

Strategic Planning in Nonprofit Organizations

POLS 5390, FALL 2014

SECTION 0, CRN 40694

3 Credit Hours

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Course Description- Focuses on the skills necessary for conducting a strategic planning process in nonprofit agencies.

Course Objectives and Content

Strategic planning assumes that it is possible for organizations to identify a preferred future state, formulate a plan to move to that state, and successfully execute the plan. This course will examine the process of developing a strategic plan. In addition, we will critically evaluate the assumptions underlying the process. By the semester's end, students will have gained knowledge and experience in conducting each stage of a strategic plan's development. The ultimate goal of this course is to equip students with an understanding of the strengths and limitations of strategic planning, as well as practical experience in its application.

This course will be taught online using UTC's Blackboard system. Although I have great confidence in technology, I am also confident that we will encounter glitches during the semester. Students should familiarize themselves with the Blackboard system and the course website on Blackboard. If any questions or difficulties arise, please let me know.

Required Texts

Nonprofit Strategic Positioning: Decide Where to Be, Plan What to Do by Thomas A. McLaughlin, Publisher: Wiley (March 3, 2006), ISBN: 0471717495

Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations, Second Edition by Michael Allison, Jude Kaye, Publisher: Wiley; 2 edition (July 11, 2005)

We will be using one case for this class, the Meredith Center, which must be purchased (price <\$3.00). I will provide information separately on obtaining this case.

Additional **required** readings will be available on the course Blackboard website at <http://utconline.utc.edu>

Course Requirements

Your grade for this course will be based on a combination of participation in a class project, performance on course assignments and exercises, participation in and moderating of discussion forums, and a final exam.

A. Class Preparation and Participation- This course will be taught as an online seminar, defined as:

1 : a group of advanced students studying under a professor with each doing original research and all exchanging results through reports and discussions; **2** : an advanced or graduate course often featuring informality and discussion; **3** : a meeting for giving and discussing information. (From WWWebster dictionary.)

As the definition suggests, your preparation and participation will determine the success of this course. I expect each student to read **all** assignments, to be prepared to raise issues based on the readings, and to participate fully in discussing those issues.

Since this is an online course, you will be able to demonstrate your preparation and participation primarily through class discussion forums. Note that consideration of each topic will generally open on Thursday at noon and close at noon on Friday of the following week, providing a full week to read the material, complete assignments, and engage in discussion. You must participate in the discussions during the allotted time. Comments posted after a forum closes will not be considered in grading.

For each topic during the semester I will assign one or two students to serve as discussion moderators. Guidelines for moderating and participating in discussion forums are included below. A rubric describing the criteria used to evaluate discussion participation is linked under the Course Syllabus button.

B. "Thinkpiece" Essays, Exercises, and Case Analyses – Students are required to complete a number of assignments for this class. These include three "thinkpieces" (articles for critical review) and two cases for review and analysis. I will post the necessary

material on the course website with each assignment. You will have one week to complete these assignments. Written work will be graded on both content and grammar.

C. Team Project--Strategic Plan- The final weeks of the course will be devoted to the development, presentation, and discussion of a strategic plan. The plan will be based on the analysis of the Meredith Center case (mentioned above under required texts). The class will be divided into two teams. Each team will have two weeks to review the case, develop the plan, and prepare a powerpoint presentation for submission along with the plan. I will post both teams' work on the course website for discussion during the final week of class. Additional details about the project will be provided at the appropriate time.

E. Final Exam- A final exam may be given at my discretion. Whether or not a final is necessary will depend on my assessment of class performance throughout the semester. If a final is deemed necessary, it will consist of three to five questions requiring essay responses. Students will choose two of the questions to answer. The final exam will be graded on both content and grammar.

GRADING SUMMARY		
	Without Final	With Final
Discussion Forum Moderation	25%	20%
Discussion Forum Participation	25%	20%
Thinkpiece Essays and Case Analyses	25%	20%
Team Project	25%	20%
Final Exam	-	20%

Email: The University uses an aggressive spam filter that may block email messages from non-UTC domains. To assure that your email messages are delivered, you should **use your UTC email account for this course**. If you have problems accessing your email account, contact the Help Desk at 423/425-4000.

How to get an A in this class—An A is the highest grade that can be earned. It signifies **outstanding** work. It means not only adequate preparation, but also cogent analysis, both in written work and class discussion; not only well-written assignments, but also work that is grammatically correct, free of spelling and syntax errors. It means that deadlines are met. In short, an A is reserved for those who do work of the caliber expected in a graduate program. Doing the minimum required does not justify an A.

ADA STATEMENT: Attention: If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or a special accommodation in this class or any other class, call the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 425-4006 or come by the office, 102 Frist Hall
<http://www.utc.edu/Administration/DisabilityResourceCenter/>.

If you find that personal problems, career indecision, study and time management difficulties, etc. are adversely affecting your successful progress at UTC, please contact the Counseling and Career Planning Center at 425-4438 or
<http://www.utc.edu/Administration/CounselingAndCareerPlanning/>.

HONOR CODE PLEDGE (from the [UTC Student Handbook](#)): I pledge that I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on any test or assignment. I understand that plagiarism constitutes a serious instance of unauthorized aid. I further pledge that I exert every effort to insure that the Honor Code is upheld by others and the I will actively support the establishment and continuance of a campus-wide climate of honor and integrity.

Course Schedule		
Dates	Topic/Task	Textbook Reading Assignments (Additional readings will assigned and posted on course website)
Aug. 18-22	Course Orientation	
Aug. 21-29	Setting the Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case-The East Coast Orchestra
Aug. 28-Sept. 5	Introduction and Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Positioning, Chapters 1 and 2; • Strategic Planning, Chapter 1
Sept. 4-12	Strategic Plan: An Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UTC's Strategic Plan • Liedtka, "Everything I need to know about strategy I learned at the national zoo."
Sept. 11-19	Mission, Vision, Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Positioning, Chapters 3 and 4; • Strategic Planning, Chapters 2 and 3
Sept. 18-26	Assessing the Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Planning, Chapter 4 • Case: Appalachian Mountain Club
Sept. 25-Oct. 3	Future Scan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Positioning, Chapter 5 • Kim and Mauborgne, "Blue Ocean Strategy."
Oct. 2-10	Assessing Internal Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Positioning, Chapter 6
Oct. 9-17	Deciding Where to Be, Agreeing on Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Positioning, Chapter 7; • Strategic Planning, Chapter 5
Oct. 16-24	Meredith Center Case Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meredith Center Case
Oct. 23-31	Write the Plan, Present the Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Planning, Chapter 6 • Gimpi and Dakin, "Management and Magic."
Oct. 30-Nov. 7	Plan Implementation and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Planning, Chapters 7 and 8
Nov. 6-21	Team Exercise—Putting it All Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meredith Center Case
Nov. 20-Dec. 1	Meredith Center Plan Presentation and Discussion	
<p>Note: The Instructor reserves the right to make minor modifications in the syllabus based on student interest and time constraints.</p> <p>Students should also note that, in addition to the readings listed above, video, audio, and web-based exercises may be included under some topics. Students are responsible for all material included with each topic.</p>		

Discussion Forum Guidelines and Hints

Moderators/Facilitators

- Read the appropriate reading(s) and/or and post a brief summary of the readings.
- Post probing, "critical thinking" questions to get the discussion started and to keep the discussion going the length of the discussion period. Critical thinking questions are those that require your peers to use their critical analysis skills. These questions require that respondents demonstrate both a factual knowledge of the readings and comprehension of how the knowledge might apply. These should NOT be simple "look this up in the book" questions, or "what's your opinion" questions, or even a regurgitation of the readings. Assume that all of your fellow students have read the chapters and go from there.
- Facilitators ask probing questions, encourage participation, ensure that all participants adhere to "netiquette" standards of group discussion, summarize the discussion periodically, and keep the discussion moving. It is especially important to provide a short summary of the discussion at its conclusion. The summary should be short and summarize/synthesize the entire scope of the discussion. The book chapters do not need to be rehashed; this should be a summary of the discussion that took place online.
- A reader should be able to give a synopsis of the entire discussion based on the summary posted.
- Responsibility for facilitating requires that you keep the discussion going for the length of time allotted, respond to postings, refocus the discussion if it gets off track, and maintain the quality of the discussion. Obviously, facilitators will want to check in on their forums more often than non-facilitators.

Forum Participation

- Discussion participants reply to the "critical thinking" questions about topic(s) from the readings. Check in often to reply and "discuss" the topics in question and be aware of all of the discussion threads. Your postings should extend the discussion and conversation about the particular topics.
- All posting should be relevant to the topics under discussion. The number of postings is not as important as the quality, but you should post enough to evidence adequate participation in the discussion. "I agree with Joe" or "I think you're wrong" and other dead-end comments are not evidence of participation and preparation. Neither are comments that are off topic or that are rude in any way. PLEASE respect your fellow students, their ideas and their experience.
- The discussion forums will open by noon on Thursday and close at noon on Friday of the following week. You must participate in the discussions during the allotted time. Comments posted after the end date amount to talking in an empty room.
- Good postings are those that can be classified using one of the following categories.
 - new, novel ideas or individualized perspectives or ideas on the topics being discussed. These postings could also include an in-depth discussion of the readings or topics.
 - comments that offer more information, outside experience or examples of the content under discussion.
 - new references, links or resources that relate to the discussion with some mention of their value to other members of the class. These postings can include URLs, articles, or other research that provide a justification for viewpoints.
 - questions that set the stage for conversation or push the discussion to new, related areas. These are not postings for clarification of other postings, but ones that direct the conversation in new directions and to new (but related) topics.
 - comments that synthesize previous postings and use that synthesis to demonstrate new insights or conclusions.

In summary, check in often and participate meaningfully in the class discussions. It is NOT necessary to respond to every posting, but it is necessary to provide thoughtful postings that extend the discussion.