Strategy and Leadership in the Accelerated Future of Work

Fall 2022 B
Tuesday/Thursday, 9am-10:30am
Kravis – 640

Professors Jeff Schwartz and Stephan Meier
jls2387@columbia.edu
sm30871@gsb.columbia.edu
Office: Kravis 926
Office hours: by appointment only

Course Assistant: Ayanna Hall <AyHall24@gsb.columbia.edu>

COURSE OVERVIEW

In 2020, the world experienced a rapid shift into the Future of Work (FoW) across various dimensions, compelling business leaders to broaden their horizons, rethink their strategies, and adapt the models they employ for work, workforces, and workplaces. As we look ahead, this acceleration, coupled with disruptive influences such as genAI, will continue to reshape business models, workforce ecosystems, and the dynamics of collaboration between individuals and technology.

This course is designed for advanced MBA students to develop an understanding of the drivers changing the nature of work, jobs, management, and leadership, explore the primary dimensions reshaping work and careers, and to prepare students to lead large organizations and startups with an understanding of these new dynamics.

This is an integrative course designed to link and apply core management disciplines (organization, technology, supply chain, HR, marketing, strategy, finance and operations) with the complexities leaders face redesigning and re-imagining work, employing new workforce ecosystem models, and rethinking workplaces, collaboration and virtual work.

Topics will include the changing nature of work with special attention on human-machine teams, the expanding nature of the workforce including the growth and challenges of the open talent economy (and the combination of on balance sheet employees and alternative employment models), and the evolving nature of workplace arrangements with a focus on remote, hybrid workplaces strategies. In exploring the impact on leadership, the course will consider the changing nature of careers (including the longevity dividend, the multi-generation
workforce, and the challenges of life-long learning and re-invention); the dynamics of organizational strategies shifting beyond hierarchical (bureaucratic and administrative models) to ecosystems, networks, teams, and platforms; the opportunity to expand leadership and management models from a focus on direction and control to teaming, development, social dynamics and design. The course will conclude with consideration of how these changes impact individual workers, business and organization managers, and an introduction to public policy implications.

The course is designed around active student participation including recent case studies, class debates on key topics, and discussions with leading practitioners to understand how to manage and lead the accelerated future of work. The class builds on insights about human behavior and microstructure, and as such will be relevant for large and small organizations.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

This course is organized in three parts:

Part 1 is about Strategy and the FoW. This module builds on strategy formulation and how the FoW is affecting different business models differently and is changing the way we think about business strategy and corporate scope.

Part 2 is about how automation and AI is changing work. How is technology and human-machine collaboration changing jobs, skills, teams, and work. And what are the implications for business leaders as managers and their roles in policy and society.

Part 3 is about how workplaces and workforces have to change in an accelerated FoW. How teams are formed and interact is changing rapidly and influencing how firms are organized in a world of networks, teams, and platforms. This will include the changing nature of workforce strategies and the role of internal and external talent markets and workplaces through hybrid and remote work and shifts in careers and workforce composition.

The class will conclude with an examination of the managerial and public policy and societal implications for business leaders and the changing nature of work, workforces, and workplaces.

CONNECTION TO THE CORE

The learning in this course will utilize, build on, and extend concepts covered in the following core courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Course</th>
<th>Connection with Core</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Formulation</td>
<td>1. Competitive Advantage</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Competitive Dynamics</td>
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<td>3. Corporate Scope</td>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Individual and group biases</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Introduction to networks</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
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**CONNECTION TO OTHER ELECTIVES**

This course is complementary to several electives. The most important ones are the following:

*Economics of Organizational Strategy* (B8215) is a course that sheds light on the inner workings of firms and how strategy informs how workers have to be organized. The course focuses on HR policies such as recruitment, compensation, and performance management while this class is about how the FoW is changing how leaders think about HR. The topics are obviously interlinked and both courses should be taken in order to get the full picture of how HR strategies are changing in the future. *Advanced Org Change* (B8512) is about the principles of new management approaches to structure, processes and norms which fits the current era of a new workforce (millennials), of new complexities in managing globally and digitally, and the onset of disruptive and VUCA threats. As such, it focuses on the emerging laboratory of new management approaches and revolutions called Management 2.0. It focuses on a set of organizational inventions—designs and cultures— which are meant to be more agile and responsive. It is complementary to this course’s focus on the concept of the FoW is affecting strategic decisions.

*Technology Strategy* (B8570) provides an introduction to the strategy management of technology. The class is about how to integrate technology into strategic decisions and how strategy is affected by technology. The class is about business models being affected by technology while this class is about how technology changes the workplace profoundly. Both classes are complementary.

*People Analytics and Strategy* (B8590) is about how data analytics can help firms make better personnel decisions. The course touches on how data allows us to make better HR decisions while this class is about how the FoW changed organizations, strategy and leadership in a permanent way.

**COURSE ADMINISTRATION AND GRADING**

Grading will be based on 1) class participation, 2) preparation (in small groups) of a position statement about the effects and impact of automation and AI on work and jobs, 3) mid-term case write-up (individually with GenAI as a partner), and 4) an optional final project. These components are weighted in the following way to calculate the course grade:

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<tr>
<td>1. Class Participation (weekly)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>2. Position Statement and PPT (1)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Mid-term case write-up (1)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Optional Final Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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All the foregoing components of the grade are individual of type C vis-à-vis the honor code.
A student who only participates actively in class and does a good job on the case write-up and group debate can receive a maximum grade of HP. Students who wish to receive an H must also submit an individual final project as described below in addition to actively participating in class and doing well on the case write-up and group debate presentation. There is no reason to do a final project unless you are going to put forth a serious effort on all three components of the grade.

1. Class Participation
Your participation is essential for both your own learning and that of other students. Because this is a case-based course, most of the learning will take place in our class discussion of these very cases. We expect that every student will arrive having done the required readings and be prepared to answer the day’s assignment questions. Students should also expect to be cold called in class. 40% of your overall course grade will be your participation grade, which is further decomposed into three components: 1) Poll question completion (10%), 2) Frequency of class participation (10%), and 3) Quality of class participation (20%).

Poll question: There is one poll question for each case and guest speaker in class. Poll questions will be posted as assignments in your Canvas Calendar. They require you to read the relevant case or article and give a short response to 1-2 questions. You must submit your answer to the poll question through Canvas by 7AM on the day the relevant case or guest speaker is scheduled for class. Two of the poll questions, you will discuss with ChatGPT (instructions will follow).

Slack: The blog-like platform allows you to continue our discussions outside of the classroom. Students are expected to post relevant articles to the course material and actively engage with your classmates. At minimum, students are expected to participate in at least three (3) Slack contributions during the class term. Students should be prepared to speak about their comments in class.

Frequency and quality of class participation: Both the frequency and quality of your class participation will be affected by non-attendance. Obviously, not coming to a class means that you will not have a chance to take part in class discussion, which is a critical component of your overall grade. In terms of the quality, the best class comments:

- Articulate a clear stance or argument
- Raise issues from past classes, current events, or other anecdotes that are relevant to the discussion
- Show curiosity and a willingness to experiment
- Use data, examples, or your own personal and professional experience to support arguments
- Be respectful when disagreeing by summarizing the contravening opinion before delivering your own

If you are comfortable with participating in class, I encourage you to help others feel safe about participating by inviting further discussion or referring to points that have already been made by your classmates. Students are also expected to be present, prepared, and participate per the Columbia Core Culture. For excused absences, please submit the OSA administered survey on Canvas before the session you have to miss to make sure that your participation grade does not suffer. Use of electronic devices in class is not allowed except in answering Poll Everywhere questions during class.

2. Preparation for Class Debate on effect of automation (write-up and PPT to be submitted by November 2 at 2pm EST).
The influence of AI-driven automation has already left a significant imprint on both our personal lives and professional endeavors. With the introduction of ChatGPT, and other forms of Gen AI, a prominent question that has been under discussion for years has taken center stage: Will AI and automation replace jobs, or will it enhance them? In session 5, we will delve into the wealth of evidence and perspectives surrounding this debate.

Working in small teams (groups of 4 to be assigned), you will be tasked with crafting a comprehensive paper that compiles the supporting evidence for either side of this argument. However, we will also assign each team to adopt a specific stance that you will vigorously defend during our class discussions. In class, we will randomly select two teams, each representing a different perspective, to present their findings through a concise two-page PowerPoint presentation. All students will be required to submit their group paper and PPT on Canvas before session 5.

Deliverables:
   i) A written document summarizing the evidence regarding the impact of automation on jobs (with a word limit of 1,000 words).
   ii) A two-page PowerPoint presentation succinctly presenting the evidence supporting your chosen standpoint.

3. Case Write-up On Unilever Remote Work in Manufacturing (due November 27, 2pm EST).
You must complete one required case write up for the case on Unilever: Remote Work In Manufacturing Case using the FOW workbook framework outlined in the first week. A standard response would include a summary of the business problem, how the business problem’s solution directly contributes to the company’s strategic priorities (cost/value/meaning), how the specific challenges relate to future of work, workforce, and workplace dynamics, and a summary of management implications, options and recommendations. The objective is to view the cases through the integrative lens of the FOW as part of the corporate strategy and not narrowly as a functional problem where we are seeking to identify a particular tool or approach. Case write-ups should analyze and persuade rather than recite facts. Each write-up should not exceed 1000 words, which is approximately equivalent to three (3) pages at 12-pt Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins.

4. Optional Final Project
The final project is for students hoping to receive an H in the course. However, doing a final project does not guarantee that a student will receive an H, and receiving an H also requires doing well in participation and the two class assignments.

For the final project, we ask that you analyze and evaluate a particular strategic decision or (set of decisions) facing a company or industry using the concepts from the course (essay form, 1,800 word limit, including all exhibits). While providing some details is necessary, you should emphasize analysis over description. Do not use cases covered in this course or other courses at Columbia Business School. You are welcome to make use of industry contacts. We are also happy to provide a real-world ‘case’ if you have trouble deciding on your own.

Students who wish to do a final project must sign up on Canvas to confirm the project’s topic. Not signing up with a proposal means that you will not have an opportunity to submit a final project. Discussing your topic with us in advance is advised but not required. The optional final project’s due date will be confirmed on Canvas and announced during the start of the course.
CLASSROOM NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS
Students are expected to adhere to CBS Core Culture in this class by being Present, Prepared, and Participating.

Present:
- On time and present for every session
- We will have assigned seating throughout the class
- Attendance tracked

Prepared:
- Complete pre-work needed, expect cold calling
- Bring nameplates

Participating:
- Constructive participation expected and part of grade
- No electronic devices unless explicitly called for by the instructor

READINGS
All cases, required readings, and videos will be made available via links in the Calendar section of the course Canvas page. There is no physical casebook for this course.

Optional, but Highly Recommended Readings


Altman, Elizabeth; Kiron, David; Schwartz, Jeff, and Jones, Robin. WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEMS: Reaching Strategic Goals with People, Partners, and Technologies. MIT Press 2023

INSTRUCTORS

Jeff Schwartz is a retired senior partner and advisor at Deloitte Consulting where he founded and led the firm’s Future of Work practice in the United States. Jeff is the Vice President of Insights and Impact for Gloat, the leading startup providing enterprise talent and career marketplace and skills analytics platforms. He is the author of WORK DISRUPTED and Co-author of Workforce Ecosystems, and was a visiting lecturer at Cornell Tech’s MBA program. He has been a consulting partner for 25 years and has extensive experience in workforce and workplace transformation, work redesign, and organization and human capital issues in global and growth markets. He holds an MBA from the Yale School of Management and an MPA in development economics from Princeton’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs.

Stephan Meier is the chair of the Management Division and the James P. Gorman Professor of Business at Columbia Business School. His research and teaching interest is on the human side of strategy, i.e. human decision-making and organizing workers are at the center of a sustainable competitive advantage. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Zurich, was previously a senior economist at the Center for Behavioral Economics and Decision-Making at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. He also teaches the core strategy formulation class and various immersion classes.