



COURSE INFORMATION

Course Number: MGT 857
Course Title: Digital Strategy
Term and Year: Fall-1 2021
Class Meeting Time, Day: **Section 01:**
Tue / Thu 1:00 pm – 2:20 pm, Evans Hall 4210
Section 02:
Tue / Thu 2:40 pm – 4:00 pm, Evans Hall 4210
Section G1 (MMS GBS):
Tue / Thu 4:10 pm – 5:30 pm, Evans Hall 4210

CONTACT INFORMATION

Professor(s)	TA(s)
Name: <i>Vineet Kumar</i>	Ankit Sisodia (01)
Office Location: 5455	ankit.sisodia@yale.edu
Telephone Number: 203.436.9657	
E-mail Address: vineet.kumar@yale.edu	Seung Yoon Lee (02)
Office Hours: By Appointment	seungyoon.lee@yale.edu
(see Canvas for Link)	
	Ian Weaver (G1)
	ian.weaver@yale.edu

Review Sessions: *As Needed*

COURSE MATERIALS

Textbook(s): None required

Recommended Books: Instructor will provide required book chapters via Canvas.

Readings: *See Detailed Outline of Class Sessions*

Software: *Excel may be used for assignments and project if needed.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Disclaimer: Syllabus is tentative. Please check latest version on Canvas by “Last Updated” date.

Course Description:

Digital Strategy is a course that builds upon topics in strategy, marketing and economics to understand issues in markets where digital technology plays an important role. Through a mix of case studies and lectures, the course brings together a variety of issues unique to markets significantly impacted by technologies. The course is divided into 4 modules. Each module will feature a lecture session laying out the conceptual foundations followed by 2-3 case studies.

We study the essential elements of *business models*, the principles of hypothesis-driven choices. We investigate reasons that we observe a variety of business models in the market for digital products and services, and identify outcomes to assess the performance of business models and the challenges in implementing them. Second, we focus on understanding strategies and how business models can be used by *disruptors and complementors*, with a view to evaluating drivers of success in the marketplace. Third, we study *platforms* to understand the primary issues in developing multi-sided platforms as well as the perspective of participants on each side. Fourth, we examine *technology-driven transformation* both from a technology perspective (with AI and blockchain as key emerging technologies), as well as from a firm perspective (with The New York Times).

Course Objectives:

The course is designed to provide a strategic perspective on digital technologies, but given the broad scope of the topic, aiming for comprehensive coverage in a few sessions does not seem feasible. I've had to make tradeoffs in selecting areas to examine in depth. My goal is that a student who completes the course successfully should be able to:

- Understand growth and monetization tradeoffs in adopting business models
- Determine whether a disruptor or complementor strategy is more appropriate
- Evaluate design and governance decisions for platforms
- Develop a perspective regarding new emerging technologies and how they could reshape markets and firms
- Understand challenges and opportunities involved in undertaking a digital transformation

Note: This is NOT a digital marketing course, and will not focus on social media or digital marketing or advertising, Search Engine Optimization, Google / Facebook Analytics etc.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Component	Details	Points
Assignments (Individual and Group)	See details below	50
Project Paper (Group)		25
Attendance and Participation (Individual)	Every class	25

Please see the Yale SOM Grading Policy at <http://portal.som.yale.edu/page/grading-policy>

Class Participation: You will be encouraged, and likely cold-called to air your views in class. Evaluation will be on the quality and to a lesser degree, the number of comments you make. Please come prepared to each class by reading the assigned material and thinking carefully about the preparation questions.

DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS/PROJECTS/PROBLEM SETS

You will be required to form a group of **X** people within your section for the group assignment and project. *Groups need to be within section* since we have a group presentation. If you need help forming a group, the TAs will help. (Note: X might depend on the section and will be announced in class or via canvas).

Project: After forming a group, submit a one-slide with project proposal idea on canvas. Then, you'll set up a meeting with the professor to go over the idea and obtain feedback and approval. We will send out links to help schedule meeting times during predefined blocks.

NOTE: ALL Project ideas must be submitted for pre-approval to instructor by Sep 17, 2021.

The final project deliverable will be a written report with a 12-page maximum (double spaced, 12-point text). Assignment groups CAN overlap with project groups.

While I have in mind specific types of projects detailed below, I'm open to custom projects if you send me a carefully thought out one-paragraph written proposal if you want to do something different. **However, note that the same or similar project(s) cannot be submitted or presented in multiple courses.** The types of projects I have in mind are detailed below:

- A) Developing a new business proposal based on "emerging" digital technologies (We'll define this as "something not in widespread use but has a reasonable chance of becoming widely adopted in a few years"). Please check with the instructor if you have questions. The focus here will be on identifying how the technology can create value, and how the value can be taken to market.
- B) Examine the transformative impact of "emerging" digital technologies on the business of an incumbent provider, taking the perspective of both the disruptor and complementor.
- C) The product and company you evaluate will originate from TechCrunch's Startup Battle Field Leaderboard (<https://techcrunch.com/startup-battlefield/leaderboard/>). The overall focus will be to identify a new product or service that adds value at the intersection of technology and finance, health, education, automotive, etc. and present its business model analysis in depth, including alignment and considering counterfactual analysis for choices made by the firm.
- D) Undertake an in-depth examination of how a firm has used digital technologies to transform its business to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Projects will be evaluated on the following aspects: (a) creativity, (b) clarity of thought and writing, (c) quality of argument and (d) insights obtained. Depth is valued more than breadth or comprehensive coverage. The instructor will discuss project details in class.

Assignments: Group assignments can be done in groups of 4 students, whereas **Individual assignments** must be submitted by each person. Please indicate the contribution of each person for group assignments. Everyone in the group is expected to make a significant contribution to **each** assignment, so please budget time to discuss assignments. Late assignments will not be graded. *No extensions or exceptions to any due dates should be expected.* We don't have any

makeup assignments for missed classes or assignments. However, if you have an extenuating circumstance, please contact **AASL**, and they will determine an appropriate course of action.

Group Presentation assignment: all groups should be prepared to present in class. If logistics require, groups will be chosen to present in class based on quality of analysis and insights, as well as differential contributions relative to other groups. It is important to submit PowerPoint **Slides** through Canvas, so we can load them up before class. Except the Group presentation, all assignments should be submitted as a **PDF** document.

Individual assignments: Your individual assignment submissions must be **4 pages or fewer** (excluding any exhibits), in 11 or 12-point text font and double-spaced text. Please convert everything to one PDF file before submission and submit through Canvas. Please name the file in the following format:

Group04.pdf

For individual assignments,

LastName_FirstName.pdf

Details of Assignments will be posted on Canvas. Due dates are listed in “Outline of Class Sessions” below. If you have any questions at all, please don’t hesitate to check with the professor or TAs.

YALE SOM POLICIES

Please see the Yale School of Management Bulletin at <http://www.yale.edu/printer/bulletin/htmlfiles/som/rights-and-responsibilities-of-students.html> for Rights and Responsibilities of students and for information on requesting a course recording.

Laptop/Device Policy

Usage NOT allowed without the express permission of the instructor.

OUTLINE OF CLASS SESSIONS (All Dates 2021)

Session	Date	Topic	Assignment Due (Time Due: 9 am)
Module 1: Digital Strategy and Business Models			
1	Sep 02 (Thu)	Course Introduction Overview of Business Models	
2	Sep 07 (Tue)	Hubspot (CASE)	
3	Sep 09 (Thu)	Dropbox: It Just Works (CASE)	A1 (Individual, PDF)
Module 2: Disrupting and Complementing			
4	Sep 14 (Tue)	Entry in Existing Markets (Disruptors and Complementors)	
5	Sep 16 (Thu)	Apple Pay (CASE)	A2 (Individual, PDF)
6	Sep 21 (Tue)	Zillow and Redfin (Dual CASE Presentations)	A3 (Group Presentation, submit PPT Slides on Canvas)
Module 3: Platform Thinking			
7	Sep 23 (Thu)	Platform Thinking	
8	Sep 28 (Tue)	American Well (CASE)	A4 (Individual, PDF)
9	Sep 30 (Thu)	Note: Subject to change Flipkart (CASE) + Wayfair (Guest)	
Module 4: Transformation through Technology			
10	Oct 05 (Tue)	Overview of Emerging Technologies	
11	Oct 07 (Thu)	Blockchain (In-class Exercise)	
12	Oct 12 (Tue)	Firm Transformation with Technology The New York Times Paywall (CASE)	A5 (Individual, PDF)
13	Oct 14 (Thu)	Course Summary & Digital Future	
		Project Proposal (Group) Due on Sep 17	
		Project Report (Group) Due on Oct 21	

Note: *The content of some sessions may change.*