STRA6015 – Advanced Topics in Strategy and International Business
Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Hong Kong

Prof. Kevin Zhou
Chair Professor of Strategy/IB
University of Hong Kong
Tel: 852-3917-1006
Office: KKL1224
kevinzhou@business.hku.hk

Schedule - Friday (9:30-12:45): Jan 18/25; Feb 1/15/22; March 1/8/15/22/29;

I. Course Information

Course Description:
This doctoral seminar covers advanced topics on strategy and international business (IB), with a focus on critical review of their theoretical foundations and substantial issues. Seminar topics include: state of strategy and IB research, firm capabilities and learning, product innovation, interfirm control and collaboration, global strategy, and emerging markets. The emphasis will be on the critical review of their theoretical framework and model development of new research projects.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

- To acquire an in-depth understanding of the theories, concepts, models, and paradigms that collectively form the foundation for strategy and IB (CLO1)
- To gain the critical review skills in identifying the major assumptions, strengths, and limitations of academic articles (CLO2)
- To develop the critical thinking skills in generating theory-driven research ideas and models (CLO3)
- To obtain the skills of developing and presenting research papers that are publishable at international journals (CLO4)

Alignment of Program and Course Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RPg Program Learning Goals</th>
<th>Course LOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To conduct quality research independently in their area of specialisation</td>
<td>CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To be able to teach subjects in their specialisation</td>
<td>CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To inculcate professionalism and leadership.</td>
<td>CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To master communication skills.</td>
<td>CLO4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommended books:
II. Course Assessment
Teaching and Learning Activities

Various activities will be employed, including lectures, class discussion and exercises, literature review, and research proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Teaching and Learning Activities</th>
<th>Expected contact hour</th>
<th>Study Load (% of study)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T&amp;L1. Lecture with interactive exercises</td>
<td>33 hours</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T&amp;L2. Critical review and research paper</td>
<td>48 hours</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T&amp;L3. Self study</td>
<td>69 hours</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150 hours</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment

Class Participation 20%
Critical Review 30%
Research Paper 50%

1. Class Participation (20%)

Attendance is a necessary condition for class participation. It is also important to attend all the classes because the most insightful ideas come primarily from class discussion.

To encourage learning, students are expected to actively participate in class discussion. You should read carefully all required readings before each class. You should be ready to talk about the main message, methodological sophistications, and possible extensions of the papers under required readings.

This part of the grade includes your attendance of the class (including timeliness), your role as a critique, as well as your contribution to class discussion of the assigned readings.

2. Critical Review (30%)

In each session, papers in the reading list will be assigned to each individual student. You must come to each class after thoroughly reading all the required readings.

A one to two page (typed, single spaced) critical review of the assigned paper will be required from each student. Please bring enough copies to the class to distribute to all the participants.

The critical review is not a simple summary of the paper; rather, it should focus on critique and possible extensions. Note that you are taking the role of a journal reviewer for a critical review.

Critical Review Guideline

1) **Summary**: a very brief summary (2 or 3 sentences) of the key messages of the paper.

2) **Statement**: do you like the paper? If yes, what are the contributions of the paper (i.e., what strikes me as interesting)? If not, why (in general)?
3) **Specific Comments (the most important part):** raise the **problems** and **concerns** point by point, usually following the paper’s structure. For example,
   a) Is the main research question important/significant? Why?
   b) Are the assumptions in the conceptual model valid? Why?
   c) Is the hypothesis development solid? Is the logic clear? Why?
   d) Is the research design, sampling, or empirical analysis appropriate?
   e) Are the conclusions of the paper valid? Does the paper answer the questions proposed?

4) **Research Implications:** what are your **suggestions** for the authors to solve the issues you raise? What is the possible way of extension? How would you proceed?

5) **Literature Relatedness:** How would you position the article among the assigned readings or in the field?

3. **Research Paper (50%)**

Every student must submit a research paper by the end of the seminar. The research project will involve writing a major publishable paper focusing on strategy and IB issues. You will need to read beyond the reading list to write a research paper. It should be 15 – 20 pages plus references. It should be an empirical paper without data and results sections at this stage, but including analyses and results in the paper is highly encouraged. The article should be developed with a targeted journal in mind, such as


**Notes**

- Each student will submit a research paper by the last day of the class. You are also required to present your research in the class (10 minutes presentation plus 10-15 minutes Q&A)

- The PPT should include (1) the model with a key message (one sentence), (2) research gaps, (3) research questions, (4) theoretical base, (5) hypotheses, (6) research plan, and (7) potential contributions.

- Ideally, you should work on the empirical side of the paper during the rest of the year and send the full paper to major conferences such as Academy of Management, Strategic Management Society, or Academy of International Business, and then submit it to academic journals.
Learning Outcomes, Teaching and Learning Activities, and Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course LOs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To acquire an in-depth understanding of the theories, concepts, models, and paradigms that collectively form the foundation for strategy and IB (CLO1)</td>
<td>T&amp;L1, 2, 3</td>
<td>A1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain the critical review skills in identifying the major assumptions, strengths, and limitations of academic articles (CLO2)</td>
<td>T&amp;L1, 2, 3</td>
<td>A1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop the critical thinking skills in generating theory-driven research ideas and models (CLO3)</td>
<td>T&amp;L1, 2, 3</td>
<td>A1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To obtain the skills of developing and presenting research papers that are publishable at international journals (CLO4)</td>
<td>T&amp;L1, 2, 3</td>
<td>A1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard of Assessment
Class participation, assignments, project reports and exams are graded using the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Course Grade Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+, A, A-</td>
<td>Strong evidence of superb ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate and synthesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+, B, B-</td>
<td>Strong evidence of ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate and synthesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+, C, C-</td>
<td>Evidence of adequate ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at low levels of learning: such as describe and apply, but not at high levels of learning such as evaluate and synthesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+, D</td>
<td>Evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Little evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. COURSE POLICIES

**Class Conduct:** Please respect your instructors and your fellow students. You are required to attend all classes on time. If you have to miss a class, please write a formal notice to inform the instructor at least one day before the class.

**Academic Dishonesty:** The University Regulations on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. Please check the University Statement on plagiarism at [http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/](http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/)

**Plagiarism, cheating, and other misconducts:** Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. All materials submitted in this course must be your own original work. Any material not completely original must be credited to the proper source.

**Attendance:** According to FBE policy, students must attend at least 70% of classes in order to pass the course.
Sessions and Reading Lists

Session 1: Organization and Interactive Exercise

**Topic: When West Meets East: How to Publish at International Journals**

**How to Write Academic Papers**


----------


Session 2: Theories of Strategic Management


-------------


Session 3: Firm Capability and Learning


------------


Session 4: Product Innovation


----------


Session 5: Interfirm Control


**Session 6: Interfirm Collaboration**


-------------------


Session 7: Global Strategy


-------------------


Session 8: Emerging Markets and Institutional Voids


---------------


Session 9: Student Proposal Workshop

Session 10: Student Proposal Presentation and Feedback
Prof. Kevin Zhou

Prof. Kevin Zhou is Changjiang Scholar, Chair Professor of Strategy/International Business at Faculty of Business and Economics, The University of Hong Kong. Prof. Zhou received a B.E. (with honors) in Automatic Control and an M.S. in Economics and Management at Tsinghua University, and a Ph.D. specializing in Marketing and Strategy from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Prof. Zhou’s research interests include capability and innovation, interfirm exchanges, and strategic issues in international business and emerging economies.

Prof. Zhou has published numerous papers in prestigious journals such as Administrative Science Quarterly, Strategic Management Journal, Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Marketing, Journal of International Business Studies, Organization Science, and among others. He received the Outstanding Researcher Award of HUK in 2016, Outstanding Researcher Award of FBE in 2013 and HKU Research Output Award in 2006 and 2011.

Prof. Zhou currently serves as the senior editor of Asia Pacific Journal of Management, editorial board member of Strategic Management Journal, Journal of International Business Studies and Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, as well as the Panel Member of Business Studies Panel, HK Research Grants Council. He has been the World’s Top 1% cited scholars based on ISI's Essential Science Indicators (ESI) since 2011. In 2016, he is the first and only Business and Economics Scholar in Greater China on the list of ESI Most Cited Scientific Researchers in the world.

Prof. Zhou has rich experience in teaching International Business, International Marketing, Business Research, Marketing Management at Virginia Tech, University of Hong Kong, and University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He has also taught Business Data Analysis for MBA, Marketing Research for IMBA, and Business Research for PKKI Executive Programs at HKU, as well as Marketing Management for EMBA program at UNCC. He has rich consulting experiences working with companies such as Federal Pharmaceutical, 3M, Riche Monde, and TCH. He received the Outstanding Teacher Awards for IMBA Teaching (2006-2007) at HKU.