

# International Business in the Era of Disruptions (MNGT-C2001, 6 ECTS)

## SYLLABUS

September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Instructor's contact information	Course information
Assistant Professor Iiris Saittakari E-mail: <a href="mailto:iiris.saittakari@aalto.fi">iiris.saittakari@aalto.fi</a> Office: BIZ building, Management Studies Office Hours: upon agreement  Teaching assistant: Martta Nieminen E-mail: <a href="mailto:martta.nieminen@aalto.fi">martta.nieminen@aalto.fi</a>	Status of the course: Mandatory course of the Strategy specialization, BSc Studies in Management Academic Year, Period: 2022-2023, Period I Location: R001/U135a U7 PWC and Zoom. The first lecture will be via Zoom only. The following lectures will be in hybrid format unless otherwise notified. Language of Instruction: English Course Website: <a href="https://mycourses.aalto.fi/course/view.php?id=29578">https://mycourses.aalto.fi/course/view.php?id=29578</a>

### 1. OVERVIEW

Understanding the principles, dynamics, opportunities, complexities, difficulties and risks of international business is practically a must for everyone in today's business environment. In the last few years, the global business environment has become increasingly volatile and unpredictable. There are significant, potentially disruptive forces affecting businesses today: climate change, advancing technology, entirely new business models, and quick turns in the political environment some of the most notable ones. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine caught many businesses by surprise and is still making the future very difficult to predict.

The course provides a theoretically grounded overview of key issues, opportunities and challenges in global business. We shall assess globalization and the consequent changes in firms operating environment and analyze the needs to adjust firms strategies and operations due to these changes. The course covers key concepts and principles of conducting business in the international dimension, including issues in various functions, such as HR and marketing. The role of politics and regulation are covered, including world trade and regional economic blocs. The premises that various countries provide for companies in terms of competitiveness are analyzed. Ethical issues as well as social and environmental responsibility are addressed. The purpose of the course is to a) present the most important forces affecting international business today, b) introduce various international strategies, and c) present the ways to organize, coordinate and control international activities.

### 2. PREREQUISITES

No formal prerequisites but you are expected to have completed basic studies in strategic management.

### 3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The key objectives of the course are: to introduce the frameworks and tools to analyze global business environment, to introduce various modes of doing business across borders, and to familiarize with the planning, implementation and management of business activities globally.

The learning outcomes include:

- the enhanced awareness of differences in global business environment, including political, regulation and cultural aspects
- understanding of the dynamics and suitability of various ways to conduct business in different global business environments, including the adaptation issues
- understanding of the related ethical and social responsibility issues
- ability to analyze and plan global business activities
- problem-solving skills based on real-life cases.

### 4. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

The course assessment will be based on the following components:

#### **Individual assignments (45%):**

- Reflection papers (3 x max 8 points). The third reflection paper can be substituted with 4-5 min video.
- Final paper (20 points)
- Course feedback (1 point)

#### **Class participation (20%):**

- Active contribution to the learning of the other participants (10 points)
- Pre-class assignments (10 points)

#### **Case studies done in teams (35%)**

- Presentation: material, video presentation, and Q&A (20 points)
- Executive summary (15 points)

Regular class attendance is expected of all participants, as described under 'Class attendance and active participation' section. You are also expected to be on class / online on time and be prepared to turn on the video during the classes for active participation.

Grade (0 to 5) is based on the points below:

0-49 points	= 0
50-59 points	= 1
60-69 points	= 2
70-79 points	= 3
80-89 points	= 4
90-100 points	= 5

All assignments must be submitted and the final case presentation made in order to get a final grade for the course. General feedback is given during the lectures and/or on MyCourses following the submissions. Specific feedback will be given personally for students or teams upon request.

Note that turning in class assignments is considered acknowledgement of guidelines on scholastic honesty and academic integrity (see section 9).

## 5. ASSIGNMENTS

This course consists of individual assignments and a case study made in teams, in addition to class participation. Please find below a detailed description of the assignments.

### **Individual assignments – reflection papers (45%)**

These assignments help you to reflect on the knowledge accumulated from the course book, articles, other reading materials, and lectures. The purpose of the reflection papers is to summarize the key knowledge and bring your own perspective to it. In the reflection paper, you should summarize YOUR key lessons of the material covered since the deadline of the previous reflection paper. You may for instance reflect on what you found surprising, particularly interesting, or things that you do not agree with. Excellent papers are ones where you describe your own learning as well as demonstrate critical and analytical thinking. Please note that the three first reflection papers are due roughly once a week during the course, while the final longer paper is due a good week after the last lecture.

In the final paper, you will be given a set of questions to which you are expected to reflect based on your learning from the whole course.

Please use academic referencing (text references as well as reference list) in all writing. Failure to follow academic writing standards may lead to failing the assignments. Please use APA referencing style: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

Format: Length of maximum 2 pages (except final paper: 5 pages), font 12, line spacing: 1,5. The third reflection paper can be substituted with 4-5 min video reflection.

Deadline: The assignment must be uploaded to the assignment submission box in MyCourses by 17.00 on Friday of the submission week.

Evaluation: Maximum number of points for each reflection paper is 8, except the final paper that is 20.

One point is given to those who fill in the course feedback form.

### **Case study assignment in teams (35%)**

Each team will consist of 4-5 students. The teams will be formed during the first week of the course by the teachers, so please make sure to be present during the first lectures. (In the case of absence, please contact the teachers. Also please inform the teachers if you decide not to take the course.) The teams will themselves choose a case company and a topic to work on (please see below for more instructions for choosing the case organization and the topic). The topic should be a relevant business or management issues that has a clear problem in the era of disruptions and a significant international dimension. For instance, the topic could be challenges related to the internationalization of a start-up company, divestment decision, the management of the global value chain of which a company is part, or cross-border people management.

There are two deliverables: i) a set of Power Point (or equivalent) slides and pre-recorded video presentation, and real-time Q&A (20%), and ii) an executive summary of the assignment (maximum 5 pages, 15%). The time allocated for each case will be decided and communicated during the course.

Deadline: All material must be uploaded on MyCourses by 12 noon on October 11.

Evaluation: Maximum number of points for the assignment is 35.

### **Class attendance and active participation (20%)**

Class attendance and active participation are considered integral parts of learning. Therefore, active participation counts for 10% of the final grade. To get credit for the course, 70% of the lectures must be attended (7/10). Exceptions are made based on medical certificate only. In case of medical absence, please send your medical document to Elli Hämäläinen ([elli.hamalainen@aalto.fi](mailto:elli.hamalainen@aalto.fi)) and let the course instructors know that you have done so. Please do not send the medical documentation to the course instructors.

Another 10 points are given based on pre-class assignments that are completed in MyCourses.

The practicalities and practices of using Zoom and hybrid mode will be discussed in the first session.

## **6. CHOOSING THE CASE ORGANIZATION AND THE TOPIC**

Students will work in teams of four to five to analyze and propose a solution how the case company should handle the issue at hand. When choosing the case and topic, it is worth considering the availability of information about the company and the issue that you're analyzing. Carlsberg cannot be the case company as it is covered in depth during the lectures. You may collect primary information but the assignment can also be done entirely with secondary data. The teams are encouraged to also meet face-to-face, if possible. Please note that the teams are also encouraged to have face-to-face meetings (with Zoom option) with the supervising faculty member during the third week of the course (September 26-30) – if feasible. The booking will be available in MyCourses.

## **7. READINGS**

The teaching case is available on MyCourses. The other readings you are expected to download them yourself based on the references provided in the preliminary schedule. These readings are available via the Aalto University library services, and you can find them easily by searching with the article name (please note this works on any Aalto computer, but not elsewhere) or via our university library webpages.

### ***Textbook***

*Global Business Today*, 11th or 10th edition, by Charles W. L. Hill and G. Tomas M. Hult, McGraw-Hill, 2020 or 2018, international student edition.

### ***Articles and other readings assigned for a particular lecture session***

Florida, R. & Hathaway, I. (2018). How the geography of startups and innovation is changing, *Harvard Business Review*, November, 27.

Meyer, E. (2017). Being the boss in Brussels, Boston, and Beijing. *Harvard Business Review*, 95(4), 70-77.

Mudambi, R. (2008). Location, control and innovation in knowledge-intensive industries. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 8(5), 699-725. Read pages 708-715 starting from section 2.3. Location: dynamic analysis of the value constellation.

Lazarow, A. (2020). Beyond Silicon Valley: How start-ups succeed in unlikely places. *Harvard Business Review*, March-April. When Startups Succeed in Unlikely Places ([hbr.org](http://hbr.org))

Welch, L., Benito, G. & Petersen, B. (2019). *Foreign Operation Methods: Theory, Analysis, Strategy*. Chapter 2: Theoretical approaches. Available [here](#).

## Cases

Carlsberg Breweries A/S: Facing Political Risk in Russia. Available [here](#).

Internationalization of brewery companies: The case of Carlsberg. Available [here](#).

## Extra readings

Ciravegna, L., & Michailova, S. (2022). Why the world economy needs, but will not get, more globalization in the post-COVID-19 decade. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 53: 172-186. Read pages 172-180.

Contractor, F. J. (2022). The world economy will need even more globalization in the post-pandemic 2021 decade. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 53: 156-171. Read pages 156-165.

De Villa, M. A. (2022). Assessing geopolitical risk: A multilevel approach for managers of multinationals. In review for AIB insights. Used with the author's permission on this course. Available [here](#).

Panwar, R., Pinkse, J., & De Marchi, V. (2022). The Future of Global Supply Chains in a Post-COVID-19 World. *California Management Review*, 00081256211073355.

World Bank. 2020. *World Development Report 2020: Trading for Development in the Age of Global Value Chains*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1457-0. pp. 14-21. Available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2020>

World Bank. 2022. *World Investment Report 2022: Tax Reforms and Sustainable Investment*. New York, NY: United Nations Publications. pp. 1-6. Available at [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/wir2022\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/wir2022_en.pdf)

## SCHEDULE

Session	Date	Topic(s)	Lecturer(s)	Readings	Assignment
1	Tue 13.9. 13:15 – 16:00	Introduction and course practicalities What are disruptions? What is international business?	Iiris Saittakari	Hill & Hult, Ch 1	
2.	Thu 15.9. 13:45 – 16:00	The global business environment: political, economic and legal dimensions	Iiris Saittakari	Hill & Hult, Ch 2-3 Case: Carlsberg	Reflection paper 1 due 16.9. 22.00.
3.	Tue 20.9. 13:45 – 16:00	International strategy Stakeholder pressure	Iiris Saittakari	Hill & Hult, Ch 12 Internationalization of brewery companies: The case of Carlsberg	
4.	Thu 22.9. 13:45 – 16:00	Internationalization process Market entry modes	Catherine Welch (Zoom only)	Welch, Benito and Petersen, 2019	Reflection paper 2 due 23.9. 22.00.
5.	Tue 27.9. 13:45 – 16:00	Global supply chains Global value chains	Iiris Saittakari & Pietro Zancai (Wärtsilä, via Zoom)	Hill & Hult, Ch 15 Mudambi, 2008	Please sign up for a team meeting (f-to-f or virtual) with your supervisor and be prepared to discuss your project during September 26-30.
6.	Thu 29.9. 13:45 – 16:00	International Human Resource Management Cultural differences: case China	Martta Nieminen & Iiris Saittakari & Linyu Liu	Hill & Hult, Ch 17 Meyer, 2017	Reflection paper 3 due 30.9. 22.00.
7.	Tue 4.10. 13:45 – 16:00	International entrepreneurship, Internationalization of small firms Team feedback session	Daria Kautto & Iiris Saittakari	Florida & Hathaway, 2018 Lazarow, 2020	
8.	Thu 6.10. 13:15 – 16:00	International marketing  International finance	Hannu Seristö Timo Korkeamäki	Hill & Hult, Ch 11 & 16 (Ch 10 optional)	
9.	Tue 11.10. 13:15 – 16:00	Team presentations	Iiris Saittakari	Team presentations	
10.	Thu 13.10. 13:15 – 16:00	Team presentations; Course wrap-up	Iiris Saittakari	Team presentations	
	Fri 21.10				Final paper due 21.10. 17.00.

## 8. COURSE WORKLOAD

<b>Classroom hours, online</b>	30h
<b>Class preparation</b>	35h
<b>Assignments</b>	95h
<b>Total</b>	<b>160h (6 cr)</b>

## 9. ETHICAL RULES

Aalto University Code of Academic Integrity and Handling Violations Thereof

<https://into.aalto.fi/display/ensaannot/Aalto+University+Code+of+Academic+Integrity+and+Handling+Violations+Thereof>