

NYU Los Angeles

Digital Business Strategy

MKTG-UB 9056 LA1

Fall 2020

Instructor Information

- George Dewey
- Office Hours: By appointment

Course Information

- Digital Business Strategy
- MKTG-UB 9056 LA1
- Tuesdays 7:15-8:30 pm
- Classroom Zoom

Course Overview and Goals

Every industry, from entertainment to transportation, is being transformed by digital technology - whether they like it or not. This course will cover platforms from a strategy and marketing perspective. The objectives will be to understand how platforms function, the unique challenges they face, and how platform-oriented companies can leverage their strengths and achieve success in the marketplace. These objectives will be achieved through a combination of readings, class discussions, case analysis and a group project.

Class Attendance and Participation (20%)

Every session of the course will involve interaction in the form of class discussion. I expect each one of you to come to class on time and be prepared to contribute to all class sessions. Please go over the readings prior to class. Lectures will not duplicate reading material: they will supplement and embellish the readings and offer alternate viewpoints. Attendance will be taken for each class session and will be a factor in determining your class participation points. Laptops, cell phones, smartphones and other electronic devices are a disturbance to both students and professors. All electronic devices must be turned off prior to the start of each class meeting.

Two Individual Case Write-Ups (30%)

A **hard copy** of this report (2-3 pages, excluding appendices, **single-spaced, 12-point font**; please do NOT put the assignment into folders – just the stapled pages is all we need, and a cover page is optional) is due in class on the date the case is scheduled for class discussion in the above schedule. You need to be **physically present** in class for us to accept a hard copy of your assignment. **An electronic copy** must be also **uploaded on NYUC** before class on the day it is due (go to the Assignment tab). Failure to upload on NYUC before the deadline will result in a 2-point penalty on the assignment. On the days you turn in your case write-ups, you may be randomly called upon in class to present and defend your recommendations.

Failure to be physically present in class to participate in the discussions will result in a 5-point penalty on the assignment. If we do not find either an upload on NYUC or a hard copy delivered in class, then you will **lose all points** for the assignment. It is recommended that you account for disruptions in IT services, printing issues, etc., while meeting the deadlines. No allowances will be made for such unanticipated events.

No extensions will be given for the assignment under any circumstances. These include unanticipated situations such as illness, family emergencies, as well as legal obligations such as jury duty, court summons, etc. Therefore it is recommended that you (1) plan on doing two of the first three cases (and keep the last one as a backup), and (2) plan on finishing and the assignment and uploading on NYUC a few days before the deadline (to account for last-minute emergencies). The deadlines are available to you on the first day of class, and it is your responsibility to plan your activities accordingly.

Assignment: Please select **any one out of the four cases** highlighted in bold letters on the syllabus. **Additionally, you will choose an emerging digital platform**, ideally in the entertainment or music industries. Analyze the business models used by the companies and suggest your ideal business model for this industry. Please use the following format in your write-up (page suggestions are single-spaced, but make sure you adhere to the 3-page limit):

1. (**½-1-page**). Summarize **the company and its businesses** (or companies if there are more than one)
2. (**½-1 page**). Define **clearly and concisely the strategic challenges facing the industry and firm(s) today** (you will need to update the case information with outside research in this section – the case might be a few years old, but we are interested in the current situation – please reference your sources).
3. (**1-1½ pages**). In light of your strategic analysis, list the **pros and cons** of the **business model(s)**

utilized by the company. If there is more than one central company in the case, then list

for all of them. **This should be the major part of your write-up.** Materials such as tables, quantitative analysis, may be placed in appendices, not in the text. Do not repeat tables and material contained in the case. You will also need to **update the case information with outside research** in this section – the case might be a few years old, but we are interested in the current situation facing the companies).

4. (**½-1 page**). Based on your analysis, **recommend the business model that you believe would be ideal for a new company (not necessarily the companies referred to in the case) trying to enter this industry.** Your recommendation can be a modification of the business model(s) presented in the case, or you can recommend your own. Analyze and **list the pros and cons of your recommended business model.**

5. (**No limit**). Appendices and bibliography using the APA or MLA format. 1 point will be deducted for submissions with improper formatting.

Group Project Report/Presentation (35%/15%)

A hard copy of your report should be submitted in class and an **electronic copy** (10-12 pages, excluding appendices, **single-spaced, 12-point font**) should be **uploaded on NYUC** before class (by any one member of the group) on the day it is due (go to the Assignment tab). Failure to upload on NYUC before the deadline will give you an automatic extension of 24-hours with a 5-point penalty. After the 24- hours automatic extension, the assignment will not be accepted. A hard copy of your presentation slides is **not** required. Just bring the electronic version to class on the day of your presentation, and I will save it on my desk computer.

Assignment: Groups of 5-6 students will analyze a company pertaining to the entertainment industry. Your project report should show an understanding of the frameworks and concepts covered in the course, as well as significant original scholarship and research involving secondary data sources (please confer with the reference librarian at Bobst for library sources). In addition to the written report, **each group will make a 15-20 minute presentation in class on its project findings (max 10 slides per presentation – summarize only the most important points from your written report).**

The written report should clearly indicate which person(s) in the group contributed to which section(s). In addition, peer evaluations may be used to determine individual contribution to the project.

As a general rule, it is the responsibility of each group member to find his or her group. It is not the responsibility of the group to track down missing members. If you're having trouble connecting with your group, contact your TF who can facilitate the process. You will not get credit for the project if the rest of your group provides evidence that your contribution was insufficient.

Please select a company that operates in the digital space. Preferably it should be a company that is just starting out with a new business model so that your project can explore how it can succeed in the marketplace. Your company needs to be approved by me before you start working on it. Here is a suggested format to organize your paper. The page suggestions are single-spaced:

1. **(½-1 page)**. Executive summary of your report.

2. **(2-3 pages)**. Environmental Analysis: Examine the economic, technological, social, regulatory, political, and legal environments in your industry sector. Please restrict this analysis only to issues that directly affect the industry and company.

3. **(2-3 pages)**. Industry and Competitor Analysis: Examine the structure of the industry (whether monopoly, oligopoly, or pure competition), the different players operating in the industry (domestic and international), the economics of the industry, the core competencies of the main players, and the nature of competition in the industry.

4. **(2-3 pages)**. Consumer Analysis: Examine the consumer culture, consumption patterns, customer needs, and trends in the industry. In multi-platforms, evaluate the role of all sides in the platform.

5. **(2-3 pages)**. Company Analysis and Strategy: Analyze the company's business model and strategy, and evaluate its prospects. Who are the top 2-3 executives in the company and what are their backgrounds (such as the CEO, Head of Marketing, Head of Technology, etc.)? What recommendations would you make to top management as they look into the future?

6. **(½-1 page)**. Conclusions.

7. **(No limit)**. Appendices and bibliography using the APA or MLA format. 2 points will be deducted for submissions with improper formatting. Also indicate the individual contributions by each group member to the entire project (which member was primarily responsible for which section)

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Class attendance and participation	20%
Two case write-ups	30%
Project Report	35%
Project presentation	15%

Required Grading Language for Elective Courses

At NYU Stern, we strive to create courses that challenge students intellectually and that meet the Stern standards of academic excellence. To ensure fairness and clarity of grading, the Stern faculty have agreed that for elective courses the individual instructor or department is responsible for determining reasonable grading guidelines

Course Schedule

Date	Topic and Readings	Readings and Cases
Sep 8	Introduction	
Sep 15	Multi-Sided Platforms	
Sep 22	Business Models	An On-Demand World (Case: <i>Movie Pass & On-Demand Food Delivery</i>)
Sep 29	Business Models	Attracting an Audience (Case: <i>Updating Dating</i>)
Oct 6	Platform Design	Relentless Optimization (Case: <i>OpenTable</i>)
Oct 13	Competitive Strategy	What Makes You Unique? (Case: <i>AirBNB</i>)

Oct 20	Marketing Strategy	Getting to Scale <i>(Case: Uber)</i>
Oct 27	Digital Culture	Winning the Talent War <i>(Case: LinkedIn)</i>
Nov 3	TBD	TBD
Nov 10	Shifting Culture	Learn it All <i>(Case: Satya Nadella)</i>
Nov 17	Streaming Wars	Mini-presentations
Nov 24	TBD	TBD
Dec 1	Presentations	
Dec 8	Presentations	

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

Required Course Material

1. Harvard case packet available for purchase and download after the first session on Sept. 3rd

Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](http://nyu.edu/its/classes) (nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](http://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](http://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](http://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centres is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades. The class roster will be marked at the beginning of class and anyone who arrives after this time will be considered absent. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalised by a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade. For courses that meet two or more times a week, the same penalty will apply to two unexcused absences. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

Plagiarism Policy

The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU LA. NYU LA policies are in accordance with New York University's plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

It is a serious academic offense to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU's various schools and colleges.

Religious Observance

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Academic Programs Coordinator in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

Inclusion, Diversity, Belonging and Equity

NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton has said, “...not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities.” At NYU LA, we are committed to creating a learning environment that:

- fosters intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences; and
- promotes an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their endeavours.

Provisions to Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Centre for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.