

Course Outline

Course Code	RSM 392 H1 S
Course Name	Strategic Management
Term, Year	Winter, 2023
Course Meets	L0801, Fridays, 1-3pm, WO35
Web page URL	https://q.utoronto.ca

Instructor Details

Name	Email	Office Hours
Martin Hetu	martin.hetu@rotman.utoronto.ca	By appointment

Teaching Assistant

Andy (Seungho) Back: andy.back@rotman.utoronto.ca

Course Scope, Mission, and Learning Outcomes

Strategy, as taught in this course, is about why some businesses are able to consistently turn a profit while others are not. We are looking to identify sources beyond “luck” that explain why firms with similar opportunities can nonetheless perform so differently.

We will study:

1. why there are persistent differences in productivity and profit
2. why certain strategic choices fit better than others
3. how firms can influence their rivals' behaviour
4. when firms should grow, shrink, or expand in scope
5. how to motivate workers, managers, and suppliers
6. the role of beliefs in so-called “relational” contracts
7. special topics for strategy in an entrepreneurial firm.

I teach this content largely from an economics perspective, and we will use the content you learned in introductory microeconomics, including basic game theory. For each class, you will read a combination of practitioner articles and case studies exploring these themes and topics. Some of the case studies will focus on firms you may not be familiar with or on familiar firms at earlier times in their history. This is deliberate: we will use these cases to derive generalizable lessons related to why some firms become highly profitable while others do not.

This course aims to improve your decision-making and critical thinking capabilities through learning and applying strategy tools and through active discussion and debate with peers. The emphasis of the course, and of class discussion particularly, is on rigorous thinking and learning rather than finding the “right” answer.

We should also note that RSM 392 is designed to function like an MBA course and to prepare students (a) for potential MBA courses in the future and (b) for the intensity of the professional

experience. Note that the course builds heavily on the MBA Strategy courses offered by leading MBA programs. Consistent with this approach, we emphasize class participation, class discussion, and professionalism to a substantial degree.

Course Prerequisites

RSM219H1, RSM222H1

Course Materials

Required Readings

A course package includes all cases and some of the articles for this course. You will need to buy this from the Ivey website (see instructions below). In addition to the readings in the course package, additional articles posted on Quercus are required reading. Please make sure not to miss these.

Electronic Course Materials

Please see the step-by-step instructions below to purchase the course pack required for your course:

Course: Strategic Management - RSM392 Winter 2023 Sections L0801

Professor(s): Martin Hetu

1. Go to the Ivey Publishing website at www.iveypublishing.ca.
2. Log in to your existing account or click "Register" to create a new account and follow the prompts to complete the registration. If registering, choose the "Student" role.
3. Click on this link or copy it into your browser: <https://www.iveypublishing.ca/s/ivey-coursepack/a1R5c00000EIhgOEAT>.
4. Click "Add to Cart".
5. Go to the Shopping Cart (located at the top of the page), click "Checkout", and complete the checkout process.
6. When payment has been processed successfully, an Order Confirmation will be emailed to you immediately and you will see the Order Confirmation screen.
7. Once you have completed your order, click on your username on the top right --> Orders --> Downloads.

IMPORTANT: Access to downloadable files will expire on the course end date, so **be sure to save a copy on your computer**. The downloadable file is a PDF document that can be opened using Adobe Reader. This material is for your personal use only and is not to be shared, reproduced, or distributed in any form.

NEED HELP? Contact your professor directly or email Ivey Publishing's Customer Support Team at cases@ivey.ca.

These materials will cost a total of \$52.20. The use of these materials complies with all University of Toronto policies governing fees for course materials.

Evaluation and Grades

Grades are a measure of the knowledge and skills developed by a student within individual courses. Each student will receive a grade on the basis of how well they have command of the course materials, skills, and learning objectives of the course.

Work	Percentage of grade	Due Date
Class Participation	15%	Ongoing
Quizzes	10%	Ongoing (see below)
Mid-Term Test	25%	March 3, 2023
Strategic Analysis Assignment	10%	Ongoing (see below)
Final Term Test	40%	During exam period (TBD)

Course Format and Expectations

Strategic Analysis Assignments

Twice during the semester (once before and once after the midterm), you must write up and send in answers to the bolded assignment question for a particular week's case. You should only answer the one bolded question. This question can be found on Quercus under the assignments. The assignment is intended to help you develop your logical reasoning and communication skills. You should aim for clarity, strong organization, concision, professionalism, and correct grammar. How well you communicate your ideas will be considered in the evaluation of the assignment. Sources should always be correctly attributed. I have no preference as to the citation style (e.g., APA, MLS, Chicago) as long as citations appear.

Your write-up should be no more than 2 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font). Please include your name (full name, no nickname) as well as your student ID number on your write-up. These are to be turned in electronically on Quercus before the start of the class in which the case is being discussed.

Case questions for write-up are assigned based on the last digit of your U of T ID number.

Which case you are assigned depends on the last digit of your student number:

Last digit is 1-3: Natura and Lincoln Electric

Last digit is 4-6: Virgin Mobile and Airborne

Last digit is 7,8,9,0: Porter Airlines and Meituan-Dianping

Support is available through the RC Centre for Professional Skills (CPS) for students who would like help or feedback on their writing or speaking. CPS offers both individual and group appointments with trained writing instructors and presentation coaches who are familiar with the RC program and common types of business assignments. You can also access your college Writing Centres for help with written assignments.

You can [book an appointment with a writing or presentation coach](#) through the RC Centre for Professional Skills Writing Centre. For more information about writing centres, student supports, and study resources, see the [Writing and Presentation Coaching academic support page](#).

Quizzes

During weeks 2 to 11, I will post a short quiz each week on Quercus about the case study or reading assigned that week. The quiz will contain 5 multiple-choice questions about certain aspects of the case or reading. If you have done the reading, you should be able to answer all

of these questions without difficulty. These quizzes aim to ensure you're paying the right level of attention to your readings. Quizzes will be posted online a week before they are due. Each quiz will be due before the class in which it will be discussed.

Class Participation

Strategic analysis is not accomplished through the routine application of formulas but rather through reasoned analysis under conditions of limited information and uncertainty. One of the primary goals of this course is to help you develop the ability both to clarify your own position on a strategic question and to be able to articulate and defend it clearly. As such, regular class attendance and class participation are a critical part of this course.

The goal of class discussion is to arrive at a collective analysis of the issues presented by the day's materials. Strategic analysis is not accomplished through the routine application of formulas, but rather through reasoned analysis under conditions of limited information and uncertainty. One of the primary goals of this course is to help you develop the ability both to clarify your own position on a strategic question and to be able to articulate and defend it clearly.

As class participation is a graded component of the course, students will be evaluated on the following:

1. **Relevance:** Are you a good listener? Are your comments clearly related to the case and to the comments of others? Are your comments linked to the themes that the class is exploring together?
2. **Advancement:** Do your comments move the class discussion forward or simply reiterate points that have already been made? Do you sustain a line of argument or point of view through a significant part of the class session, or is it an isolated comment?
3. **Support:** Have you used specific data from the case, from the readings, or from your personal experiences to back up the assertions that you are making?
4. **Integrative Thinking:** Is there a willingness to challenge the ideas that are being expressed? Is there a willingness to test new ideas? Does the participant integrate material from past classes or the readings where appropriate? Do the comments reflect cumulative learning over the course, or does the participant merely consider each case in isolation?
5. **Clarity:** Are your comments succinct and understandable?

These bullet points highlight two important parts of a good discussion: preparation (so that you can support your answers and make clear statements) and listening (so that you respond to the discussion as it unfolds). Being "wrong" will not count against you, but it will also not help out. Making empty or repetitive comments that do not add to the discussion will also not help and may hurt if these comments interfere with the ability to discuss issues in depth.

If you happen to have information from outside the case materials, please do NOT introduce it in the discussion without prior discussion with the instructor. The point of the case discussion is to adopt the perspective of the decision-makers at the time of the case, and adding extra information shifts the discussion away from the issues we need to emphasize in the case. On the other hand, if you are particularly knowledgeable about a case, a firm or an industry we discuss, please let me know so that your insights can be eventually brought to bear in the discussion.

It is my hope that our class can serve as a riskless environment in which we all feel comfortable testing new ideas and pushing the boundaries of our thinking. I know that some of you may be shy or uncomfortable speaking publicly, and/or English is not your first language. If you are

particularly worried about your in-class contributions, please check in with me. Do not hesitate to reach out about this issue; we will work together to find ways to facilitate your participation.

Students who dominate discussions, discourage, intimidate, or show a lack of respect for other participants, or diminish the value of the class in any way, will be penalized. In particular, you are expected to treat colleagues respectfully: to disagree with an idea without discrediting the speaker, to help others articulate their points of view, and to use airtime judiciously. Please treat others as respected colleagues.

Mid-term Test

A mid-term test will take place during class on March 3rd. This will be an individual, closed-book exam. The midterm will consist of multiple-choice questions. I will provide more information on the structure of the exam in advance of the midterm date.

Final Term Test

There will be an open-book **3-hour individual final online assessment** scheduled during the exam period. This exam will consist of short-answer and long-answer (i.e., paragraph) questions that span the entire semester's coursework. I will provide you with more information on the structure of the exam by the final day of class.

Exam period: Tuesday April 11 to Friday April 28, 2023.

Missed Tests and Assignments (including mid-term and final-term tests)

Students who miss a test or assignment for reasons entirely beyond their control (e.g. illness) may request special consideration.

In such cases, students must:

1. Notify the instructor AND the Rotman Commerce Program Office **on the date** of the missed course deliverable, e.g. missed test, final assessments, assignment or class (in the case of participation marks).
2. Complete a [Request for Special Consideration Form](#) and submit it along with your Absence Declaration on [ACORN](#) (please read the instructions on how to use the Absence Declaration in ACORN) within **2 business days** of the originally scheduled course deliverable. Please email your documents to rotmancommerce.info@utoronto.ca.

Students who do not provide this information will be given a grade of 0 (zero) for the missed course deliverable.

Students who miss the mid-term test, a quiz, or the strategic analysis assignment **and** provide the appropriate documentation will have their grade percentages reallocated to the remaining test, quizzes, or assignment. For example, if you miss the midterm, your final exam will count for 65% of your grade.

If you are unable to make the final exam for reasons beyond your control and follow the steps above, a make up final will be provided. This does not apply to cases where you have already begun the final test.

Late Assignments

All assignments are due on the date and at the time specified in Quercus or the syllabus. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Students who, for reasons beyond their control, are unable to submit an assignment by its deadline must obtain approval from the instructor to have their grade for that assignment reapportioned. Supporting documentation will be required as per the policy on missed tests and assignments.

Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Commitment to Accessibility

The University is committed to inclusivity and accessibility, and strives to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities and activities offered at the University.

If you require accommodations for a temporary or ongoing disability or health concern, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom, or course materials, please [email Accessibility Services](#) or [visit the Accessibility Services website for more information](#) as soon as possible. Obtaining your accommodation letter may take up to several weeks, so get in touch with them as soon as possible. If you have general questions or concerns about the accessibility of this course, you are encouraged to reach out to your instructor, course coordinator, or Accessibility Services.

Ouriginal

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the [University's Plagiarism Detection Tool FAQ](#) page from the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is a fundamental value essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will continue to be valued and respected as a true signifier of a student's individual work and academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously.

[The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the process for addressing academic offences and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.

- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes collaborating with others on assignments that are supposed to be completed individually).

On test and exams

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) medical notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated by the procedures outlined in the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. If you have any question about what is or is not permitted in the course, please do not hesitate to contact the course instructor. If you have any questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from the instructor or other U of T or RC resources such as the RC Centre for Professional Skills, the College Writing Centres, or the Academic Success Centre.

Email

At times, the course instructor may decide to communicate important course information by email. As such, all U of T students are required to have a valid UTmail+ email address. You are responsible for ensuring that your UTmail+ email address is set up and properly entered on ACORN. For more information visit the [Information Commons Help Desk](#).

Forwarding your utoronto.ca email to a Gmail or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Gmail accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that important messages from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

Recording Lectures

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record a lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask the instructor's explicit permission and may not do so unless permission is granted. Students who have been previously granted permission to record lectures as an accommodation for a disability are excepted. This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, Quercus materials, etc.

If permission for recording is granted by the instructor (or via Accessibility Services), it is intended for the individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" them in any way. It is forbidden for a student to publish an instructor's notes to a website or sell them in any other form without formal permission.

Classroom Norms

Consistent with the general goal of mutual respect, students are reminded to demonstrate:

Arriving on time. Late arrivals are disruptive to both lectures and class discussion and show disrespect to those who are on time. Class starts 10 minutes after the hour.

Minimizing disruptions. All cell phones should be turned off during class. You should not leave and re-enter the class. You should avoid engaging in side conversations after class has begun.

Focusing on the class. I encourage you not to take notes on your laptop, as the course is discussion heavy. Empirical evidence shows that notetaking on a laptop decreases how much conceptual content you remember.

Get to know your classmates. Please bring your name placards; even better, in the first few classes, please state your name when answering questions.

How to Prepare for Classes

Most of our classes involve a case, although there is one full class lecture (Industry Analysis), and there will be at least one class activity during the term.

- **For every class:** you should be prepared to answer any (or all) of the discussion questions provided in the syllabus should you be called on in class. Use the questions as a starting point to guide your preparation.
- **For lectures:** you should read the theoretical reading in your case book.
 - Start by skimming the reading, looking at headings and subheadings to understand what the reading discusses. Then examine any diagrams.
 - Then, re-read the questions for the lecture.
 - Use these questions as you read the text itself.
 - What are the central points of the reading? Why are these points important? What is not addressed? What assumptions are being made? In other words, be prepared to know the central points of the reading as well as to share a critical analysis of your reading.
- **For cases:** while there's no set method of case preparation, one way involves the following¹:
 - Start by reading any theoretical readings or articles that are also assigned. Consider what the case is designed to accomplish — why this case, now, in this course? Use the theoretical readings to frame your reading of the case
 - Read the exhibits first. What do they say about the case?
 - Then, skim the case.
 - Examine any case questions and think about how the case headings relate to those questions.
 - Read the case. Take notes on important issues. Draw links between the theoretical reading and the assigned case. Apply any tools discussed in the theoretical readings.
 - Re-read the exhibits.

¹ This section borrows heavily from Prof. Anita McGahan's notes on how to prepare cases (article forthcoming).

- Answer the questions.
- Also, don't forget what we've learned in prior classes. Often using those tools of analysis will give you new insights into a particular case. Thus, the course will often build on concepts already taught rather than addressing a new subject in isolation each week.
- It's often helpful to summarize your perspective of the case on a single page of notes. It requires you to focus on the larger issues at hand, rather than feeling that every fact is important.
- Take a stand. What are the core issues in this case? Why are they so important? What should be done? What will happen if your idea is implemented?

Weekly Schedule

	Date	Topic	Discussion Questions	Reading
1	Jan 13	Introduction to Strategy	<p>What is strategy?</p> <p>Why, and to what extent, do firms differ in their productivity and profitability?</p> <p>Why aren't all profits competed away from successful firms?</p> <p>Why are business cases difficult to learn from without theory?</p>	Porter, "What is strategy?" HBR, Nov-Dec 1996, Reprint #96608, Vol. 74 Issue 6, p61-78;
2	Jan 20	Industry Analysis and Value Capture (1)	<p>How much do industries differ in their profitability?</p> <p>Is it best to enter "blue ocean" industries where you are a monopolist?</p> <p>Are rival firms always competitors?</p> <p>Why do some firms in a value chain earn large profits and some earn little?</p>	<p>HBS Case on Crown, Cork and Seal</p> <p>"The Right Game" by Brandenberger and Nalebuff</p> <p>"Why do Management Practices Differ Across Firms and Countries" by Bloom and van Reenen. (Optional)</p>
3	Jan 27	Industry Analysis and Value Capture (2)	<p>What are vertical and horizontal differentiation?</p> <p>How can firms differentiate in their input markets?</p> <p>When is differentiating your product bad for profits?</p> <p>Should you always differentiate into higher quality products?</p>	<p>HBS Case on Natura</p> <p>"Taking Industry Structuring Seriously" by Makadok and Ross (only pages 509-523; the appendix is very technical and can be omitted)</p>
4	Feb 3	Competitive Positioning (1)	<p>Why do we use prices in the first place?</p> <p>What other "mechanisms" can be used to transact and when should they be used?</p> <p>When do prices get competed down to zero profitability?</p> <p>What causes price wars?</p>	<p>Kellogg writeup on "The Mother of All Pricing Battles"</p> <p>HBS Case on Virgin Mobile</p> <p>Chapter 7 of "Principles of Pricing" by Vohra and Krishnamurthi</p> <p>Chapter 9 of "Principles of Pricing" by Vohra and Krishnamurthi (Optional)</p>

5	Feb 10	Competitive Positioning (2)	<p>When considering entry, does the age of an industry matter?</p> <p>Why do incumbents get entrenched in some industries?</p> <p>Why are new inventions adopted slowly?</p> <p>Why do some industries have frequent exit and entry of leading firms?</p>	<p>Ivey Case on Porter Airlines</p> <p>"Industry Life Cycles" by Klepper</p>
6	Feb 17	Corporate Strategy and Incentives (1)	<p>Why do firms exist anyway?</p> <p>Why did firms arise historically?</p> <p>What should you make yourself and what should you buy?</p> <p>When should firms merge or separate?</p>	<p>Notes on Theory of the Firm</p> <p>Columbia Case on Walt Disney Company</p>
7	Mar 3	Midterm	(In-class midterm)	
8	Mar 10	Corporate Strategy and Incentives (2)	<p>Why can't you make workers do what you want?</p> <p>Why are teams hard to motivate?</p> <p>What is performance pay trying to accomplish?</p> <p>When can strong incentives perversely make outcomes worse?</p>	<p>HBS Case on Lincoln Electric</p> <p>"On the Folly of Rewarding A While Hoping for B" by Kerr</p> <p>"Excellent Police" by Fisman and Sullivan (Optional)</p>
9	Mar 17	Relational Contracts	<p>Why are formal contracts so rare in business contexts?</p> <p>When can the promise of future business or promotions induce cooperation today?</p> <p>Why did General Motors decline in the 1980s instead of just copying Toyota's practices?</p>	<p>"Management Practices, Relational Contracts, and the Decline of General Motors" by Helper and Henderson</p> <p>Optional reading for more technical detail:</p> <p>"Non-contractual Relations in Business: A Preliminary Study" by Macaulay</p> <p>"What do Managers Do?" by Gibbons and Henderson</p> <p>(Click on Download PDF Chapter → then Click on Part IV Within Forms: Structures and Processes → then Click on Show Subsections → then click on 17. What Managers Do?)</p>
10	Mar 24	Innovation Strategy (1)	<p>Why do bigger or more experienced firms have lower unit costs?</p> <p>When are decreasing unit costs a source of strategic advantage?</p>	<p>HBS Case on Airborne Express</p> <p>Optional reading for more technical detail:</p>

			<p>How do you know, empirically, the nature of the learning curve in your industry?</p> <p>What are the dangers of taking advantage of learning curves?</p>	<p>“Learning by Doing: The Real Connection between Innovation, Wages and Wealth” by Bessen</p> <p>Chapter2 "Skills of the Unskilled"</p> <p>Chapter 3 “Revolutions in Slow Motion”</p>
11	March 31	Innovation Strategy (2)	<p>Is “disruption” overrated?</p> <p>What makes an entrepreneurial firm different anyway?</p> <p>Who becomes entrepreneurs?</p> <p>Is the “MVP” model of entrepreneurship always best?</p>	<p>NTU Case on Meituan-Dianping</p> <p>Optional reading for more technical detail:</p> <p>“Dynamic Commercialization Strategies” by Marx, Gans and Hsu (pages 1-24; appendix can be omitted)</p> <p>“More Entrepreneurs is Bad Public Policy” by Shane</p>
12	April 10 (Monday)	Course Recap and Conclusion	<p>Review of the concepts seen in class.</p> <p>Q&A session</p>	
<p>Final Exam Date To Be Determined (Exam Period: Tuesday April 11 to Friday April 28, 2023)</p>				

Please note that the last day you can drop this course without academic penalty is March 19, 2023. Our last session will take place exceptionally on Monday, April 10 because Friday, April 7, is Good Friday (a public holiday).

Other Useful Links

- [Become a volunteer note taker](#)
- [Accessibility Services Note Taking Support](#)
- [Credit / No-Credit in RSM courses](#)
- [Rotman Commerce Academic Support](#)

URL links for print

- Request for Special Consideration Form: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/forms-requests-and-appeals/forms/>
- ACORN: <http://www.acorn.utoronto.ca/>
- Email Accessibility Services: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca
- Accessibility Services website: <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>
- University's Plagiarism Detection Tool FAQ: <https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>
- The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>
- Information Commons Help Desk: <http://help.ic.utoronto.ca/category/3/utmail.html>
- Become a volunteer note taker: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/program/volunteer-note-taking/>
- Accessibility Services Note Taking Support: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/note-taking-support/>
- Credit / No-Credit in RSM courses: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/degree-requirements/credit-no-credit-option/>
- Rotman Commerce Academic Support: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/academic-support/>
- Book an appointment with a writing or presentation coach: <http://uoft.me/writingcentres>
- Writing and Presentation Coaching academic support page: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/academic-support/writing-and-presentation-coaching/>
- Centre for Professional Skills Teamwork Resources page: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/teamwork-resources>
- Book an appointment with a Teamwork Mentor: <http://uoft.me/writingcentres>