

GLOBAL BUSINESS STRATEGIES FOR A DIGITAL AGE

Course code	<i>GRAL017</i>
Level of studies	<i>Graduate</i>
Number of credits	<i>6; 36 hours of class work, 124 hours of self-study,</i>
Course coordinator (title and name)	<i>Dr. Nasar um Minullah, nasmin@faculty.ism.it</i>
Prerequisites	<i>Undergraduate diploma</i>
Language of instruction	<i>English</i>

THE AIM OF THE COURSE:

This course includes theoretical foundations and hands-on practice of digital strategy and transformation concepts at the global scale. Digitalization is a megatrend responsible for restructuring organizations and redefining industries. The course is subdivided into three modules. The first module contains classical strategy frameworks laid out by Micheal Porter and other influential management scholars. It is further extended into global strategy to understand strategies of multi-national organizations. Overall, this module extends students' understanding of applications of Artificial Intelligence in organizations based on fundamental knowledge of digital transformation.

The second module describes digital strategy and how it has evolved from classical strategy school of thought. Students are familiarized with the economic foundations and managerial implications of multi-sided platforms and business/innovation ecosystems. In a world increasingly characterized by digitalization, these forms of organizing economic value creation have become a pivotal element of modern strategizing and business innovation. Based on empirical insights from academic research, students are taught different digital strategies adopted by organizations and how it enables them to thrive in a constantly changing technological environment. It further extends into digital transformation framework laid out by David Rogers. Students will be able to understand the transition from analog to digital age by learning how advancement in digital technologies have transformed the understanding of organizations about customers, competition, data, innovation, and value proposition. Understanding of digital transformation will help students to navigate through the changes it has brought to various industries.

The third module creates a deeper understanding of agile methodologies serving as means to achieve digital transformation. This hands-on module contains a workshop on Scrum methodology. The students will learn managerial perspectives for digital product development by working on a product development project. The knowledge in this field will also enable them to potentially achieve professional certifications in Scrum and Product Ownership areas.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course learning outcomes (CLO)	Study methods	Assessment methods
CLO1. Ability to directly transfer their knowledge to practice: Students learn about digital transformation in general and apply the knowledge to the selected company in particular (as part of the course project)	Lectures and study of course textbook and articles	Group project
CLO2. Ability to analyze micro (market) and macro environments, implement an industry analysis and be able to apply strategic evaluation tools to understand business environment.	Lectures, Class discussions, group activities, self-study	Group project
CLO3. To be able to develop a digital strategy for the company, assess digital risks and defend the proposed recommendations.	Lectures, presentations, group work	Group project
CLO4. Ability to work in and lead a team virtually and in-person, to present work results in written or oral form, to be able to argue decisions.	Lectures, workshop, presentations, group work	Group project, Class Participation
CLO5. Develop personal and professional abilities, critical thinking, and creativity.	Case studies, discussions, group and individual work	Class Participation, Group Project

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

The ISM University of Management and Economics Code of Ethics, including cheating and plagiarism are fully applicable and will be strictly enforced in the course. Academic dishonesty and cheating can and will lead to a report to the ISM Committee of

Ethics. With regard to remote learning, ISM reminds students that they are expected to adhere and maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting.

GENERATIVE AI USE POLICY

Generative AI may be used in this module to support learning, research, visual communication and proofreading, but students must remain the authors of all submitted work. AI should be used as a sparring partner to help think, test ideas and improve presentation, not to replace judgement or copy and paste work. Here is the allowed use of generative AI tools for different tasks of the course:

- Case study analysis - AI may be used to support background research, brainstorm ideas, proofread text and create visuals, but the diagnosis, evidence, argument and final proposed solution must be produced by the team.
- Project Presentations – Students are not allowed to generate entire presentation with AI, however they are encouraged to develop ideas with the help of AI.

Students must check AI outputs, reference sources, protect confidential information and include a brief AI-use statement where AI is used beyond basic spelling or grammar checks. Misuse includes submitting AI-generated work, copying AI text into written work, inventing evidence or references, or presenting AI-generated analysis as the student's own work.

COURSE OUTLINE

Topic	In-class hours (Theory and Practice)	Readings
Course Introduction: • Digital Transformation and Strategy under different contexts Module 1: Strategy: Foundations of Management and Strategy: • Management • Planning Process • Strategy Global Strategy • Globalization of Business Context • Framework for International Management	9	1. Module 1, 3 and 4 (Lumen Open Learning Resource, 2024) 2. Ghemawat (2001) 3. Porter (1990) 4. Walmart around the world – Harvard Business Case
Module 2: Digital Transformation Strategic Pillars • Customers • Competition • Data • Innovation • Value Digital Strategy • Customer Engagement Strategy • Digitized Solutions Strategy • Operational Backbone Multisided Platforms (MSP) and Strategy • The transition from Products to Platforms • MSP Scaling • Ecosystems	9	1. The Digital Transformation Playbook (Rogers, 2016) 2. Ross et. Al. (2017) How to Develop a Great Digital Strategy 3. Kupp and Peppard (2021) Driving Digital Transformation at Faurecia, Harvard Business Case. 4. Nasar um Minullah (2024) The X Factor: Twitter's quest to become a super-app. Business Case. 5. Van Alstyne et. al. (2016): Pipelines, Platforms, and the New Rules of Strategy. 6. Zhu et. al. (2016) "Products to Platforms: Making the Leap."
Module 3: Drivers of Digital Transformation:		1- Mahadevan (2017) ING's agile transformation

- Digital Innovation vs Digital Transformation - Organizational Agility as a Key Driver of Digital Transformation	6	2- Schwaber and Sutherland (2020) The Definitive Guide to Scrum: The Rules of the Game 3- Minullah (2025) Charting blue skies... Business Case
Project Presentations Course wrap-up	3	Retrospectives and course wrap-up
	Total: 27 hours	

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

Type of assignment	Self-study hours	% of the total grade
Project Presentation	94	76%
Class Participation & Peer Evaluation	30	24%
Total:	124	100

DESCRIPTION AND GRADING CRITERIA OF EACH ASSIGNMENT

Assessment 1. Project Presentation

You will learn about strategic pillars of digital transformation and how it has transformed various industries during this course. Going along the learning journey, you are required to analyze the digital transformation status of a company of your choice and provide recommendations for improvement. You are going to rely on the publicly available information for this consulting project.

Further instructions will be handed out before beginning of the course.

Assessment 2. Class Participation & Peer Evaluation

Class Participation will be based upon attendance and active participation in class activities such as case discussions. Every member of the group will evaluate each other in the form of Peer Evaluation for the consulting project. The Peer Evaluation form will be distributed during first session of the course.

RETAKE POLICY

Re-take of the exam. Presentations cannot be retaken. The retake examination will be based upon a reflection paper about the project. Separate instructions about the reflection paper will be provided as per ISM policy.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Students are expected to:

- Attend class and engage in discussions.
- Complete the readings before attending the lectures.
- Work constructively in groups

After reading a text you should be able to account for:

- The author's argumentation and viewpoints.
- The structure and composition of the text.

You should also think about:

- How might the issues raised be reflected on real-life situations that you've experienced?
- What do you find interesting, useful or frustrating about the text?
- What would you like to have clarified or explained?
- What are the limitations of the theories, tools and methods that you just learned?

REQUIRED READINGS

1. Minullah, N. (2025). Charting blue skies: Jeppesen's journey from digital innovation to transformation. Case Research Journal. <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/NA0878-PDF-ENG>
2. Kupp and Pappard (2021) Driving Digital Transformation at Faurecia, Business Case. The Case Centre. Available: <https://www.thecasecentre.org/products/view?id=177148>
3. Lumen Open Learning Resource (2022). Principles of Management. Available: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-principlesmanagement/>
4. Rogers, D. (2016): The Digital Transformation Playbook. New York: Columbia University Press.
5. Ross J.W., Sebastian I.M., Beath C. (2017) How to Develop a Great Digital Strategy. MIT Sloan Management Review. Vol. 58, No. 2.
6. Van Alstyne, M., Parker, G., Choudary, P. (2016): Pipelines, Platforms, and the New Rules of Strategy. Harvard Business Review.
7. Zhu F., (2015) "Competition when platforms attack." Harvard Business Review (Oct 2015): 30-31.
8. Zhu F., Furr N., (2016) "Products to Platforms: Making the Leap." Harvard Business Review 94, no. 4 (April 2016): 72-78

ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. Adner R., Kapoor R., (2016) "Right Tech, Wrong Time." Harvard Business Review (Nov 2016) 71(3): 60-68.
2. Gupta, S., (2018) Driving Digital Strategy: A Guide to Reimagining Your Business. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.
3. Hagiu A., (2014) "Strategic Decisions for Multisided Platforms." Harvard Business Review. 55 (2): 71-80.

The reading materials will be posted on course e-learning platform.

ANNEX

DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Competency goals and learning objectives for Master of Business Management

Programmes:

Global Leadership and Strategy

Innovation and Technology Management

International Marketing and Management

Competency Goal	Learning Objectives
Students will demonstrate advanced disciplinary knowledge.	LO1.1. Students will demonstrate advanced discipline knowledge through the independent development of a Master's thesis, showing a deep understanding and appropriate application of theories, concepts, and methods relevant to their field of study.
Students will be digitally competent.	LO 2.1. Students will demonstrate digital agility competencies by selecting and applying appropriate tools, platforms or technologies, integrating digital insights into business decision-making, and adapting digital approaches in response to evolving project requirements and contextual changes.
Students will be critical thinkers	LO3.1. Students will be able to define the business problem and develop innovative solutions
	LO3.2. Students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking in problem solving
Students will be independent learners	LO4.1. Students will become independent learners and develop their own comprehension of scientific theories, models, and concepts.
Students will be socially responsible leaders	LO5.1. Students will be able to evaluate past and current practices in their discipline from an ethical perspective.
Students will be effective communicators	LO6.1. Students will develop and deliver a coherent oral presentation
	LO6.2. Students will develop and deliver a coherent written research paper

Competency goals and learning objectives for the Master of Social Science

Programmes:

Financial Economics

Competency Goal	Learning Objective
Students will demonstrate advanced disciplinary knowledge.	LO1.1. Students will demonstrate advanced discipline knowledge through the independent development of a Master's thesis, showing a deep understanding and appropriate application of theories, concepts, and methods relevant to their field of study.
Students will be digitally competent.	LO 2.1. Students will demonstrate digital agility competencies by selecting and applying appropriate tools, platforms or technologies, integrating digital insights into business decision-making, and adapting digital approaches in response to evolving project requirements and contextual changes.
Students will be critical thinkers	LO3.1. Students will be able to identify underlying assumptions, limitations of previous research; evaluate managerial solution alternatives.
Students will be independent learners	LO4.1. Students will become independent learners and develop their own comprehension of scientific theories, models, and concepts
Students will be socially responsible leaders	LO5.1. Students will be able to evaluate past and current practices in their discipline from an ethical perspective .
Students will be effective communicators	LO6.1. Students will develop and deliver a coherent oral presentation
	LO6.2. Students will develop and deliver a coherent written research paper