**BUS 486**  
**Spring 2012**  
**Senior Seminar in Business Policy**

**Professors:** Dr. John Planchon, Dr. Pamela Church and Dr. Steve Samaras

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**Office Hours:** Planchon 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m. Monday/Wednesday or by appointment.  
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Samaras 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. TTH or by appointment

Please feel free to drop by our offices whenever you need to speak with either of us; however, if it is not during office hours, we may have other obligations and be unable to talk with you. Please don't be offended if that happens. Also, the time immediately before a class meeting is very important to professors. Please do not drop by our offices for help in the hour before a class meeting.

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**Text:** Selected cases must be purchased from Harvard Business School on line. Each student is responsible for purchasing her/his copy of the cases used in Senior Seminar. Instructions of how to make this purchase will be provided in class.

**Course meeting time and place:** 2:00 – 3:15 p.m. TTh.  
Professor Church, Buckman 110; Professor Samaras, Buckman 212; and Professor Planchon, Buckman 103. At times we'll all meet together. Those times and places will be noted on your schedule and announced in class.

## **I. COURSE PERSPECTIVE AND OBJECTIVES**

As the Catalogue description of the course indicates, Senior Seminar requires that you integrate and use concepts presented in your business and economics courses. Further, the Catalogue is explicit in outlining the major areas to be emphasized in the course. Those areas are:

1. appraisal of a company's situation within the framework of macroeconomic and societal conditions as well as the organizational and economic conditions of the firm;
2. developing objectives and strategies for the firm in the areas of financial operations, management and marketing;
3. presenting your analyses of business situations through both written and oral communication.

These areas will be emphasized in the coverage of the seminar. They will be reexamined briefly through class discussion, or at times through short presentations by the professor. Then, the information relevant to specific areas will be applied in cases.

We have redesigned Senior Seminar in Business to accomplish two broad, rich, and interrelated purposes.

- The first purpose is to engage students in a truly integrative experience focused upon the art of applying the theories, principles, and constructs studied in their major to analyze a firm's performance within the context of its industry's structure, the prevailing political, legal and social environments, and the student's own ethical framework.
- The second purpose is to engage students in an integrative experience of looking forward to the leadership and ethical challenges they will encounter upon leaving college and entering their chosen career paths.

Although neither purpose can be accomplished fully by focusing narrowly upon coursework taken as part of the major, the second more forward looking purpose will explicitly engage students in integrating their major coursework with their entire liberal arts education.<sup>1</sup>

Historically, Senior Seminar in Business has depended extensively on the case method of instruction. The newly designed Seminar continues that tradition, but some additional pedagogical approaches have been added. Case studies of an actual situation in a company will be studied as a team project. The objective is a highly integrated approach that requires cooperation among students, teams, and faculty. Oral and written presentations for the purpose of defending their decisions and recommendations will be

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<sup>1</sup> These broad purposes feed directly toward accomplishing our Department's goals enumerated below:

- Graduates understand and appreciate the vital connections between all the disciplines represented in the department so that they can make fully-informed and reasoned business judgments. This will greatly enhance their value to any institution that requires broad perspectives and open-minded approaches from its executives as it faces new challenges.
- Graduates are exceptional in their oral and written communication skills. Leaders of organizations must communicate their ideas effectively. These skills will be enhanced in case courses that require formal oral presentations and written analyses and also require extemporaneous classroom discussion.
- Graduates are confident and capable as they pursue careers and advanced degrees in business and economics. This confidence will be instilled from the case approach used in upper level business courses that provide vicarious experience in making judgments within a complex environment. Further, cases will expose students to recently published research not found in textbooks.
- Graduates are grounded not only in the theories of all disciplines within the department and the philosophies underlying those theories, but also in their own sense of right and wrong that will guide all important decisions they must make. They understand that integrity and moral values are vital components of decision-making. Within this context, the graduates will recognize that their liberal arts background has prepared them for the ethical challenges that are ahead. Students can not only answer questions but question answers.
- Graduates work effectively and efficiently with others to accomplish mutual goals. These skills will be enhanced by the requirement that students work in study groups.

required from all students for each case. An atmosphere of open debate and exchange of ideas inside and outside of class will be encouraged, and students will observe that their professors do not always agree with each other and that disagreement is not necessarily bad. However, it is hoped that students will also observe that arguments should be civil, substantive and framed within the context of analyses and ideas.

Various pedagogical approaches to meeting these objectives in addition to case studies have been added to the course.

- Simulation game that requires a multidisciplinary approach
- Cases that address ethical behavior – possible participation by business professionals and/or Rhodes professors both within and outside of the department
- Cases that address leadership issues—possible participation by business professionals
- Inviting industry leaders to discuss business issues with students—possible case discussion led by alumni business professionals

## II. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT

Seminars are defined as discussion groups, colloquia, and round tables. Every one of these definitions makes it clear that our **Senior Seminar will be an enriching experience only if all participants are active and prepared.** Hence, all seminar members have responsibilities.

1. Adequate preparation of all assignments before each class
2. Thorough understanding and critical evaluation of material covered in the course
3. Regular attendance and active/meaningful participation in class\*
4. Scheduling of appointments with the teacher when you are having problems with the course. (You should anticipate talking with us outside of class about the cases. Although we will not “give you the answer,” we will eagerly serve as guides in helping you unravel “the answer.”

\*Please note that a substantial portion of your course evaluation will be based on classroom performance. Attendance is a necessary though not sufficient condition for a good evaluation in classroom performance. That is, when one is absent a zero is earned for that day. Further, frequent talking in class “just to be heard” is not a mark of “active/meaningful” participation. The student, who listens, thinks, synthesizes material and then makes substantive comments that move class discussion forward, brings much more to the classroom than one who insists on talking in hopes of getting a “high” classroom performance evaluation.

## III. Business Strategy Game - SIMULATION

The simulation portion of the course is a very important experiential learning exercise. Through the Business Strategy Game Simulation, you will experience decision making

under competitive uncertainty. The simulation will provide experiences such as: plans sometimes don't work because of actions of competitors to thwart them, the need to adapt to a changing business landscape, and the use of competitive analysis in order to create actions to minimize their impacts. Because your team's performance relative to active competitors who are highly motivated to defeat you, each team will be awarded up to 10% of the course grade based on the final team standing relative to the standing of competitors. The team that wins will get the highest possible value while the other teams will receive less based on how far behind the winner they end up. The resulting grade for the simulation may be adjusted up or down based on the quality of the teams' debriefing presentations at the end of the semester. Statistics that indicate level of participation of each team and individual student are available to the instructor. If decision deadlines are missed or if it becomes evident that little effort is being made by a team, the simulation grade awarded will be reduced accordingly.

There will be two simulation quizzes given via the simulation website. Each individual must pass the each quiz with a score of 70% or better. Any individual not passing one or both quizzes will be penalized 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the simulation grade value. Failure to take the quizzes may be construed as zero simulation participation and the individual may receive zero for the entire simulation.

Each team will also turn in (before Feb 3 @ noon) a 2 – 3 page (double spaced – 12 point font) statement of its proposed strategy for the live round of the simulation. Detailed instructions will be provided during the Simulation Overview on January 27. The team should also speculate what strategies other teams may be planning. The practice rounds may offer some hints of what they might be planning; however, caution is advised because the other teams may change from the practice round strategy. Failure to turn in a plan prior to the deadline for Live Round 1 may result in a penalty of 3/10ths of the simulation grade value. The plan should be emailed as an attachment to: [samaras@rhodes.edu](mailto:samaras@rhodes.edu) by one individual on your team.

Simulation overview and team building will occur in class on January 17, 2012. Detailed instructions are available on the Business Strategy Game website after individual registration. **REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS AND CODES WILL BE PROVIDED ON JANUARY 17.** You are encouraged to utilize all of the instructional materials provided in the website – mostly, because your toughest competitors will be doing so. The simulation is very rich and offers many strategy and tactical options. You should become familiar with these as soon as possible.

Professor Samaras will be administering the simulation and will be available throughout the semester as a coach/consultant (see office hours). Professor Samaras will not provide you with any additional and undue information about your competitors and cannot provide you with solutions that come with any guarantees of success. He administers the simulation but does not control it. He can help you to better understand the wealth of information provided by the simulation and answer procedural questions you may have.

There will be special recognition for the one of the two industry winners that completes the simulation with the highest scores.

#### IV. GRADING AND EVALUATION

Course grades are earned according to the following scheme

94-100	A	90-93	A-
87-89	B+	84-86	B
80-83	B-	77-79	C+
74-76	C	70-73	C-
67-69	D+	64-66	D
60-63	D-	Below 60	F

A weighted course average will be calculated using the following (including individual grades (IG) and group grades (GG<sup>2</sup>)):

- 40% Cases (6 oral and written (GG)) Two cases will be presented in each rotation for a total of 6 oral and written grades each accounting for 8.33% of the course grade. No late cases will be accepted.
  - 10% Midterm Exam - IG<sup>3</sup>
  - 20% Final Exam – IG<sup>3</sup>
  - 20% Class Contribution (Includes cases presented by groups, professor directed discussions, and discussions led by guest lecturers.<sup>4</sup>
  - 10% Business Simulation Game—IG No late work will be accepted.
- 100%

#### **Honor Code**

1. Providing a system where students can purchase electronic copies of the Harvard Cases used in Senior Seminar, yields substantial savings in text costs for every student. Each student is required to purchase his/her own electronic cases. Any student who does

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<sup>2</sup> Each written and presented case will be graded as a group project. That is, each student responsible for the case will receive the same grade for the completed case. **All cases, presented and written as a group, are to be pledged as only the group's work. The use of any "old cases" from previous classes or other breakout sections is considered cheating. A group pledging its work also pledges that it is the result of equal contribution of work from each member of the group.**

<sup>3</sup> The final and midterm exams will consist of case questions to be completed in class, but you will be given the case in advance so that you can prepare for the exam. You should complete a written analysis of the case selected to cover all aspects of the course. You may bring your prep-work, class notes, and cases with you for use in the exam. You may not use others' old cases or enlist the help of anyone else in preparing for the midterm or final.

<sup>4</sup> Classroom contribution: This portion of your grade **does not** include your presentation of cases assigned to you to be presented to the class. It **does** include the discussion of all other cases as well as other assigned readings. All students are responsible for being prepared to discuss all cases and assigned readings.

not purchase his/her own cases and rather, makes use of another person's cases, will be considered in violation of the Honor Code for stealing the intellectual property of HBS.

2. It is mentioned elsewhere, but it is worth mentioning again that each group case should be pledged as the collective work of only the group members. That is, the group should not make use of other's analyses in preparing cases—old cases from other groups, on-line analyses, colleagues' input, etc.

3. Any student found in violation of the Honor Code for conduct in this course may be assessed a penalty by the Senior Seminar Professors, Church, Samaras and Planchon, up to and including failure of the course.

## V. WORKING AS A TEAM

As mentioned earlier in the syllabus, one of the goals of the Department of Commerce and Business is for its graduates to be able to work effectively and efficiently with others to accomplish mutual goals. These skills will be enhanced by the requirement that students work in study groups or "teams" in Senior Seminar. We encourage you to do all work that is not an individual assignment with members of your team. When working with your team and when discussing cases in class, each team member has an obligation to dissent. That is, each team member should not be a toady to others. Rather, each team member has an obligation to present well developed, alternative points of view and solutions.

There will be 20 teams in Senior Seminar, 19 teams with three student members and one team with four student members. These teams will work together on cases and in the Business Simulation. For case presentation and discussion, teams will be divided into three clusters with seven teams in Clusters 1 and 2, and six teams in Cluster 3. For the Business Simulation, teams will be divided into two industries. The Cluster and Industry divisions are listed below.

<b>Case Presentation and Discussion Clusters</b>		
<b><u>Cluster 1</u></b>	<b><u>Cluster 2</u></b>	<b><u>Cluster 3</u></b>
Team A	Team H	Team O
Team B	Team I	Team P
Team C	Team J	Team Q
Team D	Team K	Team R
Team E	Team L	Team S
Team F	Team M	Team T
Team G	Team N	

<b>Business Simulation Industries</b>			
<b><u>Industry 1:</u></b>		<b><u>Industry 2</u></b>	
Team A	Team F	Team K	Team P
Team B	Team G	Team L	Team Q
Team C	Team H	Team M	Team R
Team D	Team I	Team N	Team S
Team E	Team J	Team O	Team T

## V. COURSE SCHEDULES

### Business Strategy Game Simulation Schedule—Spring 2012

<b>Simulation Round</b>		<b>Decisions Due Keyed into system</b>	<b>Results Available</b>
Practice Round 1	Team	Jan 27 @ noon	Jan 27 @ 1PM
Practice Round 2	Team	Feb 1 @ noon	Feb 1 @ 1PM
Reset Sim. <i>Important- do not input any live round decisions until after this reset.</i>		Feb 1 @ 6PM	
Simulation Quiz 1	Indiv	Feb 4 @ 4PM	immediate
Strategic Plan	Team	Feb 3 @ noon	No Results
Live Round 11	Team	Feb 4 @ 4PM	Feb 3 @ 1PM
Live Round 12	Team	Feb 10 @ noon	Feb 10 @ 1PM
Live Round 13	Team	Feb 17 @ noon	Feb 17 @ 1PM
Simulation Quiz 2	Indiv	Feb 19 @ noon	immediate
Live Round 14	Team	Feb 24 @ noon	Feb 24 @ 1PM
Live Round 15	Team	Mar 2 @ noon	Mar 2 @ 1PM
Live Round 16	Team	Mar 9 @ noon	Mar 9 @ 1PM
Live Round 17	Team	Mar 23 @ noon	Mar 23 @ 1PM
Live Round 18	Team	Mar 30 @ noon	Mar 30 @ 1PM
Live Round 19*	Team	Apr 13 @ noon	Apr 13 @ 1PM
Live Round 20*	Team	Apr 20 @ noon	Apr 20 @ 1PM

\* Starting at the end of round 18, a coin toss will determine whether or not the simulation will proceed to each next round.

## Course Schedule for Senior Seminar BUS 486

Thursday, January 12

Course Introduction, instructions for written and oral presentations, review syllabus, instructions for team formation. **All sections meet in Blount Auditorium.**

Tuesday, January 17

Make sure you e-mail team members to Ms. Gibson by 12:00 noon, January 17. Groups of three! **All sections meet in Blount Auditorium.** Information on the Business simulation.

Thursday, January 19

Presenting and writing cases. **All sections meet in Blount Auditorium.**

**January 24 – 27 March**

**Clusters 1, 2 and 3 will meet individually with professors Church, Planchon and Samaras.**

**Case Presentation and discussion Schedule—January 24 – 27 March.** For the schedule below, Church meets in 110 Buckman, Samaras in 212 Buckman, and Planchon in 103 Buckman. Clusters will move to the room of the Professor with each rotation.)

The date listed is the Tuesday on which a case will be presented. The following Thursday is not listed; however, that date is for class discussion of the case presented on the previous Tuesday.

	Prof.	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
		Samaras	Church	Planchon
Case Teams	24-Jan	Cola Wars	World Com	Apple
		A B C D E	H I J K L	O P Q R
Case Teams	31-Jan	Delta	Costco	Matching Dell
		F G A B C	M N H I J	S T O P
Case Teams	7-Feb	Airbus A3XX	Diageo	Mondavi
		D E F G	K L M N	Q R S T

**Rotation 2**

	Prof.	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
		Church	Planchon	Samaras
Case Teams	14-Feb	World Com	Apple	Cola Wars
		A B C D E	H I J K L	O P Q R
Case Teams	21-Feb	Costco	Matching Dell	Delta
		F G A B C	M N H I J	S T O P
Case Teams	28-Feb	Diageo	Mondavi	Airbus A3XX
		D E F G	K L M N	Q R S T

**Rotation 3**

	Prof.	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
		Planchon	Samaras	Church
Case Teams	6-Mar	Apple	Cola Wars	World Com
		A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
Case Teams	20-Mar	Matching Dell	Delta	Costco
		F G A B C	F G A B C	F G A B C
Case Teams	27-Mar	Mondavi	Airbus A3XX	Diageo
		D E F G	D E F G	D E F G

Tuesday, April 3	Exam I. Place to be announced
Thursday, April 5	Easter Break
Tuesday, April 10	Speaker/case study <b>All clusters meet in Blount Auditorium</b>
Thursday, April 12	Speaker/case study <b>All clusters meet in Blount Auditorium</b>
Tuesday, April 17	Speaker/case study <b>All clusters meet in Blount Auditorium</b>
Thursday, April 19	Speaker/case study <b>All clusters meet in Blount Auditorium</b>
Tuesday, April 24	Debrief Simulation <b>All clusters meet in Blount Auditorium</b>
Thursday, April 26	Debrief Simulation <b>All clusters meet in Blount Auditorium</b>
<b>Monday, April 30 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.</b>	<b><u>Final Exam</u> Place will be announced.</b>