

# MNGT-E1005 Strategy in Action

## SYLLABUS

1 November 2023  
(Subject to changes)

Instructor's contact information	Course information
Patrick Furu <a href="mailto:patrick.furu@aalto.fi">patrick.furu@aalto.fi</a> Office hour: 12:00-12:30 after Tuesday lectures in the lobby	Master's level course 2023-2024, Period II Teaching language: English Course website: <a href="https://mycourses.aalto.fi/course/view.php?id=37331">https://mycourses.aalto.fi/course/view.php?id=37331</a>
<b>Course assistant</b> Aleksi Korhonen, <a href="mailto:aleksi.o.korhonen@aalto.fi">aleksi.o.korhonen@aalto.fi</a>	

### OVERVIEW

This course familiarizes you with the practice and implementation of strategy in entrepreneurial firms, multinational corporations, and other organizations. You will gain an analytical and realistic understanding on how strategy is brought into action in organizations. During the course we use case studies and learn to apply several analytical frameworks and tools. Guest lecturers share their experiences on the contemporary challenges of strategy work and implementation.

### PREREQUISITES

There are no specific prerequisites for the course. However, we advise you to first complete any bachelor's level course on strategic management.

The course is designed to complement the decision making focus in the course *Strategy Process* which, however, is not required to appreciate the contents of this course.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course provides you with the basic understanding of the processes and practices through which strategy can have a true impact in organizations. After this course you will be able to

- assess the basic principles and conditions for bringing strategy into action in organizations through leadership, inclusion, communication, and organizational design

- identify typical strategy processes and different organizational roles involved in strategy implementation in various types of organizations
- analyze for the barriers and obstacles that may hinder bringing strategy into action, including forms of resistance to change, power, and politics
- understand the key aspects of some of the most contemporary approaches to strategy, including strategic foresight, value(s)-driven strategies, lean and agile, and open strategy.

## **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

This course relies on extensive work around assignments during the course. Please remember to reserve enough time to complete the assignments between the classes.

The weights of the different forms of assessment are indicated below:

1. Individual pre-assignments (30%)
2. Final assignment (30%)
3. Group assignments (30%)
4. In-class activity and participation (10%)

Session participation is rated on active and useful engagement that contributes to collective learning throughout the course and not only on presence in the sessions.

Attendance in the class is mandatory. You are however allowed to miss two sessions without informing the instructor or any extra work.

## **OFFICE HOURS**

During 12:00-12:30 after Tuesday lectures Patrick is in the lobby to address any questions you might have. Please, address questions preferably during the office hour, or during the class when appropriate.

## **ASSIGNMENTS (more information in a separate document)**

### **Individual pre-assignments**

You have three individual pre-assignments during the course. These involve analyzing and reflecting on pre-assigned readings and/or cases. The assignments are returned before the lecture in question.

### **Final assignment**

The final individual or pair assignment is an essay in which you analyze and develop actionable strategies for a company. For this, you should apply analysis frameworks learned during the course. The final written report with recommendations is returned at the end of the course.

### **Group assignments**

There will be three required group assignments related to case studies. Assignments are given separately in MyCourses. Assignments are submitted as Powerpoint slideshow files by the given deadlines.

## PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE (TBC)

PERIOD II 2023-2024: 25.10.-1.12.2023

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:15-12:00

Location: V002 (Tuesdays), T004/U006 (Thursdays), Ekonominaukio 1

	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS & PREPARATION	DEADLINES
<b>MODULE 1: FROM FIXED TO FLUX – DRIVERS OF DYNAMISM IN STRATEGY</b>				
#1	Tue 24.10.	<b>Introduction: Strategy - fixed of in flux?</b>	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Strategy in action</p> <p><b>Case:</b> Prêt-a-Manger Covid responses</p> <p><b>Optional and background readings:</b></p> <p>Whittington et al. (2020). Chapter 1: Introducing strategy, in Exploring Strategy, Pearson Education Ltd.</p> <p>Burgelman, R., Floyd, S., Laamanen, T., Mantere, S., Vaara, E and Whittington, R. (2018). Strategy processes and practices: Dialogues and intersections. Strategic Management Journal, 39. Ss. 1-28.</p> <p>Liedtka, J. and Kaplan, S. (2019), "How design thinking opens new frontiers for strategy development", Strategy &amp; Leadership, Vol. 47 No. 2, pp. 3-10.</p>	
	Thu 26.10.	<b>No session</b>		
#2	Tue 31.10.	<b>Strategic decision- making</b>	<p>Strategic management of complexity</p> <p>Decision-making in changing environments</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Snowden, D. J. &amp; Boone, M. E. (2007): A Leader's Framework for Decision Making, Harvard Business Review, November.</p> <p><b>Case:</b> LEGO – Managing Complexity (2013). Harvard Business School Publishing</p> <p><b>Optional and background readings:</b></p> <p>Reeves, M., Love, C., &amp; Tillmanns, P. (2012). Your Strategy Needs a Strategy. Harvard Business Review, 90(9), 76-83.</p>	<b>Pre- assignment #1:</b> LEGO – managing complexity DL 9:00
<b>MODULE 2: ENABLERS AND CHALLENGES OF STRATEGIC CHANGE</b>				

#3	Thu 2.11.	<b>Value(s) as drivers of strategic change</b>	Value(s)-driven strategic change  <b>Case:</b> <a href="#">Why Scooter Startups Are Worth Billions - YouTube</a> <b>Readings:</b> Whittington et al. (2020). Chapters 4.4.1 VRIO analysis, 4.4.2 The value chain and value system, 4.4.3 Activity systems, 7.4.1 Business models. In Exploring Strategy, Pearson Education Ltd.  Smith, J. B., & Colgate, M. (2007). Customer value creation: A practical framework. Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 15(1), 7-23.	<b>Groupwork assignment #1:</b> DL 9:00
#4	Tue 7.11.	<b>Strategic foresight in practice</b>	Analytical tools for foresight Disruptions and foresight <b>Visitor:</b> Kai Kaasalainen, Chief Executive Officer, Tamro <b>Readings:</b> Scoblic, J. P. (2020). Learning from the Future. <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , 98 (4): 38-48. <b>Optional and background readings:</b> Carleton, T., Cockayne, W. & Tahvanainen, A.-J. (2013). <a href="#">Playbook for Strategic Foresight and Innovation</a> . <i>Online resource for your use.</i>	<b>Individual assignment #2:</b> Value-driven business model, case eScooters DL 9:00
	Thu 9.11.	<b>No session</b>		<b>OPTIONAL, for feedback:</b> Teaser for the final assignment DL 23:59
#5	Tue 14.11.	<b>(The problem of) Participation in Strategy</b>	Participation and implementation Possibilities and limits of participation <b>Visitor:</b> Jacob af Forselles, Chief Strategy Officer, Konecranes <b>Readings:</b> Mantere, S. & Vaara, E. (2008). On the Problem of Participation in Strategy: A Critical Discursive Perspective. <i>Organization Science</i> , 19 (2): 341-358.  Whittington, R., Cailluet, L., & Yakis-Douglas, B. (2011) Opening strategy: Evolution of a precarious profession. <i>British Journal of Management</i> , 22(3), 531-544.	
<b>MODULE 3: APPROACHES TO STRATEGY IN ACTION</b>				
#6	Thu 16.11.	<b>Agency and leadership in strategic change</b>	How to secure that people accept and adopt strategy? <b>Simulation:</b> Power and influence V3 <b>Readings:</b> Kotter, J. P. (2007): Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , January.	<b>Group work assignment #2:</b> DL 9:00

			Meyerson, D. E., & Scully, M. A. (1995). Tempered radicalism and the politics of ambivalence and change. <i>Organization Science</i> , 6(5), 585-600.	
#7	Tue 21.11.	<b>Lean and agile approaches</b>	<p>Foundations for lean and agile Leading professionals Self-managing organizations</p> <p><b>Visitors:</b> Sami Markkanen &amp; Jesse Kaislavuo, Head Agile Coaches, OP Group</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Goleman (2000): Leadership That Gets Results. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, March-April.</p> <p>Martela, F. (2019): What makes self-managing organizations novel? <i>Journal of Organizational Design</i> (8)23. <a href="https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1186/s41469-019-0062-9.pdf">https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1186/s41469-019-0062-9.pdf</a></p> <p><i>Additional reading:</i> Hundermark &amp; Kaltenecker (2014): What are self-organizing teams? <a href="https://www.infoq.com/articles/what-are-self-organising-teams/">https://www.infoq.com/articles/what-are-self-organising-teams/</a></p>	<b>Pre-assignment #3:</b> Lean and agile forms of organizing
#8	Thu 23.11.	<b>Creativity and strategy</b>	<p>Turning ideas into strategy Creativity in strategy work</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Brandenburger, A. (2019). Strategy Needs Creativity. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 97(2), 58–65.</p> <p>Mamédio, D. F., Cunha, M. P. e, &amp; Meyer Jr, V. (2021). Strategic improvisation: An introductory conceptual framework. <i>Cross Cultural &amp; Strategic Management</i>, 29(1), 24–47.</p> <p>Poetz, M., Franke, N. &amp; Schreier, M. (2014): Sometimes the best ideas come from outside your industry. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, November.</p>	
<b>FINAL PRESENTATIONS</b>				
#9	Tue 28.11.	<b>Student presentations</b>	Presentations of the group analyses	<b>Group work assignment #3:</b> DL 9:00
	Thu 30.11.			<b>Final assignment,</b> DL 23:59

## COURSE WORKLOAD

<b>Classroom hours</b>	27 h
<b>Class preparation</b>	21 h
<b>Individual assignments</b>	65 h
<b>Group assignments</b>	47 h
<b>Total</b>	160 h (6 cr)

## **ETHICAL RULES**

Aalto University Code of Academic Integrity and Handling Thereof  
<https://into.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=3772443>

## **OTHER ISSUES**

- Please register via Sisu
- Course materials will be available on MyCourses
- Please, be present on the first lecture to secure your place in the course. If you cannot be there but will join the course, send an email to [aleksi.o.korhonen@aalto.fi](mailto:aleksi.o.korhonen@aalto.fi).
- Please read session #1 slides carefully for all kinds of practical information