Course Syllabus

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CLEAR LAKE
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MGMT 4312 - Business Strategy
Fall 2016 - Section 02 - Bayou 3326 - Wed 7-10PM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Dr. T.A. Voelker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Dr. V. is fine for web communication)</td>
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</table>

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| Office Hours |

Prerequisites: This course is to be taken in the last semester of coursework.

Applied Critical Thinking Statement

This course has been authorized by UHCL as an Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) Course which means that in addition to learning about the specified course content, students will be engaged with some or all of the Elements of Thought and Universal Intellectual Standards of critical thinking. The objective of an ACT course is to develop the student’s ability to become skilled at analysis and evaluation by applying a set of intellectual tools that may be effectively used across all disciplines (as well as to the student’s personal life). Based on the Foundation for Critical Thinking (http://www.criticalthinking.org/), critical thinking involves thinking for a purpose, asking questions, using information, applying concepts, drawing inferences and conclusions, identifying assumptions, anticipating implications and consequences, and recognizing points of view. The Universal Intellectual Standards that are applied to these Elements of Thought of critical thinking in order to develop Intellectual Traits include clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness.

You can find other courses and instructors participating in the QEP at the QEP website.

Required Materials

Mastering Strategic Management ISBN - 978-1-4533231-0-6. This is an Open Source Textbook made available at the Open Textbook Library from the University of Minnesota (open.umn.edu). While you may order a printed copy of the textbook via
Amazon.com, the electronic version of the textbook is free. An HTML or DOCX version of the textbook can be found at the Saylor.org website.

Each student is also expected to procure a license to the Strategy Simulation: The Balanced Scorecard from Harvard Business School (link goes directly to course pack).

The group video should be created and edited using video-editing software such as Camtasia, Windows Movie Maker, AVS Video Editor, iMovie, Corel Video Studio Pro, Cyberlink PowerDirector or other similar software. Please be aware that many of these video packages have a free trial period (30-days is typical) or have deep discounts for student purchase.

Introduction

"Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel."

Socrates

Strategic Management (MGMT 4312) is a capstone course focused on the integration of functional areas and requiring students to determine policy at the general management level. Students address problems and issues faced by business firms, seeking to manage the relationships between different elements of the firm and integrate functional areas in order to optimize performance.

The course catalog describes MGMT 4312 as "the study of the formulation, implementation and assessment of strategic decisions." Throughout this course you will be presented with content selected to assist you with analyzing business data, using that data to formulate strategic plans, and identify necessary resources and capabilities to implement those plans.

This course is a seminar. It is taken during the final semester of coursework during the BS degrees within the business, healthcare management, and environmental management disciplines. You are expected to thoroughly read and view all assigned material and then engage in reflective writing about that material at a level commensurate with one completing a business degree.

It is impossible to be a good strategic thinker without also being a good critical thinker. Indeed, strategic thinking is a very specific application of critical thinking. The paradigm you will use, throughout this course, is "know your customer, know your competitor, know yourself." In order to craft effective strategy, you must rigorously scrutinize your customers, your competitors, and your marketplace.
You must use this information to infer the strengths in your firm which can be leveraged by your strategy while also identifying the weaknesses in your firm which must be defended. You must be able to weigh and evaluate different options, recognize resource and capability trade-offs, and ultimately find a way to fit the elements of your firm and strategic plan together in a manner that generates a competitive advantage. Doing this requires purposeful, measured, rigorous, and considerate thought.

Central Question

**How can we make better strategic decisions?**

Central questions represent the purpose of a course. All knowledge in a course is organized to answer the central question of the course. As you read, view, and discuss the assignments in this course, it should always be done in the context of answering or addressing this central question.

When you approach a new reading or video in this course, ask yourself how an understanding of that material will help you answer this question. Indeed, finishing off the thought, *"this reading tells us that we make better strategic decisions when we______"* should naturally lead you towards at least one fundamental concept present in the article.

Fundamental Concepts

The fundamental concepts of a course can be thought of as the foundations of a course. They are the concepts upon which all other ideas are constructed and arranged. If you understand these concepts in a deep, personal, and meaningful way, you will find it much easier to grasp other topics covered in this course. Ultimately, a thorough understanding of the fundamental concepts of a course should help you address, in a meaningful way, the central questions of a course.

Whenever you come across a new idea, new readings, or new assignments related to this course ask yourself, *"which fundamental concepts apply here and how do they apply?"* As you begin to identify the fundamental concepts present, follow this by asking yourself *"which context (central question) is best for framing the fundamental concept which manifest in this reading?"* As you develop an answer to these two questions, you begin the process of thinking critically about strategy. You demonstrate mastery of a subject when you think and talk in terms of that course's fundamental concepts. In the context of strategy, you are thinking like a strategist when you think about:
Competitive Advantage: Strategy is the pursuit of organizational excellence. At all times, strategy readings, research, and application are conducted in the interests of identifying sources of (dis)advantage. Advantages give an organization a leg-up or competitive strength when applied to a situation or against another organization.

Trade-offs: Strategy can be thought of as the things you choose NOT to do. No single organization can perform excellently at all things. In part because focusing the resources needed to be excellent at one thing precludes those resources from being deployed at excellence in another thing. Additionally, being excellent at certain things may itself preclude excellence at other things (mutually exclusive capabilities). It is wise to remember that an organization that strives to be good at everything only succeeds in mediocrity at everything.

Congruence: Strategy is very much about fit and fit is thought of as congruence (being in agreement or consistent with one another). The strategy of the firm must fit with the external environment. It must fit with the capabilities manifest in the firm. The controlling mechanisms of the firm (structure, culture, and control systems) must fit with the strategy. Finally, the components of the strategy (arenas, vehicles, differentiators, sequencing, and economic logic) must fit together. Each of these pieces of the strategic environment of the firm must fit together, coalescing into a logical whole.

Student Learning Outcomes
A student demonstrates his or her excellence of mastery in this course when he or she:

SLO1 - demonstrates the ability to identify significant, strategic questions and issues
SLO2 - demonstrates the ability to identify relevant, strategic information, organize that information in a logical manner, and discuss that information in a precise and clear manner.
SLO3 - demonstrates the ability to accurately, precisely, and clearly discuss strategic concepts, theories and models related to strategic positioning, environmental opportunities and constraints, resources and capabilities, managerial preferences and values, and organizational design options at appropriate times.
SLO4 - recognizes logical assumptions inherent in the above referenced strategic theories and is able to draw upon the appropriate theories given the relevant circumstances.
SLO5 - demonstrates the ability to make logical inferences and identify relevant and significant conclusions resulting in planning for, and executing on, decisions that create better integration between functional areas of the firm.
Students should expect that one, or more, of these learning objectives form the basis for evaluation and grading in any activity in the course.

At all times, students will be expected to identify and discuss relevant connections between strategy concepts, topics, and information.

### Course Deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Element</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 points</td>
<td>• Element of Thought reading submissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scored for completion and quality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 10 activities, drop lowest score</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 points</td>
<td>• Weekly experiential learning activities</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students will work collaboratively but submit an individual reflection sheet each meeting (time allotted for individual writing each class period)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Scored mostly for completion, feedback provided.</td>
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<td>• xx class activities with the lowest score dropped.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 points</td>
<td><strong>Project 2026</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Video Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Milestone Meeting (individual deductions)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Peer Review (individual grade adjustments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 points</td>
<td><strong>The Simulation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Simulation Performance (50 points)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Simulation Debrief Report (50 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>400 points</td>
<td>• Midterm Business Analysis exam (200 points)</td>
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<td>• Final essay exam (200 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 points</td>
<td><strong>Personal Portfolio</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Resume</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Attend a networking event</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Capabilities Assessment</td>
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<td>• Hopes and Dreams</td>
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Weekly Readings: Elements of Thought

(SLO 1-4)
You will indicate your completion and understanding of textbook readings by developing an element of thought exercise for each assigned reading chapter.

You are allowed to use weekly Element of Thought submissions for which you received a B- (80%) or better as reference material during the final exam.

Submitting and Formatting an Element Assignment
These should be submitted in a single file for the week, separated using these formatting and heading instructions. Your submission should be in a Microsoft Word formatted file (.doc or .docx extensions). Blackboard does not allow in-client reading or commenting on other formats (.pdf, .pages, .opl, etc.) and I will not accept submissions in any of these latter formats. If you use an Apple or Linux based operating system or make use of an open-source office productivity suite, you need to be certain of how to EXPORT or SAVE AS your file structure to convert it to the appropriate file type. It is your responsibility to format this correctly and there are no provisions for subsequent submission. Double check your submission for safety!

The file is best presented in Landscape mode (sideways pages), but I will not deduct for portrait mode submissions. It should be submitted in a 12-point font, preferably Georgia or Times New Roman. I will not deduct for other fonts unless the readability of the submission suffers. Your writing should be single spaced and your paper should use 1" margins throughout. You should skip a line (include a blank line) following each paragraph or section change.

You should use HEADING tags at each change of topic. This means a TITLE tag when you start a document and a HEADING-1 tag when you start your response to a question. I read and grade a large number of student submissions each week, your proper use of formatting helps me read and comment more efficiently. Heading tags can be found on the main ribbon of Microsoft Word (which has defaults for 'normal,' 'Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.) and can be found as a dropdown menu in Google Documents (right below the Format menu).

You should take care in the structure of your writing. This means that you are expected to use correct grammar and spelling. You are also expected to use paragraphs as appropriate. While I will not deduct for each and every typo, multiple errors, unnecessary walls of text, and run-on sentences will result in a failing grade on the assignment, regardless of the quality of ideas you express.
Expected Content on the Element of Thought submission

Your elements answers must be submitted via Safe Assign in Blackboard by the end of the day, Saturday evening. Your EoT submissions will be reviewed each week and I will comment on them on a rotating basis. Comments typically involve either direct feedback on the reading material, development advice related to the elements and standards, or other questions for consideration (this is not an exhaustive list, merely a common list).

I expect you to read the entire assigned reading (often more than one chapter) and not merely one or two sections of the reading. In general, each section of the reading has useful, important, and thus testable information. Should I determine that your submission comes from a very narrow reading of the reading, you will receive a failing grade on the submission.

My feedback to you will not (typically) adversely affect your grade on the weekly submission. Rather, they are intended to help you improve the standards of intellect present in your written submissions. This, in turn, should help your performance in the graded Mid-Term and the Final Exam.

Grading Determination for Element of Thought Activity

1. Was the entry submitted at the appropriate time and formatted appropriately?
2. Does the entry reasonably address the assigned tasks?
3. Does the entry cover the entirety of the chapter or does it indicate little or no reading occurred?
4. Are the written responses thoughtful and reasoned, or short and frivolous?
5. Does the entry suggest an understanding of the material as it pertains to the course central question?

As long as your answers are in your own words, in your own voice, on time, and seriously attempt to address each task you will receive full credit for the journal entry. Deviations for any of the listed determinants (above) will result in a grade of less than 80%, precluding use of that submission during the examination period.

Element of Thought Tasks (Best in Landscape Mode)

1. Explain the PURPOSE of the reading(s). This involves identifying the primary topic, explaining the importance of the topic, and identifying when (and under which conditions) a manager should apply this topic. For reference, the topic is usually the title of the chapter (e.g. strategy for PoM, Ch. 5). What is this topic and why is it relevant to the operation of a business venture? Please note that the purpose of a chapter is never 'to write a chapter on [topic].' Rather, I want to know the purpose of [topic]. If the chapter is about strategy, tell me what you learned about strategy - don't tell me that you read a chapter about strategy (or any other topic).
2. The 5-CONCEPT table. Concepts are the things we use to make sense of, or organize a(n) [topic]. This includes (a) relevant terminology that helps us explain and
communicate about the idea, (b) systems we use to make sense of, or classify [topic], (c) models we use to make predictions about or from [topic]. Concepts are your tools when you work within the [topic] - to be good with a tool, you must understand the tool. It's okay to use sparing quotes here (cite it with a page #), but you should try to explain it in your own words. I can't offer feedback on your accuracy if you just restate the text and I won't provide passing grades to submissions that are simply cut and paste of the text or outside source (and the latter would also be an academic honesty violation). I provide a list of 3-4 concepts for each assigned reading. You are expected to identify and develop additional important building block ideas to round out the “5-concepts” for the week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept Name</th>
<th>DEFINE (generally a one-sentence definition)</th>
<th>EXPLAIN (how is it used, what are its main parts, why is it important)</th>
<th>ASSUME (why is it organized the way it is, what makes it work, why does it work)</th>
<th>EXEMPLIFY (specify the example and how it fits to your explanation or assumption)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There should be a separate row here for each of the 5-Building Block concepts in this reading.</td>
<td>A sentence or two describing the meaning and purpose of the building block</td>
<td>Identify its important components and any significant processes used.</td>
<td>Try to describe how or why this building block works in terms of the course central question.</td>
<td>Attempt to anchor this in your personal experiences or, if needed, use an example from the text or classroom.</td>
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3. **IMPLICATIONS.** How does thinking about, or using, this [topic] inform our understanding of the four fundamental concepts for the course? What did you learn specifically about SHARED MEANING? How did this reading influence your understanding of choices involving the MEDIUM AND MESSAGE? How did this reading offer insight into our goal of optimizing SIGNAL AND NOISE? Finally, how did this reading enhance our understanding of PATHOS, ETHOS, and LOGOS? It may be that one of the fundamental concepts was barely present in a reading, but at least one is always developed in detail in anything we read. Try to address at least two - and try to offer specifics and details for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This reading helped my understanding of COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE when it...</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This reading contained the following important information about TRADE-OFFS...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This reading helped me to better understand CONGRUENCE in that...</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. Based on your writing, come to a CONCLUSION. Given what you have written to this point, how does this reading help you answer one of the course central question. This should involve some restatement of ideas expressed earlier, if it doesn’t, you need to revisit what you wrote earlier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept Table for Assigned Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The following represents your building block concepts for your Element of Thought submissions. Note you are expected to provide detailed information on 5 building block concepts in each reading. In this table, I provide 2-4 per chapter. You are expected to review the reading and identify the remaining building block concepts on your own.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **EoT Chapter 1** | • The 4P’s  
• Intended, Emergent, and Realized Strategies  
• The Strategic Management Process |
| **EoT Chapter 2** | • Vision and Mission  
• SMART goals  
• The Balanced Scorecard |
| **EoT Chapter 3** | • PESTEL Analysis  
• 5-Forces Analysis  
• Strategic Group Analysis |
| **EoT Chapter 4** | • VRIN Resources  
• Firm Capabilities  
• Intellectual Property  
• The Value Chain |
| **EoT Chapter 5** | • Generic Strategies  
• Cost Leadership  
• Differentiation  
• Focused Strategies (Niche strategies) |
| **EoT Chapter 6** | • First Mover  
• Competitor Response Strategies  
• Cooperative Strategies |
| **EoT Chapter 7** | • Advantages of going global  
• Disadvantages of going global  
• Types of international strategies  
• Methods (options) for going global |
| **EoT Chapter 8** | • Mergers and Acquisitions  
• Vertical Integration  
• Diversification  
• Getting smaller |
| **EoT Chapter 9** | • Organizational Structure  
• Organizational Control Systems |
| **EoT Chapter 10** | • Corporate Governance  
• Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)  
• Rational Decision Making |
Class Participation
(SLO 1-5)

This is not a lecture intensive course - it is an experiential one. Experiential courses focus on application and practice. Our weekly class meetings will reflect this. This course has an organized a series of weekly activities. Each of these activities consists of individual and group activities - each centered on an aspect of business operation.

Each week there will be class participation activities and your lowest graded activity will be dropped. Recognize that this means that omission of a class meeting response, beyond the one dropped response, represents a 1.3% reduction in the total course grade. Missing one full week (two classes) is the equivalent of giving up a +/- to your course final letter grade!

In a typical class meeting the instructor will serve as a mediator or facilitator. Activities will be introduced and explained. Each activity will typically have an individual (thinking) and group (discussing) format. Some activities require searching the Internet the use of laptops, tablets, and smartphones are highly encouraged.

Throughout the class meeting, time will be provided for an individual reflection page. This worksheet, provided by the instructor, allows you to reflect on the activity of the day. You are expected to identify key activities, specifically for their value towards your final business plan. This includes questions you need to answer, tasks you need to complete, or ideas for consideration. You must turn in this page at the end of the class period in order to receive credit.

You must be on time for class to be included in group activities. Students arriving after the activity has begun will have to work on their own through the activity. This will certainly mean missing any initial explanation from the instructor which will, in turn, adversely affect your ability to adequately complete this activity.

You will not be allowed to complete, nor receive credit for, any reflections that have been completed prior to your arrival in class. Late arrival to class can result in the loss of some, to most, of the class participation grade.

You will be graded on participation in the class session as well as on the quality of your written reflection page. Quality, in this case, refers to completion of all requested writing elements in a thoughtful and applied manner. You will not be held to
standards of accuracy on these assignments - indeed, they offer an excellent opportunity to receive feedback on areas which you may not well understand. Brevity and frivolity, however, will be penalized.

Project 2026
(SLO 1-2)
Strategy is about building a successful future for your organization and strategists should spend a significant amount of their time studying and planning for the future. In this course, you will be tasked to work as a team identifying and studying an anticipated future trend or event. You should focus 10-years ahead and think about an event or occurrence likely to occur sometime around 2025 (note the project name). Your examination of this trend or event should include:

1. Specific identification of the event
2. Clear depiction of the current trends suggesting your predicted event will occur
3. Identification of things not yet in place which must happen for your anticipated event to occur (this can help with item #6)
4. Explore the more probable and more significant (these are not always the same thing) outcomes when this event occurs.
5. Explain the likely business implications for these outcomes
6. Identify the business opportunities and threats present for the various possible manifestations of this event

We will have a “milestone meeting” with each group two weeks before the final project is due. During this meeting your group will have roughly 30 minutes to discuss the project with the instructor. The instructor will ask you a series of critical thinking questions (elements and standards from this syllabus) to determine your readiness for the video project submission.

Grading for the milestone meetings is individual. Each student will be graded based upon the quality of work accomplished from the past meeting and the significance and plausibility of their chosen responsibilities for the forthcoming week.

Meetings will be roughly 30-minutes in length with two groups meeting with the instructor each class meeting. The first group’s meeting begins 5-minutes into the class period. The second group’s meeting begins thirty minutes later. All members of a group are expected to be present, prepared, and on time for their assigned meeting.
However, the group will not be penalized if an individual is late or absent - the adverse grade penalty will only apply to the absent/late individual.

You will present this information to the class during the final week of classes. This submission will be submitted as an interactive video (MP3 or similar format) of 10-15 minutes in length which will be shown to the class during the class-meeting. Additionally, you will submit a copy of the video to the instructor. Bring the video on a flash drive, we will exchange files at the end of the class meeting.

Special Instructions
1. Your video should begin with a title that clearly indicates the topic and that the video is created as an assignment for credit in MGMT 4312, F16 at UHCL.

2. While there are no established professional styles for citation within a video, good scholarship suggests that you attempt to provide credit for your sources. In general, this involves a call-out or pop-up in-video to state the source (do not use a link) at the time it is used. Additionally, your ending credits should include an organized bibliography of your call-out citations.

3. At the end of the video, each student in the group should introduce themselves and clearly explain what parts of the project they were involved in. Groups should monitor this section to assure that no individual makes exaggerated claims. This piece does not count as part of the 10-15 minute required runtime for your video.

The video may be recorded in any manner of your choosing and your creativity is encouraged in this project. There are a number of video editing software packages with either 30-day trial versions or very inexpensive student versions available. Consider, using Camtasia, Windows Movie Maker, AVS Video Editor, iMovie, Corel VideoStudio Pro, CyberLink PowerDirector, or other video editing software.

If you wish to record voice narration to a PowerPoint or similar presentation, I recommend use of Camtasia. It has a free 30-day trial version, is reasonably easy to use, and integrates directly with PowerPoint. The software developer TechSmith has a series of helpful web videos which walk you through most common tasks. Additionally, I have a fair amount of experience with this software and can provide some advice on its use.

Each student will be expected to complete an evaluation of each video and a class-best winner will be selected based on these class evaluations. The class winning video, as
well as other highly rated videos, will be used as a demonstration video for future sections of this course.

Peer Evaluation

Team members will provide a 360-degree evaluation of other team members at the end of the video project. Average team members will receive the group grade, above average members can receive slightly higher scores for the group portion, and students of low (or non) participation can have their group grade substantially lowered (this includes the potential for zero-credit for non-participation). Elements of the peer evaluation include:

- Communication – Regular and prompt
- Collegiality – Respectful and professional
- Equity – Took on a fair share of the work
- Engagement – Willing participant
- Proactive – Initiated opportunities for participation
- Quality – Commensurate to a graduate business student

Going Beyond the Textbook - the Simulation

(SLO 2-5)

Effective learning requires consuming material from a variety of sources of material, thinking deeply about the material, and incorporating the ideas present into your understanding about a phenomenon. To encourage this, the instructor has adopted a business simulation activity.

In the simulation, you will face a scenario common to management (budgeting and prioritizing). You will make choices on the scope, schedule, people, and processes you are managing. It will not be easy to reach your goals and even harder (but rewarding) to surpass your goals. This is a good opportunity to practice your knowledge of managing and your skills as a critical thinker.

The grade for the simulation consists of two components, one for the simulation and one for the debriefing. The simulation tracks and scores your progress towards the goal and use of resources. Your performance towards goal will determine half of your simulation grade.

After completing the simulation, you will be asked to prepare a debriefing report. This short report includes several critical thinking questions which task you to evaluate and assess your choices and their outcomes. You will be evaluated here for the relevance,
fairness, accuracy, precision, and logic you manifest in response to these questions. The debrief report should be no more than two-pages typed (12-point font, 1.5 line spacing, one inch margins, Times New Roman or Georgia font). Your grade on the debrief report makes up the second half of your simulation grade.

The simulation requires registration and payment to Harvard Business Publishing. The course pack to register can be found at this link. The simulation will be available in a “practice mode” from 1-February through the end of February. Once we hit DATE, the simulation will go into “live mode.”

Topics for the Simulation Debrief

1. Explain your choice of goals at the start of the simulation
2. Explain the initiatives you began using, their relative funding levels, and their relevance to your chosen goals.
3. Discuss changes to initiatives you made over the course of the simulation and your rationale for making those changes. Note changes can involve starting/stopping an initiative as well as significant funding changes towards an initiative.
4. How well did you do pursuing your goals? Did you reach or exceed any of these goals?
5. What didn’t go as well as you had hoped and why do you think this happened?
6. What advice would you offer students participating in the simulation in future semesters?

Personal Portfolio

The final project for the semester entails your submission of a personal portfolio. This portfolio clearly details who you are professionally and organizes your connections and experiences. Ultimately the creation of this portfolio should assist you in the early stage development of your career. You are encouraged to continue to develop, add to, and refine this portfolio as you progress through your career.

Resume

The first page of your portfolio should be a one-page version of your resume. Since this is not addressing a specific job posting, you need not include a statement of objectives. Simply provide a brief depiction of your education and professional accomplishments. Career Services at UHCL can provide assistance and guidance on the creation of a one-page resume. They are also an important resource available to you in your future career search - get to know them!

The remaining segments of the portfolio reflect activities that will occur, are occurring, or have occurred during your college education. If you have attended another University or College, you may
incorporate your experiences from those institutions into your answers. Please clearly identify when you are referring to events which happened outside of UHCL.

Social Networking Activity
The first element of the portfolio requires a set of social networking activities on your part. You must attend one professional networking event this semester. At the networking event you need to make at least three contacts. A contact can be considered made when you have a business card for that person and you know at least one piece of information about the person that is not listed on the business card (e.g. something that would come up in a conversation). Additionally, you should follow up, via email, with at least one of the contacts thanking them for the opportunity to meet them at the event.

Your social network section of the portfolio should include information about the event. This should include the name, date, and location of the event (a picture of the flyer or poster is encouraged) as well as a brief description of the event in your own words. You should identify why you chose the event and what you hoped to gain from attending the event. Recognize that events chosen just “to meet the course requirement,” are unlikely to help you develop your professional network.

You should also include each of the three contacts you made and a short summary of what you learned about that person. Additionally, for each person you should indicate the types of situations where it might be beneficial for you to renew your contact. This could be for any reason of your choosing, including social reasons, it’s simply an expectation that you think about the utility of your contacts.

I want you to conclude your assessment of each event with an examination of whether the event met up with your expectations going in, as well as why or why not. Not every event pans out and some deliver above our expectations. Reflecting on the outcomes and the why of the outcomes can help us make better decisions in the future.

You may choose any networking events for this assignment, I recognize that scheduling and availability may dictate what you can attend. Remember, though, if you don’t come away with three business cards and a piece of unique information about each contact, the event was a bust! Some examples of networking events you should consider include:

- Business networking functions (Chamber of Commerce socials, Optimist or Rotary Club luncheons, University Alumni socials, etc.)
- Job fairs
- Trade Shows or Professional Conferences for the industry (or profession) in which you work or are interested in working
- Lectures or Speaker series events (TED talks, University functions, etc.) but remember you need to meet at least three people (with cards) for it to really be networking
- Charity or Not-for-profit social functions
The final section of your social network assessment should include a strategy statement for your plans to develop and refine your business contacts over time.

Capabilities Assessment

Employers regularly tell us that they want specific capabilities from our graduates: critical thinking, team skills, ethical awareness, global awareness, and communication skills. Additionally, employers routinely seek candidates well versed in common and emerging technologies. In this section of your portfolio, I want you to assess your current and prospective education at UHCL, specifically focusing on situations where you have developed (or should have the opportunity to develop) these capabilities as well as situations where you gained experience in common and emerging business technologies.

- **Critical Thinking** – situations requiring complex thinking, abstract thinking, or analyzing and interpreting large sets of data, facts or evidence.
- **Team Skills** – situations requiring you to collaborate, coordinate, and manage conflict and commitment in pursuit of a group endeavor.
- **Ethical Awareness** – situations requiring recognition of appropriate moral behaviors, complications to ethical action, and management of conflicting interests.
- **Global Awareness** – situations which led to a more thorough understanding of the world as well as better appreciation, respect, and comfort in dealing with multicultural issues.
- **Communication** – situations requiring you to write, speak, or present clearly and concisely. Additionally, situations requiring you to develop skills as an engaged, active listener.
- **Technological Skills** – situations requiring you to use, and ideally program or develop using both common and emerging technologies.

For each capability or technology you indicate experience, use a SBO (specific, behavioral, and outcomes) focused explanation. First, be very SPECIFIC about the activities (and classes) which developed these competencies. Second, identify what you did (BEHAVIORS). Be clear on what you, individually had to do, to complete the activity. Finally clearly indicate how the OUTCOME of the activity links to the competency developed.

Your goal here is to convince me that the competency is present and to provide yourself with ready examples (for future employment discussions) of ways in which you are prepared to contribute professionally. As an example, many people like to claim that they are a team player – some people can clearly articulate how and why.

In many cases, though, you may not have (as yet) had enough courses to provide experiences in a specific category. Should you not presently have such experiences for a specific category (e.g. technological skills) you should focus on upcoming courses which might provide an opportunity to develop and enhance this skill. Use your degree plan, the course catalog, and descriptions of courses to look for promising areas to practice such skills.
This should be a candid assessment. It is unlikely that you have had the opportunity to greatly advance every one of these capabilities during your time in school. Depending on the concentration of your education, the specifics of the courses you took (and will take), and issues associated with balancing work, school, and life you may have spent little or no time in some of these areas. Further, while all of these capabilities are important, some of these capabilities are far more important to certain professional career paths. Strategy is about managing trade-offs and placing emphasis on the appropriate capabilities is both an organizational and individual best practice.

Hopes and Dreams
The final section of your portfolio is forward looking. During your time in the program you have been (and will be) introduced to new phenomenon and had your existing knowledge expanded for other phenomenon. You should always be looking for ways to use what you learn. Don't wait for someone to tell you how a piece of knowledge will help you, figure it out for yourself!

In this section, you should identify and explain three such ideas. These are things you hope (or could) pursue in the future. It could include ideas for new businesses, new products, changes for your current employer, things to research, places to visit, ways to change how you currently work, or any number of other possibilities. For each of the things you identify, you need to discuss which of your courses (to the best of your recollection) introduced these ideas (or might be useful for future courses). You should explain what you would like to accomplish with the idea. You should provide a timeframe for when you would like to act on the idea.

You should conclude this section with a statement of aspiration. What should you accomplish in the next five years? What accomplishments in five years time would indicate you have performed exceptionally well? What accomplishments would indicate you have performed acceptably well? What are you going to do in the next year to put you on the road to these goals?

Mid-Term and Course Final Exam
(SLO 1-5)
The exams are timed, and essay style with a three-hour completion window.

The Mid-Term Exam is a business analysis exam. You will be provided with financial information for a firm and its competitors. From this you will be asked a series of financial analysis questions based on our lecture topics through this point. You will be assessed on your ability to interpret business financials in an organized way and to make inferences logically linked to the provided data. You are permitted a one-page (front and back) study aid OF YOUR OWN CREATION for the Mid-Term exam - this will be turned in at the end of the exam.

The Final Exam is a strategic concepts exam. You will be asked a series of integrative questions tied to the course readings and strategy brick activities (which begin after the mid-term). Answers for each question are anticipated in the one-page range. Your ability to articulate answers incorporating fundamental concepts is expected. You are permitted to bring in your Element of Thought submissions (as submitted) for which you received a B- grade or higher for
Policy Statements

Academic Honesty

The Academic Honesty Policy at UHCL (found in the University of Houston-Clear Lake Catalog) states:

*Academic honesty is the cornerstone of the academic integrity of the university. It is the foundation upon which the student builds personal integrity and establishes a standard of personal behavior.*

Because honesty and integrity are such important factors in the professional community, you should be aware that failure to perform within the bounds of these ethical standards is sufficient grounds to receive a grade of "F" in this course. The Honesty Code of UHCL states "I will be honest in all my academic activities and will not tolerate dishonesty."

To demonstrate awareness with the academic honesty policies, students are required to view a video lecture related to plagiarism and take a plagiarism awareness quiz (the Academic Honesty Quiz) in the Blackboard course shell. You are also required to submit a signed Academic Integrity pledge during the first week of the course. Students must take the quiz and review their results in order to progress in the course. *This quiz is NOT part of the course grade,* however fulfillment of all requirements is necessary as they serve as a gate to the student's participation in graded content.

Students will not be allowed to submit written, graded work (reflective writing assignments or the final exam) until these requirements are met — any deadlines missed will result in the student receiving zero credit for potential submissions.

Use of SAFE ASSIGN

The School of Business at the University of Houston Clear Lake mandates submission via Safe Assign for major written assignments prepared outside of a classroom. For purposes of this syllabus, this applies to the Reflective Writing assignments, weekly element and SEE-I posts, and weekly interactive lecture responses.

*You will submit each of these assignments via SAFE ASSIGN inside of the Blackboard shell.* You will find the submission link for each assignment within the appropriate Course Content weekly folder in Blackboard. Once submitted, that link will deposit your writing into the SAFE ASSIGN database for evaluation.

Submissions within SAFE ASSIGN are examined for duplication or near duplication of other written submissions within the SAFE ASSIGN database. This database includes other
assignments submitted through SAFE ASSIGN (at all locations) as well as resources pulled from the publisher and the Internet. Write in your own words, in your own voice! Violations flagged by SAFE ASSIGN will be investigated by the instructor and treated as a possible violation of the academic honesty code.

**Late Work Notice**

The schedule of deliverables for this course is made available the week prior to the start of the course. Most readings and deliverables are available from the start of the course and can be worked on and submitted significantly earlier than the deadline. While some material (specifically the simulation) is time-locked and gated by other sequential activities, all such activities have a multi-day (or longer) window to operate in.

It will be solely the responsibility of the student to be aware of due dates. Please review the schedule included in this syllabus for details. Late work will not be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!!!

**Academic Accommodations**

If you will require special academic accommodations under the Americans with Disability Act, Section 504, or other state or federal law, please contact the Disability Services Office at (281) 283-2626.

**Important Dates - Fall 2016**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>19Jan</td>
<td>First Day of Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>19Jan</td>
<td>Online Graduation Application Available (ends 18Feb)</td>
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<td>19Feb</td>
<td>Late Applications for Graduation (ends 19Mar)</td>
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<td>12Apr</td>
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<td>3May</td>
<td>Final Class Activities</td>
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<td>TBD</td>
<td>Commencement Ceremony For Summer and Fall 2016</td>
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<td>26May</td>
<td>Grades available in e-services</td>
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**Schedule and Timetable**

It is solely the responsibility of the student to be aware of due dates. Please review the schedule included in this syllabus for details.

**Incompletes**

Only in the event of a documented emergency will an extension be granted. Further, students must be passing the course – in good standing – at the time of the extension.

**Assessment**

As part of the graduate core, MGMT 6731 participates in assessment collection necessary to maintain UHCL accreditation with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). For this course, this includes assessment related to:

1. General strategy content
2. International business issues
3. Critical Thinking Skills

*Educational Assessment* is defined as the systematic collection, interpretation, and use of information about student characteristics, educational environments, learning outcomes and client satisfaction to improve program effectiveness, student performance, and professional success. This assessment will be related to the learning objectives for each course and individual student performance will be disaggregated relative to those objectives. *This disaggregated analysis will not impact grades, but will provide faculty with detailed information that will be used to improve courses, curriculum, and student's performance.*

**Syllabus Statement - 6 Drop Rule**

6 Drop Rule Limitation - Students who entered college for the first time in Fall 2007 or later should be aware of the course drop limitation imposed by the Texas Legislature. Dropping this or any other course between the first day of class and the census date for the semester/session does not affect your 6 drop rule count. Dropping a course between the census date and the last day to drop a class for the semester/session will count as one of your 6 permitted drops. You should take this into consideration before dropping this or any other course. Visit [www.uhcl.edu/records](http://www.uhcl.edu/records) for more information on the 6 drop rule and the census date information for the semester/session.

**Grading**

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<th>Total Percentage</th>
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<td>700 to less than 770</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>770 to less than 800</td>
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*Rounding up does not occur*
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<th>Week</th>
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<th>Your reading</th>
<th>Saturday Deliverables</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>Start Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-Aug</td>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
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<td>Reading Financial Statements</td>
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<td>Business Valuation</td>
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<td>Basic Ratio Analysis</td>
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<td>DuPont Stage 2</td>
<td>Start Chapter 3</td>
<td>Simulation Practice Begins</td>
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<td>Finish Chapter 3</td>
<td>EoT Chapter 3</td>
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<td>14-Sep</td>
<td>Margins</td>
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<td>Capital Structure - Debt Capacity</td>
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<td>Liquidity</td>
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<td>28-Sep</td>
<td>Cash Conversion Cycles</td>
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<td>Strategic Positioning</td>
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<td>26-Oct</td>
<td>Firm Resources</td>
<td>Start Chapter 9</td>
<td>Work on Debrief Report</td>
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<td>EoT Chapter 9</td>
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<td>2-Nov</td>
<td>Organizational Design</td>
<td>Start Chapter 10</td>
<td>Simulation Debrief Due</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Milestone meetings for Project 2026</td>
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<td>EoT Chapter 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-Nov</td>
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<td>Strategic CSR</td>
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<td>The “Robin Hood” Case</td>
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<td>THANKSGIVING</td>
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<td>23-Nov</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Group Videos</td>
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<td>30-Nov</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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<td>7-Dec</td>
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Appendix 1 - Standards of Intellect

My feedback will often invoke one or more of the following standards of intellect. Particularly on in-class work, I may only note a single letter (e.g. “C”). When this happens, I am referencing a specific standard of intellect. Check the standard, look at what it addresses and see how you might apply that standard to the flagged written response.

Critical thinking is purposeful, deliberate, measured, and rigorous thinking. The elements of thought, covered earlier in the syllabus, are the building blocks of thought. But we can’t simply “brainstorm through the elements” to critically think. We have to hold ourselves to measures and rigor, and that requires standards of intellect.

The Foundation for Critical Thinking advances nine standards of intellect. These standards represent ways to evaluate and judge the quality of our own thoughts, or of the communication of a thought from ourselves or others. As with the elements of thought, standards of intellect can be expressed through questions that you can ask of others, or of yourself.

The topics you address and the time and space allotted to address those topics will often determine which standards are most important. Further, some of these standards presume adherence to other standards. It’s hard to imagine being logical without being clear and precise, for instance. Developing your skill as a critical thinker and a more effective communicator necessitates asking the questions associated with the elements of thought and assessing the answers to those elements through the questions associated with the standards of intellect.

Clarity [C] - Clarity references the ease of understandability of a thought or communication. Clear expressions use simple statements. They strike a balance between too little, and too much, communication. They are generally free of jargon or, when jargon is necessary, they explain the jargon in straightforward terms. When you
think about clarity, you should ask several questions. *Is this easy to understand? Could you provide more explanation? Could you offer an example?*

**Accuracy [A]** - Accuracy speaks to the rightness or ability to provide evidence for an idea. Accuracy might also be thought of the due diligence with which we evaluate our standards of evidence. This includes the facts themselves as well as the quality of sources which we use to support our arguments. With accuracy we are constantly asking ourselves how, or whether, we can check on the statements we make. *How might we prove, or verify, if a thought or communication is true? What would constitute evidence and where might it be found?*

**Precision [P]** - It is not helpful to be clear and accurate if, in doing so, we are so vague as to be making statements that might be made about any number of subjects. With precision we demand of ourselves, and others, that our thoughts and communications remain focused on the matters at hand. Further, we require of ourselves and others that we address the distinctive and specific points regarding our topics. We are in search of specifics, details, and exactness when we focus on precision. *Could you be more precise? Could you offer more details?*

**Relevant [R]** - Similar to precision, relevance tasks us to make certain our thoughts and communication stay on target. Where precision concerns itself with the unique and distinctive qualities of our topic, relevance demands that we do not become sidetracked to unrelated - or barely related - ideas. Questions of relevance pull us back towards the elements of thought. *How does that relate to our problem, or the issues surrounding our problem? How does thinking about this help us answer the question? How are the implications of this thought related to the problem we are working on?*

**Significance [S]** - Even when we stay on topic, it is often easy for our thoughts to become derailed by trivia, frivolity, or details of lesser importance. Holding ourselves, and others, to standards of significance helps us hone into the most crucial aspects of our elements of thought. Questions related to the standard of significance pressure us to use our judgment to weigh the consequences of one thought on a topic relative to
other thoughts on the topic. *How significant is this to our problem? Are there other aspects of more importance? How do we communicate the importance of this idea?*

**Logic [L]** - The elements of thought demonstrate that complex thoughts are comprised of various parts, or elements. When we think, or communicate, we must link these elements together in a way that makes sense, is consistent with existing knowledge, and progresses in a fitting manner. When we judge the logic of a thought, we are examining its adherence to theory and evidence, its fit with established models, and the sensibility of its internal arguments. Logical questions speak to the coherence of the thought or argument. *Does this make sense together? Does this connect to the points you are making? What rules or theory suggest that this is so? What must be included to make this work or make sense?*

**Fairness [F]** - Often, when thinking or discussing something of merit, we will come across ideas or perspectives which are foreign and potentially disagreeable with our own perspectives. Critical thinking demands that we treat such diverging perspectives with fairness. Fairness demands that we reasonably represent the divergent and counter-arguments we face. It requires that we recognize the strengths of opposing positions and the weaknesses of our own positions. It tasks us to try to understand the point of view of others and to see the rightness of their perspective as they see it. Questions of fairness ask us to assess our biases and the impact of those biases on our judgment. *What is my interest here? What are my biases? How are these biases affecting my perception? Am I being fairly empathetic of this divergent position?*

**Depth [D]** - Outside of natural and mechanically occurring phenomenon, nearly all phenomenon have complex and nuanced relationships. That is to say that with social phenomenon there are very few universally right answers, or statements that are true in all times, in all places. The standard of depth, though, demands that we go beyond simply shrugging complexity off with an “it depends.” Depth requires us to recognize the specific contingencies which may complicate or even contradict the general relationships we expect to observe. Depth moves us away from the slippery slope of relativism and towards discourse grounded in appropriate nuance and context. Questions of depth task us to disaggregate and segment our tendency for general or
relative responses. What factors complicate, or change, this response? What special issues within this topic deserve unique treatment? What things make this difficult, or complex, to think about or discuss?

**Breadth [B]** - The nature of human bias often predisposes us to consider things in an overly simplistic manner. Our judgment tends to be based in rules and perspectives learned over the course of our experiences. This in turn tends to make us judge something as "right" when what we really mean is that it is "consistent" with our past experiences. The standard of breadth demands that we incorporate more than one perspective, or that we consider a phenomenon from more than our ego-centric perspective. Questions related to breadth take us 'outside ourselves' and ask us to consider the same facts from a diverging orientation. What other perspectives might be useful to apply here? How might someone in a different position than me consider this? How would someone who disagrees with me come to that conclusion?
Appendix 2 - Elements of Thought

**Purpose** – All meaningful thinking has a purpose or central reason (similar to the central question of this course). By focusing on the purpose, we avoid becoming sidetracked into trivial and insignificant topics and we provide means to focus on relevant information. Focusing on the purpose often helps us to evaluate the significance of ideas.

**Questions and Issues** – All meaningful thinking can be sorted into meaningful issues or topics. Often these topics can be identified by addressing the most significant of questions. Exploring questions and issues helps us make sure that we know “what we need to know” and tasks us to see whether we have gone far enough in our study. Understanding questions and issues helps us to see the relevance of ideas.

**Concepts** – Any area of thinking has its set of appropriate theories, tools, methodologies, systems, and vocabulary. Theories are representations of the causal order of action between objects or events (in other words, “this caused that”). Theories tell us not just what to expect, but also why we should expect what we expect. While the names and labels within a theory are important, the predictive relationships are ultimately far more important to your success as a manager. In defining these ideas, theories, or models think about how they relate to a course central question or fundamental concept. This should include definitions and terms for major ideas which are not likely to be common language. Understanding concepts should help us improve our clarity and precision.

**Assumptions** – related to the concepts, how do things fit together and why do we think they work the way they do. We often sort things into bins that are alike or assume patterns of relationships or trends. These are our assumptions about the concepts within a phenomenon (it's like this, it's different from that, it's used for this, or it's best applied to that). For example, it's not enough to explain that “increasing Job Satisfaction improves Job Performance,” we need to have a logical explanation of WHY we think that happens. In this way, assumptions are the explanatory logic of a theory. It can be the case, that checking our assumptions thoroughly may help us differentiate between evidence based beliefs we should adhere to and unsupported biases that we should abandon. Our recognition of the underlying assumptions of concepts helps us to see the logic of how things fit together.

**Points of View** – Our backgrounds, experiences, and even our genetics affect how we perceive things, how we evaluate things, and even shape our judgment. No two people see things the same way, although there are reasons why groups of people see things similarly. Getting everyone on the same page is a central task for management. You can't do this (well) if you can't describe the different pages people might fairly and logically be on. Points of view tasks you to think through different starting points. The ability to discern diverging points of view provides insight into the breadth of a phenomenon and fairness to stakeholders.
**Information** – what are the pieces of data, clues, or evidence you would expect to find using your eyes and ears in the workplace? Information is where we move from abstract concepts to data, facts, observations, and examples. Evidence based management suggests that we should be guided by the facts - to do this, we have to know what facts we have, what facts we can discover, and what standards we should judge facts against. The relevant information should, of course, be related to the concepts of the chapter. Information is where our concepts and assumptions about those concepts turn into measurable and predictable observations. Access to information drives our understanding of accuracy and informs logic.

**Conclusions** – What should you do and what are your reasons for doing so? Conclusions often (but not always) bring us to the end of our critical thinking. They help us identify the right course (or courses) of action as well as the reasons for choosing to follow some paths and ignore other paths of thought. Conclusions generally lead us to a specific set of actionable behaviors. It should incorporate ideas from the chapter and specific ways you could use them (either today or in the near future). As you read the text, try to be specific and think about examples and situations where this knowledge would be useful. Your conclusion answers should also flow logically from - or relate to - the ideas developed in your other elements. A good conclusion directly applies the content of the reading towards an answer to the central question of the course drawing upon the ideas in the readings. As an example, “I would specifically use this knowledge on leadership to improve the performances of my employees by doing...”

**Implications** – what are the results you should expect from properly applying the conclusions? What would you expect to see happen if you (or other managers) failed to properly follow your advice? What does the data suggest will come next? Why do you think so? All of these are questions which represent the implications of a thought. This is a good place to emphasize the fundamental concept of congruence. You may find it a bit challenging to separate inferences/conclusions from implications. That's okay, both look towards outcomes.