HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

THE FRANK G. ZARB SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

“Educating for Personal and Professional Achievement”

MBA 350

M.B.A. INTEGRATIVE CAPSTONE COURSE

Fall 2017

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PLEASE READ THIS SYLLABUS FULLY AND CAREFULLY!

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To develop strategic and decision making skills from the perspective of senior management running an organization. To appreciate the operational complexities when making decisions simultaneously in the various functional disciplines in an integrated environment. MBA 350 will provide you with an intensive and in-depth opportunity to apply your prior MBA course work by participating in a web-based business simulation. As a member of a small executive team, you will take over the management of a company for a period of several years, making all the strategic and operational decisions normally required of top management. As we will have two runs of this simulation, with different executive teams, you will have this learning experience twice.

2. Curriculum Integration. The integration of the various business administration disciplines is central to the course content and objectives of MBA 350.


4. Oral and written communication. This is achieved through quizzes, weekly written company reports, and oral presentations for the simulation.

5. Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility. Issues of ethics and corporate social responsibility will be discussed during decision making in the business simulation.
6. Global Business. The importance of having a global perspective is captured in the business simulation, which involves an organization with multinational operations.

7. Teamwork. Teamwork is central to the semester-long business simulation.

8. Quantitative Skills: The simulation requires the use of a variety of quantitative skills including financial analysis, accounting statements and some statistical knowledge.

**MANAGEMENT SIMULATION:**

Using a well-established and time-tested business simulation, “Micromatic,” you and your fellow managers will be placed in the top management positions of a small international manufacturing firm, producing a consumer durable product. Every (simulated) three-month quarter, your team will make a variety of marketing, production and financial decisions. Your firm’s decisions and those of several competing firms in your industry will be entered into the computer program, which will then generate logical output indicating the performance of your firm and the competing firms. A wide variety of reports on your firm’s performance will be made available to you, including income statements, cash flow analyses, balance sheets, production reports, and much more. Also, a limited amount of information about your competitors’ decisions and performance will be available to you. Using such information about the past performance of your firm and your competitors, your management team will develop forecasts of future performance, which you will use in developing sets of decisions for the following periods of business activity. Your goal, as top management of the firm, is to maximize long-term profits and other firm performance measures to the satisfaction of your stockholders. This will be explained further in this syllabus and in class.

**FINAL EXAM**

At the end of the semester, an individual Micromatic simulation “solo” final exam will allow you to demonstrate the skills you have acquired in this course. Further discussion of this exam will be found later in this syllabus.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

Six s.h. of electives in concentration and completion of all advanced core courses.

**BULLETIN COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A capstone course integrating all of the functional areas of business administration. Using case analyses and a team-based business simulation, students learn to apply their previous M.B.A. coursework in corporate-level business strategy situations. Students will develop, present and implement detailed recommendations toward the resolution of complex business problems within a company or industry that must be supported by appropriate documentation of research and
analysis. Written and oral reports are required. Additional pedagogical mechanisms, such as the development of business plans, may be used.

**REQUIRED PURCHASES OF SIMULATION AND CASES:**

Registration as a team member at the *Micromatic Version 5* web site - $45.00 - (see page 11). Once you have registered, you may download and/or print the *Student Manual* as you choose.

**ATTENDANCE:**

All students are expected to arrive *on time* to class and to remain in the classroom until the end of class. Please refrain from leaving the classroom during the class session. On-time attendance at all out-of-class team meetings is also required.

**FINAL COURSE GRADE:**

Your teams’ *Micromatic* performances (measured quantitatively and qualitatively) in the two runs of the simulation, including your individual contributions to the teams……………………55%

   (Run #2 will have more quarters of company performance and your team will have more experience in the simulation; therefore it will be weighted greater in the grade calculation)

Your individual *Micromatic* “solo” final exam performance……………………………………45%

This grade calculation will be adjusted upwards or downwards by the student’s performance on the quizzes and/or by excessive tardiness or absences from the class and team meetings.

(There are no traditional textbooks or exams in this course.)
IMPORTANT NOTES REGARDING THIS COURSE, MICROMATIC AND THE CASES:

MICROMATIC (Version 5)

1. You will find this course unusual in that most of your course involvement will be as a member of a Micromatic top management team, rather than as an individual student reading textbooks, taking notes in class, and then taking exams. It can be frustrating to have your enjoyment of the course (and your resulting course grade) significantly influenced by persons other than yourself. Yet this is very often true in the real business world as well, when you are engaged in group projects, or when your job interrelates at times with other persons’ jobs. Don’t let this nature of the course frustrate you, but rather view it as a learning experience. It is designed to be an opportunity for you to strengthen your interpersonal skills and group cooperation and decision-making abilities. All top managers must have these skills and abilities.

2. In order to be able to be a fully contributing member of your management team, you will need to totally understand the mechanics of Micromatic from the very start of our simulation. At first these mechanics will seem complex and difficult to learn, but you will soon find most of the mechanics routine and be able to focus on business strategy rather than operations. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO READ THE ENTIRE STUDENT MANUAL AND VIEW THE TUTORIALS SEVERAL TIMES at the start of the semester. Each individual class member should read the student manual alone at least once before the second class meeting. Each team should then meet (also before the second class session) and re-read the simulation manual together, helping each other to fully understand the mechanics and strategy issues of the simulation. By the second class meeting every student should be comfortable with Micromatic. However, because there are many rules to Micromatic which apply only occasionally, it will be necessary to refer to the Student Manual throughout the semester. It is further recommended that students view and study the many video tutorials available in the simulation. Two quizzes will be administered to test each student’s understanding of the simulation (graded Pass/Fail).

3. As a courtesy to your team-mates and to the instructor, on-time attendance is expected at all class and team meetings. Unsatisfactory attendance at class meetings and/or at out-of-class team meetings will negatively impact your final grade.

4. Please do not use any non-course-related computer applications in the classroom during the class session (unless your team has submitted decisions and is waiting for other teams to submit theirs).

5. Your team is taking over the management of an existing company. To further increase your profits and out-perform your competitors, you will certainly want to be moderately aggressive and expand your various operations and expenditures further over the next few years of the simulation run. Pro-activity is the key word here. Pro-active tactics in marketing, production and finance can lead to strong growth in market demand for individual companies, and sometimes for the industry as a whole. However, there are significant diminishing returns on most marketing and production expenditures (such as “features” and “world wide web”), so at some point additional spending will lower your profits rather than increase your sales volume.
6. The primary measure of firm performance in *Micromatic* is *cumulative net profits over the length of the simulation*. From your prior classes you know that increasing sales alone does not lead to increased cumulative net profits. Sales have to be supported by an optimum combination of operational efficiency and financial structure. This simulation tests your skills in making decisions simultaneously in all facets of the business process. Hence, the *indirect* measures of your performance will include Total Sales, Return on Assets, Return on Equity, Profit Margin, Earnings per Share and Stock Price.

**Important:** long-run performance is what counts both in this simulation and in the real world. It is easy to increase short-term profits by lowering expenditures. Think and act with the *long term* as your corporate goal, all the way through to the final set of decisions. All components of the managerial role must be considered and coordinated for the long run: marketing, operations, and finance.

7. Before entering decisions, be sure to have all management team members check that the numbers are correct. An error in entering decisions numbers can be disastrous! *To avoid simultaneous program usage errors, only one team member should be logged into the simulation program at any time during team meetings.*

8. Quarterly decisions will be due prior to each class session. See the “Class and Simulation Schedule.” Decisions must be entered at the *Micromatic* web site. In addition, a “Weekly Report Form” must be submitted each week prior to class, reporting on out-of-class meetings and current strategy. Each team should submit one weekly report for the entire team and keep a copy of this report.

9. We will play two “trial” quarters of the simulation, and then start over again for two “real” runs of the simulation. Use these trial quarters to work out any confusion or questions in the mechanics of the simulation. All trial quarter long-term simulation industry parameters will be identical to those of the corresponding actual quarters in the first “real” run of the simulation. Some of the parameters will be different in the second run of the simulation – this will be explained in class. *For the second “real” run of the simulation, new management team assignments will be implemented, giving you the opportunity to work with a different group of company managers.*

10. *Plan ahead!* Most growth strategy decisions in *Micromatic* require one or more quarters of lead time. If you don’t think about and plan for future quarters and future years right from the start of the simulation, your competitors may take the lead in growth and profitability and your firm may become a “follower,” finding it difficult to catch up.

11. Remember that your firm’s product is a consumer durable good, and that you are not selling directly to the consumer (so psychological pricing has no value). The specific type of product your company produces is unimportant. This is purposefully left vague so that teams do not try to copy the strategies used in a real-world company or industry.
12. While each run of the simulation is limited to a certain number of quarters, you must manage your company as though the simulation would continue longer. The simulation will penalize for any “end-of simulation” decisions that create short-term profits at the expense of long-term profits, such as a reduction in certain expenditures.

13. Run #1 and Run #2 Team Reports: After each run of the simulation, each company’s managers will present an oral in-class report to their company’s stockholders (the instructor and the rest of the class). This report will focus on the company’s performance in that run of the simulation. What is management’s evaluation of the company’s performance? What were the strongest and weakest aspects of the company’s strategy and performance? Should the stockholders be pleased or not? In summary, why is your company ranked where it is? Why did it perform as it did? A PowerPoint display will strengthen the presentation. Only one team member should make the oral report, although all team members should prepare the report, and be able to add comments and answer questions during the report presentation. This will avoid possible duplication and overlap of the report contents.

Stockholders will have an opportunity to ask questions of each company’s managers. While a company’s managers are not expected to reveal any secret strategic plans or other confidential information, they should be as open as possible. Also, much of a company’s strategy and operations can be understood from a careful reading of the simulation’s quarterly reports, so there is really very little information that a company can keep truly secret. These report sessions are intended to be a learning experience for the class.

Include the following topics in your report and be concrete and specific.

1. What was the team’s strategy? Why was this strategy chosen? Was it the same throughout the simulation or did it change one or more times? If it did change, why?
2. With hindsight, what were the strengths and weaknesses of this (or these) strategies? If you could play the simulation again, how would you modify these strategies?
3. Discuss the teamwork of your group. How were you organized? Did this work well? Again, with hindsight, would you have organized your teamwork differently?
4. What aspects of the team’s performance were the strongest? The weakest? Why?
5. In summary, why did your team end the simulation in its final ranking?

Each team report should take about 15-20 minutes, including Q&A. PowerPoint presentation software should be used to illustrate points made. This final report should be prepared with thought, time and effort. No written report need be submitted.

14. You will have an opportunity to individually demonstrate the total company management skills you have developed in this course in the “solo” Micromatic final exam.

SUMMARY

15. Most important of all: M.B.A. 350 and the Micromatic simulation have two primary objectives: 1) This should be a valuable learning experience for you. 2) This experience should be fun. If this is not happening for you, please talk to the instructor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments Prior to Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to course and simulation. Assignment of teams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read complete syllabus and student manual and view simulation tutorials individually and with your team. Develop a strategy for best use of the two trial quarters.</td>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>Prepare and run instructor-guided trial Quarter 1 (Q1). Discussion of results. Prepare and run trial Q2. Discussion. Discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the trial quarter results. Prepare for Quiz #1. Think about and discuss “real” Q1 decisions prior to 9/25 class and submit weekly report as an email attachment prior to class.</td>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>Quiz #1. Prepare and run Q1 with instructor available to assist and answer questions. Discussion of results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for Quiz #2. Review Q1 results. Prepare and enter Q2 decisions prior to 10/2 class. Submit weekly report prior to class.</td>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>Quiz #2. Review Q2 results. Prepare and run Q3. Discussion of results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Hofstra Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare Oral and PowerPoint Team Report for Run #1.</td>
<td>11/6</td>
<td>Team Reports for Run #1 (Syllabus page 6). New team assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize new management team. Prepare and enter Q1 decisions for Run #2 prior to 11/13 class. Submit weekly report prior to class.</td>
<td>11/13</td>
<td>Review Q1 results. Prepare and run Q2. Discussion. Prepare and run Q3. Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for final exam</td>
<td>12/18</td>
<td>Micromatic Final Exam. 6:15-8:15.</td>
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UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY
(Graduate, As It Appears in the Hofstra Bulletin)

A University is a community of faculty, administrators and students dedicated to the pursuit of learning and to the creation of new knowledge. Every individual in this community has an obligation to uphold its intellectual standards, which alone make education worthwhile. It is the responsibility of the faculty not only to share its knowledge, but also to communicate understanding of, and respect for, the process by which knowledge is produced. The goal of most graduate study is individual synthesis and analysis, and the independent evaluation by students of others’ work. Thus, students play an active role in their own education, and each student bears responsibility for his or her work. Anyone who refuses this responsibility both misses the point of a graduate education and proves unworthy of it.

A student who commits any act of academic dishonesty, including knowingly helping another student to commit such an act, is rejecting the responsibility that is inherent in the pursuit of learning and may forfeit the right to remain a member of the academic community, particularly if he or she is unwilling or unable to recognize the seriousness of the offense and fails to demonstrate such recognition by abstaining from further violation of academic propriety.

One learns and contributes to the body of knowledge by reviewing work already done and by using it as the basis for generating new ideas, discovering new data, and drawing new conclusions. Though the process of learning is undeniably collaborative, one’s achievement in that process is assessed on the basis of one’s individual contribution. Academic honesty requires carefully distinguishing one’s own work from that of others. Each individual must fully acknowledge when, where, and how his or her work refers to or depends on that of others. This means carefully tracing the boundary between others’ efforts and one’s own, clearly noting where others’ work leaves off and one’s own begins.

The academic community assumes that work of any kind—whether a research paper, a critical essay, a homework assignment, a test or quiz, a computer program, or a creative assignment in any medium—is done, entirely and without assistance, by the individual whose name it bears. (If joint projects are assigned, then the work is expected to be wholly the work of those whose names it bears.) If the work contains facts, ideas, opinions, discoveries, words, or other elements found in sources, these must be fully and appropriately acknowledged, following a prescribed format for doing so. In general terms, the conventional format consists of a bibliography (a list of sources) coupled with footnotes or parenthetical citations that serve to identify the precise derivation of each idea, fact, paraphrase, or quotation that comes from another’s work.

For further information about policies and procedures concerning violations of academic honesty, consult Faculty Policy Series 11G in the Guide to Pride and at the University Senate Web site.

Specifically for MBA 350: All team activity must be only the work of the team members, with no input from non-team members.
UNIVERSITY POLICY ON INCOMPLETE GRADES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

When requested by the student, the instructor may grant, at her/his discretion, a grade of Incomplete (‘I’). An ‘I’ grade should be given only when unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from completing course work on time. As part of the normal final-grade process, the instructor must submit an ‘I’ grade online to the Office of Academic Records with a default grade, the grade the student will receive if the missing work is not completed. The default final grade must be a letter grade or a permanent ‘I’; a UW is not an acceptable default grade. In unusual circumstances, the faculty member may submit an ‘I’ grade without prior discussion with the student. The instructor will decide the time frame in which the student will complete the required course work. However, the deadline may not exceed one calendar year from the close of the semester or session in which the course was taken. A student will not be allowed to attend the regular class meetings at the next offering of the course. The instructor will inform the student of the completion requirements and terms.

The instructor is required to submit a grade for the student within 30 days after the student has submitted work to fulfill the terms specified. If the instructor cannot oversee the completion of the incomplete work with the student, the instructor will arrange for oversight within the department with the Dean’s permission. If the incomplete work is not completed by the deadline, the ‘I’ grade will convert to the default grade previously submitted by the instructor.

*Students cannot graduate with any ‘I’ grade (received fall 2008 or later) on their records. Candidates for graduation requesting an ‘I’ grade will graduate at the first graduation date available (January, May, August, or December) after completion of the work. If work is not completed and the ‘I’ grade turns into an ‘F’, it may prevent graduation. A student may request, from the Office of Academic Records, the default grade to replace the ‘I’ grade prior to the set deadline to ensure timely graduation.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SSD)

If you believe you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, qualified individuals with disabilities will not be discriminated against in any programs, or services available at Hofstra University. Individuals with disabilities are entitled to accommodations designed to facilitate full access to all programs and services. SSD is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will provide students with documented disabilities accommodation letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact SSD as soon as possible. All students are responsible for providing accommodation letters to each instructor and for discussing with him or her the specific accommodations needed and how they can be best implemented in each course.

For more information on services provided by the university and for submission of documentation, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities, 212 Memorial Hall, 516-463-7075.
GUIDELINES RELATED TO ABSENCES FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Hofstra University recognizes that students and/or faculty may from time to time miss class due to religious observances. Students who anticipate missing class for this reason should notify faculty members in advance. Likewise, faculty members who anticipate missing class for religious observance should notify students in their classes.

No student shall be expelled or refused admission to Hofstra University because he or she is unable to participate in any examination, study or work requirement because of his or her religious obligations and practices. However, all students are expected to complete all assignments and examinations. It is understood that no adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who avails him or herself of religious observances. The University, faculty, and student shall work together to achieve a reasonable accommodation concerning any conflicts between educational and religious obligations.

Additionally, in accordance with New York State Law, each student who is absent from school because of his or her religious beliefs will be given an equivalent opportunity to register for classes or make up any examination, study or work requirements which he or she may have missed because of that absence on any particular day or days.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Classroom Code of Conduct for Students is covered by FPS #50 at http://www.hofstra.edu/PDF/Senate_FPS_50.pdf

GRADE APPEAL POLICY

Grade appeal policy is covered by FPS #42 at http://www.hofstra.edu/PDF/Senate_FPS_42_zarb.pdf
M.B.A. 350

WEEKLY REPORT FORM

TEAM NUMBER:

REPORT FOR WEEK ENDING (Monday class date):

Please report on each *out-of-class* team meeting during the past week (actual face-to-face meetings, not virtual meetings).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time of Team Meeting</th>
<th>Absent Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Discuss and explain your company’s overall strategy:
MBA 350
MICROMATIC SIMULATION
STUDENT REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. You will need a credit card.

2. Log onto http://oaktreesim.com/Micromatic/ (Be sure you are in Version 5)

3. Select “Create a student account”

4. Enter your information (name, email, your choice of user name & password, etc.)

5. Search for our simulation by “Sonfield” or “Hofstra”

6. Click on “Register”

7. Enter validation code of “Run #1” and submit

8. Simulation Purchase ($45.00) – pay with a credit card directly or via PayPal

9. After you have paid, return to Micromatic (lower right corner of screen)

10. Select the team to which you have been assigned, click “save”

11. You can now play Micromatic with your team and also play the Solo version

12. Use the “Account Maintenance” option to change your email address, password, etc.

13. For Run#2 of the simulation, you will automatically maintain your paid registration and be re-assigned to your new team.