



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Global Management Decisions

2425-2-F5602M020

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#### Learning objectives

The course in Global Management Decisions aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the current trends and challenges in global business. We will explore how firms from both developed and emerging countries navigate the complexities of international markets. By analyzing various case studies, students will gain insights into the strategies employed by multinational corporations to expand their global footprint. Additionally, the course will examine the strategic challenges faced by businesses in navigating geopolitical tensions, such as those between major economies, and how these tensions influence corporate strategies and operations. Through these discussions, students will develop a nuanced understanding of the global business landscape, encompassing diverse regions and industries.

Understanding how to effectively organize and manage international businesses is critical in today's global economy. The course will delve into the strategies and structures that multinational corporations adopt to manage their global operations efficiently. We will explore the complexities of building and maintaining a global business empire, highlighting key strategies for success in the 21st century. Topics will include the management of cross-border teams, the integration of diverse corporate cultures, and the coordination of global supply chains. Case studies will illustrate how global companies structure their operations and leverage their core competencies to enhance their competitive edge. For example, in the semiconductor industry, companies must navigate intricate networks of suppliers and manufacturers across different countries, highlighting the importance of strategic supply chain management. These discussions will provide students with practical insights into the organizational dynamics of international businesses.

This course will guide students in developing strategies for successful global expansion and market entry. We will discuss strategic responses to domestic market challenges, such as the expansion of companies abroad to mitigate domestic regulatory pressures. A crucial aspect of this section will be understanding different market entry modes, such as exporting, licensing, franchising, joint ventures, and wholly-owned subsidiaries. We will explore the advantages and disadvantages of each mode and how companies decide on the best approach based on factors such as market potential, investment costs, control levels, and risk management. For example, the semiconductor industry's approach to managing chip shortages through various international partnerships will illustrate the importance of selecting the appropriate entry mode.

In today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, it is crucial for future managers to navigate and leverage technological advancements in global business operations. This course will prioritize the exploration of corporate R&D activities and the internationalization of R&D, highlighting their critical roles in driving innovation and maintaining competitive advantage. Students will examine how multinational corporations establish and manage global R&D networks, leveraging diverse talent pools and responding to regional market needs. The semiconductor industry, which faces unique challenges due to its complexity and the geopolitical tensions affecting it, will be used as a case study to demonstrate the importance of innovation and strategic management in maintaining supply chain resilience and efficiency in high-tech industries. These examples underscore the transformative potential of innovation in supply chain management and corporate operations, emphasizing the importance of staying abreast of technological advancements and international R&D efforts to maintain a competitive edge.

## Contents

1. International business and global strategy
2. The strategy of international business
3. The organization of international business
4. Entering developed and emerging markets
5. Global production and supply chain management
6. The internationalization of R&D

## Detailed program

### 1. International business and global strategy

a. (Benito et al., 2022; Buckley et al., 2017; Ghemawat, 2011; Werner, 2002)

### 2. The strategy of international business

a. What is Strategy? (Porter, 1996)

i. Operational effectiveness vs. strategic positioning

ii. Trade-offs between strategic positions

iii. Fit, competitive advantage, and sustainability

b. Measuring organizational performance (Katsikeas et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2013; Richard et al., 2009)

c. Global expansion, profitability, and profit growth

i. Expanding the market

ii. Location economies

iii. Experience effects

iv. Leveraging subsidiary skills

d. Cost pressures and pressures for local responsiveness

e. Choosing a strategy (Alexander & Korine, 2008; Frost et al., 2002; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Rugman & Verbeke, 2004; Taussig, 2017)

i. International strategy

ii. Global standardization strategy

iii. Localization strategy

iv. Transnational strategy

f. The relationship between internationalization and performance (Hitt et al., 1997; Pedersen & Tallman, 2023)

### 3. The organization of international business

a. Organizational structure

i. Vertical differentiation (Birkinshaw, 1997; Birkinshaw et al., 1998; Björkman et al., 2004)

ii. Horizontal differentiation (Wolf & Egelhoff, 2002)

- iii. Integrating Mechanisms (Hansen & Løvås, 2004; Washburn & Hunsaker, 2011)
- b. Control system and incentives (Bloom & Reenen, 2007)
- c. Organizational culture
- d. Organizational change

#### **4. Entering developed and emerging markets**

- a. Basic entry decisions (Boyen & Ogasavara, 2013; Isobe et al., 2000; Vermeulen & Barkema, 2002)
  - i. Which foreign market? (Bogner et al., 1996)
  - ii. Timing of entry (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2000; Shaver et al., 1997)
  - iii. Scale of entry and strategic commitments
- b. Entry modes (Schwens et al., 2011)
  - c. Selecting an entry mode
    - i. Core competencies and entry mode
    - ii. Pressures for cost reductions and entry mode
  - d. Greenfield venture or acquisition? (Ghemawat & Ghadar, 2000; Seth et al., 2002)
  - e. Strategic alliances (Spencer, 2003; Tsang, 2003)

#### **5. Global production and supply chain management**

- a. Strategy, production, and supply chain management (Mukherjee et al., 2023; Powell, 1995; Tokatli, 2007)
- b. Artificial intelligence and relocation of production activities (Kinkel et al., 2023)
- c. Global supply chain functions (Farrell, 2004)
  - i. Global logistics
  - ii. Global purchasing
- d. Managing a global supply chain (DeBerge, 2024)
  - i. The role of just-in-time (JIT) inventory
  - ii. The role of information technology (Sturgeon, 2021)
  - iii. Coordination in global supply chain
  - iv. Interorganizational relationships

#### **6. The internationalization of R&D**

- a. Product development & R&D
- b. Internationalization of R&D (Awate et al., 2015; Castellani et al., 2013; Kuemmerle, 1997)

## **Prerequisites**

The course in Global Management Decisions adopts an approach to the investigation of real-world business phenomena that combines well established theoretical concepts with disciplined empirical investigation. Accordingly, it builds upon the bulk of knowledge that students accumulated while attending previous courses in microeconomics, macroeconomics, industrial organization, statistics, and econometrics.

## **Teaching methods**

Lessons in the Global Management Decisions course are structured to combine lecture-based with interactive teaching. Within each lesson, theoretical concepts and conceptual frameworks are presented, followed by interactive discussions designed to stimulate students in exploring how to apply these concepts and frameworks to real-world business cases. Lessons will be organized as follows:

- 4 (four) three-hours lessons will be conducted using a combination of lecture-based and interactive teaching modes and will be delivered online.
- 5 (five) three-hours lessons will be conducted using a combination of lecture-based and interactive teaching

modes and will be delivered in person.

- 5 (five) two-hours lessons will be conducted using a combination of lecture-based and interactive teaching modes and will be delivered in person.
- 3 (three) two-hours lessons will be allocated to in-class presentation and discussion of project work.

Although course attendance is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged. Since lessons are based on an interactive teaching approach, students are expected to actively and constructively participate in class discussions, be prepared to comment on assigned readings, and engage in occasional group work.

## **Assessment methods**

The Global Management Decisions course does not include midterm exams. Students will be able to take the final exam according to one of the alternatives described below.

### **Method #1**

For students who regularly attend classes, the performance assessment will be based on the tasks described below (i.e., project work and written exam). For the attendance criterion to be met, the student must carry out at least 80% of the activities (i.e., quiz, assignment, class discussion, etc.) proposed during the course. These activities must be completed in the same day in which they are assigned; their completion cannot be postponed to a later date.

### ***Project work (40% of final grade; group-level grade)***

- a. At the beginning of the course, students will be required to create a “project group” and to register their group using the Excel form “Group work - registration form” available on the e-learning platform. Each group must comprise 4 components. The deadline for group formation will be communicated during the first class. After the deadline, it will not be possible to enroll for taking the exam according to “Method #1”.
- b. Each group will be assigned the task of writing a business report to analyze the management decisions that a public listed company takes with respect to its international strategy and the implications of those decisions for its financial and non-financial performance.
- c. Group members will be asked to give an in-class presentation to discuss the major findings emerging from the business research they carried out.
- d. The deadline for submitting the report and the date of the in-class presentation will be communicated at the beginning of the course.
- e. The report and the presentation must be uploaded through the e-Learning platform. Guidelines concerning the content and format of the report and the accompanying presentation will be communicated at the beginning of the course.
- f. With reference to the business report and the in-class presentation, the following competencies will be evaluated:
  - i. the ability to critically analyze the major choices the company takes in crafting and deploying its international strategy;
  - ii. the ability to identify challenges faced by the company in its international operations and propose viable solutions;
  - iii. the proficiency in gathering, cleaning and organizing relevant data from credible sources;
  - iv. the capacity to question assumptions, evaluate evidence, and present balanced arguments;
  - v. the proficiency in writing clear, well-organized, and professional business reports;
  - vi. the proficiency in presenting findings clearly and concisely, using appropriate business terminology and report structure.
- g. The assessment criteria used to evaluate the business report and the in-class presentation include:
  - i. Critical Thinking and Evaluation Skills: Evaluate the critical thinking skills demonstrated in discussing the significance and implications of the analysis findings for the company’s strategy and performance. Consider the ability to critically evaluate alternative explanations, assumptions, and interpretations.
  - ii. Clarity and Organization: Assess the clarity, coherence, and organization of the assignment structure, including the introduction, methodology, analysis sections, and conclusion. Evaluate the logical flow of ideas, use of

headings and subheadings, and overall readability of the assignment.

iii. **Insightfulness and Originality:** Evaluate the depth of insights generated from the analysis and the originality of the interpretations and conclusions drawn. Consider the ability to offer fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and forward-looking recommendations based on the findings.

iv. **Integration of Additional Sources and Research:** Assess the integration of additional sources of information, such as academic articles, industry reports, and online resources, to complement the analysis of the company's strategy and performance. Evaluate the relevance, credibility, and depth of the additional sources used.

v. **Application of Descriptive Statistics and Data Visualization:** Evaluate the proficiency in applying descriptive statistics and data visualization techniques to present and analyze the data effectively. Assess the clarity, relevance, and creativity of the graphs, tables, and charts used to convey the analysis findings.

vi. **Presentation and Formatting:** Assess the overall presentation and formatting of the assignment, including adherence to formatting guidelines, proper citation of sources, and the use of clear and professional language.

### ***Written exam (60% of final grade; individual-level grade)***

The written exam takes place in the lab, using the platform ESAMI-ONLINE. The written exam includes 5 (five) open-ended questions: each question assigns a maximum of 6 (six) points. These questions cover the topics discussed in the academic articles listed in the syllabus and marked with two asterisks. Students will have 50 (fifty) minutes to complete the exam.

The questions aim to assess students' comprehension and interpretation of advanced academic literature, ensuring they can identify key arguments, methodologies, and findings. Additionally, they evaluate students' critical thinking skills by requiring them to analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources, draw connections between theoretical concepts and practical applications, and critique the strengths and limitations of the research. This format also tests the ability to articulate well-reasoned arguments, demonstrate depth of understanding, and present original insights. Furthermore, students' proficiency in academic writing and their ability to engage with scholarly discourse are key competencies assessed through these questions, promoting a deeper engagement with the subject matter and fostering the development of autonomous, scholarly thinking.

By default, the option Method #1 does not involve an "oral exam". Nonetheless, according to art. 27 of "Regolamento degli Studenti" enacted by the University of Milano-Bicocca, students have the right to carry out also an oral exam. Students who want to take an oral exam must request it by sending an email to marco.corsino@unimib.it no later than two days after the final mark has been communicated.

Students who carried out the exam according to option "Method #1" and asks to take an oral exam must be aware that:

- i. it is possible to earn a maximum of 2 points if they correctly and comprehensively answer all the questions in the oral exam.
- ii. the performance at the oral exam can lead to a final mark that is lower than the mark obtained in the written exam.
- iii. the performance at the oral exam can even determine the failure of the entire exam.

### **Plagiarism and inappropriate use of AI tools:**

It is imperative that all work submitted is your own and properly cites any sources or influences. Plagiarism, which includes copying text or ideas from sources without proper attribution, is strictly prohibited and will result in academic penalties. Additionally, while AI tools can be helpful for research and drafting, the use of AI-generated text must be transparent and limited to ensuring grammatical correctness and coherence. Submitting content generated or significantly altered by AI as your own original work is unacceptable.

All submitted essays will undergo rigorous scrutiny for originality and compliance with academic standards. We employ advanced plagiarism detection software and have mechanisms in place to detect inappropriate use of AI-generated content. Any violation of these guidelines will be taken seriously and will lead to the invalidation of the submitted essay, the dissolution of the group, and the requirement for the students involved to take the exam individually as specified under "Method 2".

Additionally, adhering to these standards is not only about your academic integrity but also about your duty to your classmates. Engaging in plagiarism or misuse of AI undermines the efforts of your peers who are committed to producing original work and upholding the values of fairness and honesty in our academic community.

Please approach your essay with integrity and diligence, as these are foundational to your academic growth and professional development.

## **Method #2**

For students who do not attend classes, the performance assessment is based on a two-part exam which comprises a written test and a mandatory oral examination.

### **Written exam**

The written exam takes place in the lab, using the platform ESAMI-ONLINE. It includes the following types of questions:

- i. 10 (ten) multiple-choice questions. For each question, there is only one correct answer: for each correct answer you get 3 points, while there is no penalty for incorrect answers. The questions are based on the selected chapters of the textbook and aim to assess the preparation on the exam syllabus.
- ii. 5 (five) open-ended questions. Each question assigns a maximum of 6 (six) points. These questions cover the topics discussed in the academic articles listed in the syllabus and marked with two asterisks . The open-ended questions aim to assess students' comprehension and interpretation of advanced academic literature, ensuring they can identify key arguments, methodologies, and findings. Additionally, they evaluate students' critical thinking skills by requiring them to analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources, draw connections between theoretical concepts and practical applications, and critique the strengths and limitations of the research. This format also tests the ability to articulate well-reasoned arguments, demonstrate depth of understanding, and present original insights. Furthermore, students' proficiency in academic writing and their ability to engage with scholarly discourse are key competencies assessed through these questions, promoting a deeper engagement with the subject matter and fostering the development of autonomous, scholarly thinking.

Students will have 70 (seventy) minutes to complete the written exam.

### **Oral exam**

The objective of the oral examination in the Global Management Decisions course is to assess students' understanding and application of key concepts and theories related to the management of international businesses. The oral examination covers the topics discussed in the academic articles listed in the syllabus and marked with one asterisk \*.

This exam aims to evaluate students' ability to articulate their knowledge clearly and coherently, engage in critical discussions, and demonstrate their analytical and strategic thinking skills in real-time. Additionally, the oral examination provides an opportunity to assess the students' autonomous thinking and problem-solving abilities, as well as their capacity to integrate and apply theoretical knowledge to practical, real-world scenarios. Through this format, students will also be evaluated on their communication skills, including the ability to present their ideas effectively and respond to questions with confidence and clarity.

The final grade for students who take the exam according to Method #2 is computed as follows:

grade of multiple-choice questions \* 0.25 + grade of open-ended questions \* 0.40 + grade of the oral exam \* 0.35

### **Honors (laude)**

Irrespective of the exam method selected (Method #1 or Method #2), and provided the student demonstrates excellent performance in the written and oral exams, the awarding of honors (laude) is contingent upon regular, proactive, and constructive participation in course activities and debates.

## **Textbooks and Reading Materials**

### **Textbook**

Hill, Charles W.L. 2023. International Business: Competing in the global marketplace, 14th Edition. McGraw Hill, New York.

- Chapter 13. Pages: 379-401.
- Chapter 14. Pages: 412-424; 430-438.
- Chapter 15. Pages: 447-467.
- Chapter 17. Pages: 505-507; 520-527.

- Chapter 18. Pages: 560-564.

### **Articles in academic journals**

The readings listed below are mandatory and must be studied for the written and oral exams.

#### ***International business and global strategy***

Buckley, P. J., Doh, J. P., & Benischke, M. H. (2017). Towards a renaissance in international business research? Big questions, grand challenges, and the future of IB scholarship. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48(9), 1045–1064. \*\*

Ghemawat, P. (2011). The Cosmopolitan Corporation. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(5), 92–99. \*

#### ***The strategy of international business***

Porter, M. E. (1996). What is strategy? *Harvard Business Review*, 74(6), 61–78. \*

Taussig, M. (2017). Foreignness as both a global asset and a local liability: How host country idiosyncrasies and business activities matter. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48(4), 498–522. \*\*

#### ***The organization of international business***

Bloom, N., & Reenen, J. V. (2007). Measuring and explaining management practices across firms and countries. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, CXXII(4), 1351–1408. \*\*

Washburn, N. T., & Hunsaker, T. B. (2011). Finding great ideas in emerging markets. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(9), 115–120. \*

#### ***Entering developed and emerging markets***

Bartlett, C. A., & Ghoshal, S. (2000). Going global: Lessons from late movers. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(3), 132–142. \*

Schwens, C., Eiche, J., & Kabst, R. (2011). The Moderating Impact of Informal Institutional Distance and Formal Institutional Risk on SME Entry Mode Choice. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(2), 330–351. \*\*

#### ***Global production and supply chain management***

DeBerge, T. (2024). Responsibility boundaries and the governance of global value chains: The interplay of efficiency, ethical, and institutional pressures in global strategy. *Global Strategy Journal*, 14(1), 196–222. \*\*

Farrell, D. (2004). Beyond offshoring: Assess your company's global potential. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(12), 82–90. \*

#### ***The internationalization of R&D***

Castellani, D., Jimenez, A., & Zanfei, A. (2013). How remote are R&D labs? Distance factors and international innovative activities. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 44(7), 649–675. \*\*

Kuemmerle, W. (1997). Building effective R&D capabilities abroad. *Harvard Business Review*, 75(2), 61–72. \*

### **Semester**

From April 2025 to June 2025

### **Teaching language**

English

## Sustainable Development Goals

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

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