

Strategic Thinking
Instructor
UST 625/725
13
Department of Urban Studies
Affairs
Summer 2000, MW 6:00-9:30
University

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Urban Affairs Building
MGL College of Urban
Cleveland State

STRATEGIC THINKING

Syllabus

Course objectives

Planning is decision making, whether for policy, management or economic development purposes. It requires skills that assist us in processing complex information to provide understanding of the past and present, of mechanisms at work, and of likely, possible and desirable futures. Two fundamental kinds of skills that render the planning strategic are:

- a. *foresight* skills, that enable us to predict possible future states, select ones that respond to our needs, and shape them according to goals of our mission; and,
- b. *implementation* skills, that enable us to seek and achieve consensus on goals, desirable futures and ways of achieving them, among entities that are key to the realization of our visions.

Strategic Thinking introduces students to the theory and practice of strategic planning, a collection of principles and techniques applicable to the management of public and private not-for-profit sectors. At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- elicit and understand a client's interests for the near future;
- identify the kinds of information needed to assist the client in formulating goals and plans consistent with their interests;
- acquire and analyze the information pertinent to the plans, including affected stakeholders and their interests;
- identify key factors affecting implementation of the plan;
- assist the client in formulating implementable strategies, that attend to obstacles and take full advantage of opportunities;
- appreciate the necessity and general applicability of strategic thinking to a variety of contexts.

Course Method:

The course consists of:

- instructor and guest lectures
- class discussions and student presentations on assigned questions;
- simulation games
- a strategic planning class project

Students are expected to: attend all classes; participate actively in discussions; take responsibility for class presentations. Any text processing is expected to be performed on the computer.

For productive class sessions, prepare by reading text assignments and identifying topics that need clarification in class.

TEXT

1. **John M. Bryson** (B in Schedule)

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (1995).

2. Selected articles (distributed in class) from **John Bryson and Robert Einsweiler, eds.** (BE in Schedule):

Strategic Planning: Threats and Opportunities for Planners. Chicago: Planners Press (APA).

OTHER READINGS

Max H. Bazerman, **Judgment in Managerial Decision Making** (Wiley, 1986).

Daryl J. Bem, **Beliefs, Attitudes, and Human Affairs** (Brooks/Cole, 1970).

Susan L. Carpenter and W. J. D. Kennedy, **Managing Public Disputes** (Jossey-Bass, 1988).

Samuel Certo & J. Paul Peter, **Strategic Management: Concepts and Applications** (Random House, 1988).

Roger Fisher and William Ury, **Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In** (Penguin Books, 1981).

Roger Fisher and Scott Brown, **Getting Together: Building Relationships as We Negotiate** (Penguin Books, 1988).

Alvin L. Goldman, **Settling for More: Mastering Negotiating Strategies and Techniques** (BNA Books, 1991).

Barbara Gray, **Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems** Jossey-Bass, 1989).

Robert Heath & Assoc., **Strategic Issues Management: How Organizations Influence and Respond to Public Interests and Policies**, Jossey-Bass, 1988).

Jack Koteen, **Strategic Management in Public and Nonprofit Organizations: Thinking and Acting Strategically on Public Concerns** (Praeger, 1989).

Paul Nutt & Robert Backoff, **Strategic Management of Public and Third Sector Organizations: A Handbook for Leaders** (Jossey-Bass, 1992).

Michael Porter, **Competitive Strategy** (The Free Press, 1980).

Lawrence Susskind and Jeffrey Cruikshank, **Breaking the Impasse: Consensual Approaches to Resolving Public Disputes** (Basic Books, 1987).

William Ury, **Getting Past No: Negotiating with Difficult People** (Penguin Books, 19981).

William Ury, Jeanne Brett and Stephen Goldberg, **Getting Disputes Resolved: Designing Systems to Cut the Cost of Conflict** Jossey-Bass, 1988).

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

(tentative)

The final grade will be a composite of grades for:

- class participation 10%
- homeworks and class presentations 20%
- midterm (paper and its presentation, 8/15) 30%
- final (project and its presentation, 8/29) 40%

Office Hours, Location, Phone

Office:	Urban Building, Room 119A.
Office hours:	Before each class and by appointment.
Office phone:	687-2367
E-mail:	sanda@wolf.csuohio.edu
Homepage:	http://urban.csuohio.edu/~sanda/newsk.htm



Connect to the course WEB page for up-to-date links to other related WEB sites (<http://urban.csuohio.edu/~sanda/strpl.htm>).

Important CSU dates

Classes begin	May 15
Memorial Day (no class)	May 29
Late registration (late fee):	May 16
Last day to add	May 16
Last day to drop/no W on transcript	May 19
Last day to drop/W on transcript	June 2
Last day of instruction	June 22
Spring incomplete grades	December 7

University Policies

Students should refer to the Undergraduate CSU Bulletin for procedures regarding add/drop and withdrawal as well as S/U and incomplete grading.

For class cancellations due to weather, call CSU information (687-2000) before class.

Academic misconduct: plagiarism or cheating will result in an "F" for the course.

SCHEDULE

(tentative, any changes will be announced in class)

DATE	READ/DO:	SUBJECT	DUE
WEEK 1			
5/15		<i>Introduction--class organization, discussion of content Class project description¹ Decision making and judgmental processes</i>	
5/17	B Chapters 1, 2, 3	<i>Strategic thinking concepts and approaches</i>	(HW 1)
Game 1: Prisoners' Dilemma			
WEEK 2			
5/22	B Chapter 4	<i>Strategic thinking steps</i>	HW 1 due
5/24	B Chapter 5	<i>Strategic thinking steps (cont.) Group processes (nominal group, brainstorming, etc.).</i>	(HW 2)
Game 2: 2 parties, integrative, single-text device			
WEEK 3			
5/29		Memorial Day (no class)	
5/31	BE papers 4, 5	<i>Strategic thinking steps (cont.) Group processes (nominal group, brainstorming, etc.).</i>	(HW 2)
WEEK 4			
6/5	B Chapters 6, 7 BE papers 6, 7	<i>Strategic thinking steps (cont.) Interim group presentations, discussion, critique of progress</i>	HW 2 due
6/7	B Chapters 10, 11 BE papers 9, 10	<i>Implementing strategic plans Paper presentations</i>	Paper 1 due
WEEK 5			
6/12	BE papers 11, 12	<i>Case studies</i>	(HW 3)
6/14		<i>Case studies: discussion of examples</i>	HW 3 due
Game 3: multi-party, integrative, scorable			
WEEK 6			
6/19		<i>Project presentations</i>	
6/21		<i>Project presentations</i>	Paper 2 due
Last class		<i>Project critique, class debriefing</i>	

¹ Each session will include 30-60 minutes of group work on the class project.

CLASS PROJECT

Your group is charged with drawing up a strategic plan for the entity of your choice. Hold a group discussion to select this entity (options include, but are not limited to, various non-profit or for-profit organizations, and public agencies at the governmental level of your choice). Every class session will include a time period devoted to group work on the strategic plan. An outline of a proposed process follows. You should be able to conduct all project work during the scheduled time periods, although you should feel free to meet outside class if you find that more work is needed. The product will be the subject of Paper 2 described below.

SUGGESTED PROCESS

- Class 2: Decide on the entity for which you will draw the strategic plan; find a name for your group.
- Class 3: Discuss and build a history for your group and organization.
- Class 4: Devise the mission. Devise a process of strategic planning with steps, dates and expected products.
- Class 6: Begin following strategic planning steps. At every step, review the process, and update dates and expected products. Divide the workload and review this division too.
- Class 7: Follow the steps and review. Devise writing assignments for group members.
- Class 8: Follow the steps. Begin reviewing writing assignments.
- Class 9: Follow the steps. Begin working toward a finished product.
- Class 10: Follow the steps. Prepare the group's class presentation. Review the written product.
- Class 11: Class presentations
- Class 12: Class presentations

During the whole process, keep detailed notes that will help you write the second paper. Observe group problems, solve them and keep notes about the solutions and how effective they were. At all times, you are to watch the strategic plan emerging, as well as the group process that is giving rise to it. Paper 2 involves reflection on both. Good notes will make it easy to write.

² In lieu of final exam.

For all homeworks: write concisely (at most two pages), but in sufficient detail that items do not appear vague or general. Where necessary, give your reasoning. Type and proofread. Assignments should not exceed 2 pages. Avoid fillers, but make sure the papers are readable.

HOMework 1

Due: May 22, 2000

Examine the collection of mission statements handed out. Propose a small number of criteria for your analysis and then proceed to analyze the content. Some considerations:

- ⇒ What components do most share/are unique to a few?
- ⇒ Are there examples of statements that could work for any context/that reflect successfully the context for which they were formulated?
- ⇒ Are there inspiring examples that can guide planning/examples that fail to offer such guidance?
- ⇒ Would time make a difference in these examples or do they seem durable?

HOMework 2

Due: June 5, 2000

You are evaluating a strategic plan submitted to you for funding. Assume the plan does have all the components you deem important (mission, SWOT analysis, etc.) Define a set of criteria for evaluating a strategic plan. (relating them to the text recommendations). Explain your choices and examine which criteria, if any, are context-free.

HOMework 3

Due: June 14, 2000

List and discuss three group work problems you think are commonplace in any group endeavor, such as strategic planning. Identify the problems, analyze briefly what causes them and list some group process solutions you have used or you think might be useful.

PAPER 1

Due: June 6, 2000

Evaluate a strategic plan, applying the criteria devised in Homework #2.

☞ **SUGGESTED STRUCTURE** (up to about 6-8 typed pages)

- ◆ Title, Viking Number (no name!!!)
- ◆ Introductory section: topic, layout of the paper and your main conclusion.
- ◆ Background section: description of the selected plan.
- ◆ Adopt the perspective of a strategic planner: analyze process and product in terms you define.
- ◆ Conclusion section: review key arguments and conclusions and take them one step beyond the case, by reflecting on the general meaning of your answers (i.e., what is particular to this situation, and what is generally valid in most strategic planning situations?)

☞ **FORM:**

- ◆ Be concise and bring in information only when needed to support one of your arguments.
- ◆ Use strategic planning concepts discussed in class wherever possible
- ◆ Break paper into titled sections by topic. Do not retell the story at every step except when needed for argumentation.
- ◆ Write up to 5 typed pages (1 inch margins, double-spaced).
- ◆ Proof-read for typos and for completeness of sentences.
- ◆ Have another student in the class read and give you feedback; reciprocate!

☞ **GRADING:**

- ◆ **form:** use of the proposed analytical structure, conciseness, clarity;
- ◆ **content:** logic and completeness of arguments, presence of reasons for the answers, coverage of issues required, ability to derive some general insights from the specific case studied, contribution beyond insights offered in the case.

PAPER 2

Due: June 21, 2000

Present a **structured** report that could be used as a case study for a strategic planning class.

Reflect on product and process: what worked, what would you do differently if you could do it over? Include substantive issues as well as group dynamics issues in your critique of the process. Dwell on the plan component you were responsible for.

✂ SUGGESTED STRUCTURE: (up to about 8 typed pages)

- Title, Viking Number (**do not use name**)
- **Introduction** (brief): topic, short description of the case essence, layout of the paper (a roadmap), your main conclusions;
- **Content:**
 - describe briefly plan, highlighting your contribution to it;
 - evaluate the ways and extent to which your plan serves the client;
 - speculate on different **possible** alternatives that would have worked better, and what would have had to be different (client, site or process).
- **Conclusions:**
 - sum up your analysis (w/out repeating paragraphs of preceding sections);
 - derive from this case some strategic thinking insights with general validity.

✂ SUGGESTIONS:

label the statements that are not incontrovertible facts as your beliefs, & provide your reasoning for them in terms of facts & your values;

break your report into titled sections & subsections (listed in the Introduction) to help the reader identify the overall logic of your paper as well as what to expect in the following paragraphs (read section and subsection titles to check that they make sense as a group & support your arguments).

be concise; **proof-read** for typos and for completeness and correctness of sentences; have a friend or a writing lab advisor read your report and comment on its logic, form and interest.

✂ GRADING

- ⇒ **form:** use of the proposed analytical structure, conciseness, clarity;
- ⇒ **content:** logic and completeness of arguments, presence of reasons for the answers, coverage of issues required, ability to derive general insights from the specific case, contribution beyond insights offered in the case.

³ In lieu of final exam.