

## Detailed course information: Project Work “The duel”

According to the Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary, the meaning of a duel is “a conflict between antagonistic persons, ideas, or forces”, but also “*a hard-fought contest between two opponents*”. And this is exactly how we will organize our main project work in this class. We focus on five industries and within each on two leading competitors. Groups will scrutinize these companies and seek to understand their (global) strategies and market positions considering the industry contexts. The aim for each group of students is to make, after detailed strategy analysis, recommendations on (1) how to *strengthen* their company’s global strategic position and (2) *how to beat or weaken* their direct opponent and become better of that attack (henceforth, ‘duel’). The project work seeks to apply the theoretical concepts discussed in the International Business course, with its two components Global Marketing and Global Strategy, to practical business situations.

The final output should be a *management consulting report in the form of an annotated PowerPoint slide set* (i.e., slides plus notes format) in a specific industry context for a specific company. The purpose is to have students work gradually throughout the weeks on this “management consulting” report, esp. during our classes on Wednesday afternoon. On top, schedule an extra weekly group meeting to work on your own on this assignment. Consider that schedules and priorities might vary across your team members, as they might only follow a part of the course (GM or GS only). Each ‘international’ group consists of students from the University of Milano-Bicocca and one or two Erasmus students. Each group will receive some coaching from the professor.

Over the period of the class (kick-off in October, final presentations in January 2023, students go through several stages of strategic planning and at the end of this stepwise process they can integrate the different analytic steps and formulate strategic recommendations for their respective companies. You will be exposed to useful concepts and theories for each stage during the classes and in coaching sessions.

Guiding questions for your task will be provided. In the company-specific workgroups, supported by Internet-based research, students will work on these questions and the related frameworks over the months. Schedule an extra 1-1,5 hours of group work per week for internet-based research, and to structure, deepen, and finalize the analyses of the different stages of your strategic analysis, and to make sure that the analysis leads to 3-5 key recommendations for the company (as if it were real life). During coaching moments, the professor will clarify issues encountered during application of the conceptual and analytic frameworks.

You are not supposed to directly collect primary information from the companies in focus through surveys, interviews, etc. The report should be developed by integrating available secondary information (such as websites, publications, Financial Times, ...) and (explicit) *common sense*. The quality of the final strategic recommendations of the report reflects the strength and the robustness of the assumptions, analyses, and synthesis. We focus on some of the following sectors and companies (depending on the number of students and group choices):

- Toy manufacturers: Lego and Mattel

- Car manufacturers: Volkswagen Group and Daimler
- Sports companies: Adidas and Nike
- Gaming industry: Sony and Nintendo
- Tech: Samsung and Apple
- E-commerce/retail: Amazon versus Wal Mart

The stages to be followed are:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Explanation and suggested concepts and frames to consider (don't use all of these – select!)</b>
<i>Kick-off: Oct 5, 12:30</i>		
1. Present status: high level, outside-in oriented SWOT analysis for the group's own company relative to the key competitor in this <i>duel</i> case (Start Oct. 5)	A description of the corporate strategy, including core steps of international growth; Getting acquainted with the company's mission, vision, values	Core strategy thrusts Core values/mission and vision Main strategy changes in the last five years (time line)
2. International competitiveness (Start Oct. 12)	A description of the <i>firm's international competitiveness</i> along different international strategy and structure elements. International mindset	Value creation position, global competitive advantage, core business model(s), global industry trends, KSFs in the industry and co. position,
	The (consolidated) <i>key financial performance indicators</i> .	(We will provide more specific analytic questions)
3. Development of growth strategies. Dare to think out of the box. Reinvent their business. (Start Oct.19)	Innovation and transformation: Status and some ideas for additional innovation	Strategic innovation & radical business model transformation in this company, breakthrough international product and diversification realization
4. Development of global growth opportunities (Start Oct.26)	Leveraging the company's global footprint for its <i>existing</i> markets	Global market/country portfolio perspective, Apply filter model (regional approach);
5. Development of global growth strategies (Start Nov.23)	<i>Identify growth opportunities in international markets and suggest ways on how to successfully enter them.</i>	Identify some international market penetration and development opportunities. For instance, if you believe there are still many growth opportunities in Africa, what would then be ideal entry modes for realizing that

		expansion thereby taking international strength, risks, local competitors' strengths, available resources etc. into account. Or, if you think a diversification is needed based on IoT services, are you then suggesting a collaboration with a worldwide platform provider or a merger or acquisition of a player in that field or a competitor which has already made such moves?
6. Development of an attack strategy (Start Dec 14)	Adopt a military attack analogy framework and outline an attack on your main competitor, Refer to marketing-mix elements that can back-up this attack	Create 2-3 slides specifying the attack and explain why you think that attack will be successful. Refer explicitly to marketing-mix elements you will use to execute your attack (product, pricing, channels, communication...).
7. Recommendations/ Conclusion (Start Dec 14 or Dec. 21)	Based on your analysis, pinpoint what the company <i>should do</i> . Formulate 3 to 5 strategic recommendations for your company for securing strong market leadership and above-average returns in the next five years (with special consideration of the opponent firm).	

*Final presentations: January 9-10, 2023 Different 'rounds' of Duels*

*NOTE: Submit PPT and annotated PPT (report) by January 6, 20:00*

**Format final presentation and report:** Maximum 13-15 PowerPoint slides with Notes in Arial or Calibri font 10. The final presentation (incl. submission of the report) is due on 13/12/2021 at 20:00. The final presentation contains the concluding SWOT (2 slides) and the 3-5 global growth strategy recommendations with argumentation (6-10 slides) plus the attack strategy (1-3 slides) and final recommendations (1 slide). Add in attachment the full slide deck ('report'), i.e., slides with notes from stages 1 to 3 (20-30 slides maximum). The latter will not be presented (hence should be self-explanatory) but parts might be used as argumentation for the chosen recommendations.

Two groups *per sector* (one duel) will present in the final meeting. As we will look at five to six sectors, we will have ten or twelve presenting groups, i.e., 5 or 6 duels covering five to six different industries. You are supposed to attend your own duel. You are welcome to attend other duels.