# Business Policy and Strategy (Management)

## Prof. Nicola Negri; Prof. Luigi Geppert

### Module I: Prof. Nicola Negri

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to:

– Help students understand the difference between the “What to do” (Strategy) and the “How to do it” (Management).

– Explain, in case of significant changes, “how to do business” in complex multinational and national-private organisations.

– Teach students how to become “modern” managers, that is to say how to apply rational and creative solutions to the different problems affecting today’s complex organisations, especially in terms of choosing the best business policy and strategy.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will be based on the current and the future managerial culture, with a focus on the emerging and highly innovative ideas of companies. In particular, it will explore the main managerial functions that help managers ensure the development of a specific business strategy and policy: planning, organising, leading, and controlling. These four functions will be described and analysed from the point of view of different companies. The course content will be organised as follows. First of all, the course will introduce the nature of managerial activities, and the elements that characterised the evolution of the managerial environment. Then, it will explore the different managerial functions, identifying the most peculiar elements of each (e.g. the implementation of a strategy, HR management, team work, planning and controlling processes). Therefore, the approach will be equally theoretical and practical, and the lectures will be frequently based on real managing practices and interventions by subject matter experts working in national and multinational companies.

***READING LIST***

Richard L. Daft, *Management*, Ninth Edition, International Edition ISBN 13: 978-0-324-59584-0 / ISBN 10: 0-324-59584-0.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The active participation in class is fundamental. Students are invited to check the course content and the analytic calendar. Some of the lectures, aimed to introduce the key theoretical concepts of the course, will necessarily be frontal; however, the course will be focused on practical case studies and the experiences of subject matter experts, in order to help students exchange their ideas and opinions, feel more involved, and therefore develop their managerial skills.

The active participation in class is fundamental. Students are invited to attend lectures regularly, and take part to the activities proposed in class: discussions on case studies, exercises, lectures held by subject matter experts, debates with the lecturer, etc. This will allow them to develop a modern and complete vision of the manager role, who is responsible for the definition, the development, the implementation, and the control of the best business strategy.

Further information on the course, the material, and other communications will be made available on Blackboard.

However, the programme provides for the full study of the reference text by R. Daft, "Management”.

The exam is written. The test covers all the contents of the adopted text and it will focus on the examples, the case studies, the analysis proposed in class, and the testimonials of subject matter experts. Students will be asked to answer all the questions.

It is possible to take the exam in any official appeal after registration through the i-Catt system.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In order to get the most out of this course, students should have a basic knowledge of business strategic management. Class attendance and an active participation in class are highly recommended.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.

Module II: Prof. Luigi Geppert

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of the course is to develop students' knowledge of systemic tools and models so as to better understand and analyse the dynamic evolution of business strategy from the control and alignment perspective of the business manager.

In an increasingly “dynamic” business context that is difficult to plan, much like the current one, the process of defining managerial decisions appears particularly complex, making it difficult to compare a priori and predict the consequences of the most critical options.

This process requires the support of *methods* and *tools* to represent and measure the dynamic complexity of the reality, which the manager can use to improve and increase his understanding of the phenomena.

The course aims to provide the *methods* and *tools* of *simulation modelling* (or rather - in the context of this course - Systems Thinking and System Dynamics) for the conception and creation of "micro worlds" and *management flight simulators* that allow managers to explore the effects of long-term strategic decisions, to evaluate new strategies, and to develop and understand complex systems.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- improve their analysis and assessment of business strategies and business policies over time;

- understand complexity through counter-intuitive dynamics;

- build, at least qualitatively, appropriate dynamic micro-worlds to represent the many situations for which the "right" managerial decision becomes the critical success factor;

- use the methodological paradigms of Systems Thinking and System Dynamics.

***COURSE CONTENT***

With regard to Module 2, the course initially provides a brief introduction to the dynamic modelling of systems and then focuses on the execution of appropriate dynamic models (micro-worlds) that exemplify recurrent managerial situations.

The presentation of a number of business cases illustrates the application of the tools and methods presented.

Depending on the time available, a few hours will be dedicated to tutorials.

In particular, the topics covered concern:

- the definition and representation of complex systems: *Policy Resistance*;

- the elementary modes of dynamic behaviour;

- causal circular diagrams;

- level and flow diagrams;

- examples of application;

- business cases;

- tutorials (optional).

During the course, students will be gathered together in groups (teams); each group will be entrusted with the analysis of an already existing micro-world, to be used as a *business game* to achieve certain objectives through the appropriate dynamic combination of a number of control levers (which represent corporate decisions).

***READING LIST***

For Module 2

L. Geppert, *Introduzione alla Dinamica dei Sistemi: concetti generali di modellazione della complessità e applicazioni per la strategia e la gestione aziendale,* lecturer's notes published on Blackboard, 2007.

L. Geppert, *Modelli e applicazioni d’esempio*, lecturer's software models published on Blackboard, 2011.

J. Sterman, *Business Dynamics: Systems Thinking and Modeling for a Complex World,* Irwin McGraw-Hill, 2000.

P.M. Senge, *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization,* DoubleDay, 1994.

During the course, to support the concepts presented in Module 2, a number of models prepared with appropriate modelling software will be used (for example: iThink by iseesystems and Vensim PLE by Ventana Systems, which can be respectively downloaded for free from the websites: www.iseesystems.com and [www.vensim.com](http://www.vensim.com)).

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures with classroom exercises. Testimonials from managers and consultants may be provided during the course.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Regarding the exam, the following apply:

1. The Module 2 exam is based on a written test comprising exercises with open-ended and closed-ended answers.
2. The overall assessment is the arithmetic mean rounded up of the marks obtained in the 2 tests (if the result of each test is greater than or equal to 18).
3. The exam procedure is the same for all exam sessions.
4. In the first exam session that follows the course (usually comprising 3 sessions), students may add the credits (maximum 3) earned from the business game played in class.
5. The marking rules are also indicated on Blackboard.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

No special prerequisites are required. Attendance at and active participation in lectures is strongly recommended. On the lecturer's webpage, the time of receipt and the thesis request form are indicated.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.