Course Introduction and Objectives

This is a Ph.D. seminar in the field of strategy, *i.e.*, the study of how firms achieve and sustain economic profits and performance. The course is intended to provide strategy researchers with an introduction to the fundamentals of strategy as an area of study: discussing the origins of the field and reviewing several of the theories that are central to it. To that end, we shall read and discuss foundational works, notable empirical applications, and important recent advances under each theory. My objective in this course is two-fold: a) to familiarize you with the important streams of research that make up the field of strategy, broadly defined; and b) to help you develop the ability to critically assess and appreciate high quality strategy research.

Course Requirements

Readings and discussion

I have assigned a set of readings for each session. These readings are divided into three sets: a set of four *starred* readings that shall be the focus of a discussion led by you (see below), a set of other (non-starred) required readings, and a set of optional readings. Please note that all readings other than those marked optional are required. While our discussion may focus more on the starred readings, I expect you to have read and thought about all the readings for the day and to incorporate insights from them all in our classroom discussions. The readings I have starred are simply the easiest to build a discussion off; this is not to suggest that the other readings are somehow less useful or important. The optional readings
are readings I strongly suggest you read, especially if you’re interested in the day’s topic, though I’m not requiring you to do so.

In addition to going over the readings and coming prepared to discuss them in class, you will be individually assigned a specific paper on which you will lead the class discussion. A one-page (typed, single spaced, ≥ 11-point font) critical summary of the assigned paper will be required, which should typically include:

(a) a summary of the research question or problem the paper addresses,
(b) the paper’s strengths and limitations, and
(c) the contribution it makes to the field, and a couple of major obvious and non-obvious links to the other pieces in the session or the course.

Please bring enough paper summaries to the class to distribute to all the participants. The paper summaries will not be graded separately but will contribute to the class participation grade.

Term paper
You will also be required to write a term paper. Please use the following to guide the structure of the paper.

- Identify a research question of interest.
- Develop a theoretical argument and derive *ONE* testable hypothesis related to this question
- Sketch a research design of how you would test that question.

By research design I want to know (a) what you are measuring and (b) how you plan to invoke variance to facilitate your analysis. I do not need to know the specific data source or the statistical technique(s) that you would employ. These are things that you could flesh-out later if you wish to continue with this work. My evaluation of your term paper will focus on your ability to develop an interesting and potentially testable idea that addresses an important research question in the nonmarket strategy area.
Evaluation

Evaluation will be on the basis of the following weights:

- Class discussion and summaries  50%
- Term paper 50%
Week 1: Introduction and origins


Week 2: Competition, value creation and value capture


Week 3: Organizational Economics


Week 4: Resource Based View


Week 5: Capabilities


Week 6: Evolutionary views


Week 7 Cognition & Attention

