Contact Information

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Course Summary

This seminar examines economic approaches to the classic issues of strategic management. Topics include “outside the firm” areas of research such as industry and competitor analysis, switching costs, network externalities, nonlinear pricing, and pricing with naïve consumers as well as “inside the firm” areas such as leadership, allocation of authority, and organizational complementarities. The seminar also considers research on the boundaries of the firm including vertical integration, contractual channel relationships, and the relationship of financial structure and strategy. Empirical work is emphasized, but theoretical work is also examined, especially as it informs the empirical work.

Class sessions combine lectures, discussions and student presentations. Discussions emphasize evaluating the research methods employed in the papers and identifying opportunities for future research. For selected topics we briefly discuss an M.B.A.-style case study relevant to the topic. This provides “real-world” examples to inform the research and to familiarize students with M.B.A. teaching.

Students are required to write a referee report and present two papers. I provide written feedback after each presentation to provide an opportunity for students to improve their skills at presenting research. In addition, students are responsible for participating in class discussions.

Course Materials

- Course Reader 1 (contains HBS cases and materials)
- Course Reader 2 (contains journal articles)

Course Requirements

- One referee report 35%
- Two paper presentations 35%
- Class participation 30%
January 9  Organizational Meeting
Introduction to Strategy


January 16  Vertical Integration and the Value Chain


January 23  Contractual Channel Relationships


“Xerox and Fuji-Xerox” HBS Case 9-391-156.
January 30  **Leadership and Allocation of Authority**


February 6  **Organizational Complementarities**


February 13  Strategy in Markets with Demand-Side Increasing Returns


February 20  Switching Costs (Buyer and Supplier Power)


February 27  Financial Structure and Corporate Strategy


March 6  **Price Discrimination and Dispersion**


March 13  **Pricing Strategies with Naïve Consumers**

