



## GENERAL INFORMATION

Course: BUS 648: *Korea and Thailand*  
Term: Winter 2017, May 1 — May 14  
Professor: Dr. Michael Roberts  
Office: Visiting Professor  
Office Hours: By appointment  
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide students with a rich introduction to doing business in two Asian countries: Korea and Thailand. The field trip focuses on a variety of business and cultural aspects of both of these countries. There are two blended themes in the course. First is to understand the business environments, and the second is to examine the approaches to sustainable development taken in these two countries.

1. To understand and compare and contrast the Korean business environment with the Thai environment;
2. To understand how to do business as a foreigner in Korea and Thailand;
3. To provide face-to-face interactions with key business executives and scholars regarding issues affecting businesses in Korea and Thailand;
4. To understand Korean and Thai culture, the political and economic dynamics of the Asian continent, and its role in the global economy.

The course will include three full-day sessions (on Saturdays, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm) during the semester at the University of Alberta Business School, and a two-week study tour of Korea and Thailand, with various activities revolving around partner universities in Seoul (KAIST), and Bangkok (Sasin).

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. **Case Package:** Course reading materials will be distributed prior to class and available on Blackboard. Given the compressed nature of our preparation classes, students will be expected to carefully read all materials prior to class.
2. **Blackboard (Bb):** I use Bb as my primary method of communicating with you. In addition to direct communications, you will also find additional materials posted to Bb including any syllabus updates, an overview of each session including your required preparation, copies of required and supplemental reading, as well as news posts. You should check Bb daily for any new information posted relevant to upcoming sessions.

### IMPORTANT:

**Since e-mails that I send to the class originate from the Blackboard system, it is your responsibility for the accuracy of your e-mail address to Blackboard by insuring that your Blackboard account settings forward your messages to your preferred internet provider (IP) account.**



## COURSE NOTES

1. **Course Format and the Case Discussion Method.** In order to achieve the objectives of the course, we will devote the majority of our class time (both at the University of Alberta and with our partner universities in Asia) to the analysis and discussion of selected business cases. Cases provide a natural "test-bed" for theory and provide vivid examples that aid memory of concepts. While nothing can surpass firsthand personal industry and managerial experience as a basis for analysis and decision-making, case analysis is an indispensable proxy for the kind of knowledge that can only be gained through years of experience and research. Each case is intended to teach us something specific, yet each can teach many things. We will not attempt to exhaust each case of all its learning experiences, but rather build up a "war chest" of analytical tools, skills and insights, progressively over all the selected cases.

There are other reasons for employing the case discussion method of instruction. First, it allows you to develop skills at problem definition in addition to problem solving. Cases typically do not have an obvious set of tasks whose performance will lead to mastery. Rather, they force you to sift through a mass of information, some of it irrelevant or contradictory, in order to identify the important or strategic issues. Second, the case method gives you a chance to deal with ambiguity. Most cases do not have obvious "right" answers. Managers must be able to function in situations where the right answer is not known, without falling into the trap of assuming that any answer is as good as another. Some analyses and proposed strategies are clearly wrong, and some are clearly better than others. A popular phrase in case analysis classes is "**There are no right answers, but there are wrong answers.**" Case discussion techniques provide a chance to learn the *meaning* of analytical rigor in situations other than open-and-shut problems.

While I or the professors at our partner universities will direct class discussions, the quality of your learning experience will be directly determined by: **(1) your degree of preparation, active listening, and participation, and (2) your classmates' preparation, listening, and participation.** Some will not agree with you, and you may be asked to defend your argument or change your mind. So long as criticism is directed at arguments and not at individuals, is relevant to the issues at hand and coherently argued, it is very much welcomed.

2. **Case Preparation.** Because this course relies heavily on case material, extensive *before-class* preparation and *in-class* participation are required to ensure the class' success.
  1. *Preparation for a case discussion* should begin with a rapid reading of the assigned case and other materials.
  2. Then, it is worthwhile to review the discussion questions posted on Blackboard for clues as to what issues require special attention.
  3. The next step is normally to re-read the case carefully, taking notes which sort information, facts, and observations under a number of relevant headings. Push yourself to reach definitive conclusions before you come to class.
  4. You should perform quantitative analyses, "crunching" whatever numbers are available. It is also very important to provide quantitative support wherever possible, particularly when exploring various hypotheses as to the nature and importance of certain phenomena. If the requisite data are not available in the case, a precise description of what data are missing often triggers ideas for making creative use of the information that is available. It is usually worthwhile to identify trends in the firm or industry, preferably with a quantitative measurement. Some of these trends, often very important ones, will not be flagged in the text of the case.
  5. Finally, preparation will ideally include notes that can be used to guide your interventions in class discussions.



You will probably want to, and are strongly encouraged to, form *study groups* that will meet regularly to share insights and ideas about the assigned cases. While this is, of course, voluntary, past experience has shown that satisfactory performance in this course, and a good grade, depend on it.

### COURSE EVALUATION

Your course grade is based on both an individual and a group portion. In order to pass this course successfully, a passing grade (> 50%) must be achieved in each evaluation component listed below.

EVALUATION CONCEPTS	% of Grade
Class Participation (Before and During the Trip)	35%
Study Tour Professionalism	10%
Group Project	25%
Learning Takeaways from the Study Tour In-class: Due April 8th Korea: Due May 13th Thailand: Due May 20th	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Final grades represent how you perform in the class relative to other students. Your grade will not be based on a mandated target, but on your performance. Three items are considered when assigning final grades:

1. Your average weighted score as a percentage of the available points for all assignments (the points you receive divided by the number of points possible).
2. The overall average percentage score within the class.
3. Your ranking among all students in the class.

The distribution of grades will closely follow the guidelines of the University of Alberta.

Prior to the trip, grades will be posted as “IN” or incomplete. Students who need a grade submitted for convocation will receive a preliminary grade of a “C+.” Once the trip has concluded, then the official grades will be submitted to the MBA office and grade changes will be processed.

**Class Participation.** This part of your grade is based on effective contributions to class discussions. Contributions to class discussion include dialog during lecture, participating during case discussions, or engaging in in-class activities such as the advising proposals and the measurement exercise. These contributions should include input that is relevant to the course content and the topic of discussion. Case courses work well, and are enjoyable effective learning experiences, if everyone is an active productive participant. Your overall class participation will be closely monitored in the sessions at the University of Alberta and in the sessions at our partner universities. In grading in-class participation, I will look at both the *quantity* and *quality* of your class contributions and/or interventions. In-class participation is obviously a function of preparation, skills, attitude, and a willingness to actively commit yourself in front of me, the faculty from our partner universities, and your peers. A classroom is a cost-free environment for experimenting and learning to "play the game." Make use of it. I recognize that some students are far



more comfortable than others with in-class participation. However, **it is important you make an effort every class to contribute in some meaningful way.** Please feel free to come and discuss with me ways to enhance your participation.

With regard to quality, the dimensions that we look for include:

- *Relevance* – does the comment bear on the subject at hand? Comments that do not link up with what the discussion is focusing on can actually detract from the learning experience.
- *Causal Linkage* – are the logical antecedents or consequences of a particular argument traced out? Comments that push the implications of a fact or idea as far as possible are generally superior.
- *Responsiveness* – does the comment react in an important way to what someone else has said?
- *Analysis* – is the reasoning employed consistent and logical?
- *Evidence* – have data from the case, from personal experience, from general knowledge been employed to support the assertions made?
- *Importance* – does the contribution further our understanding of the issues at hand? Is a connection made with other cases we have analyzed?
- *Clarity* – is the comment succinct and understandable? Does it stick to the subject or does it wander?

Before each class discussion, it is expected that all students will make brief notes or outlines – identify critical problems, analyze relevant numbers, do the financials, generate alternative recommended courses of action, and generate ideas about how to implement them. You should rely on these notes when contributing to the class discussion.

**Students may be called on, at random, to take the lead in various aspects of class discussions.**

Typically, we will ask one or more participants to start the class by answering specific questions such as “If you were the person in charge in this situation, what would you do?” The quality of the contributions made during these periods affect a student’s overall participation grade. Factual misstatements, comments that demonstrate a lack of adequate preparation, or comments that come late in a discussion that distract the class and indicate that the student has not been actively listening will be noted as “negative” course participation.

***Behavior (During the Trip).*** We use a *Three Strikes* rule to evaluate “good behavior” on the course. We have listed a few actions by individuals that can cause significant problems to the group as a whole, and can therefore affect final grades. Further verbal clarification will also be provided.

- Missing deadlines for submitting payments, required paperwork or providing information to coordinators.
- Late by five minutes or more for any activity on the course.
- Inappropriate attire - business casual dress is required for lectures, meetings and company visits.
- Inappropriate behavior of any kind, which could complicate group arrangements, potentially damage relationships or reflect poorly on the Alberta School of Business.
- Consistently appearing overly tired during a lecture, meeting, or company visit.

These actions will impact your grade as follows.

1. First Offence – Warning
2. Second Offence – Lose one grade (i.e. A becomes B; B becomes C, etc.)
3. Third Offence – Failure of the Course



NOTE: The “Three Strikes Rule” is for minor offenses. For any offense which significantly embarrasses the University of Alberta, I reserve the right to give a failing grade for the course to any student and/or to request the student immediately leave the trip without any reimbursement.

In addition to the three-strike rule, students will be evaluate on the degree of their professionalism for 10% of the final mark. A full 10% will be awarded to students who consistently show a very high degree of professionalism and enthusiasm throughout the entire study tour.

**Group Project.** For this group project, you will self-select into five groups. It is your responsibility to form teams. The purpose of the projects is to help provide the class with a deeper understanding of either Korea or Thailand before we experience the countries. The projects take one of three forms: a case analysis of an existing case related to one of the country, research on a specific topic, or market entry proposal. Deliverables include a 30-minute in-class presentation with quality slides, and active participation in critiquing other group project presentations after their presentation in class.

#### Cases

- American Fast Food In Korea
- Transforming Korea Inc.: Financial Crisis and Institutional Reform
- Black Canyon Coffee

#### Research Topics

- Canada Korea Free Trade Agreement: Opportunities for Firms in Alberta
- Thailand Today: A guide to understanding the current cultural and business environment in Thailand today

#### We Could Bring It There

- Using MarketLine Advantage, Thailand In-depth PESTLE Insights as a starting point, propose a product or service that you could bring from Canada to Thailand
- Using MarketLine Advantage, Korea In-depth PESTLE Insights as a starting point, propose a product or service that you could bring from Canada to Korea

**Learning Takeaways** Think about this assignment as the “exam” for the course. The purpose of this assignment is to think carefully about one or more lecture or case discussion that occurred in the pre-departure classes; in a lecture or company visit in Korea; and in a lecture or company visit in Thailand. In less than 1000 words, describe what you learned, why it was valuable, and provide your own insight or critique of the learning activity.

### FORMAL POLICY STATEMENTS

Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

**Missed Assignments.** Approval for an excused absence from term work is at the discretion of the instructor as per §23.3(1) of the University Calendar. Any student who is incapacitated because of illness, is suffering from severe domestic affliction, or has other compelling reasons (including religious conviction) may apply for an excused absence for a missed assignment. If you have a conflict please discusses it with me beforehand and I will be happy to find a good solution with you. In fairness to other students, I will rarely accept excuses once an assignment deadline has passed.

**Appropriate Conduct.** My goal in this course is to create a supportive environment for learning based on open, constructive debate. This requires all of us to be engaged with the material and with each other in a



professional manner, with courtesy and respect for each other's individuality. Discrimination, malicious criticism, and disruption of class are examples of conduct that are not acceptable.

Lecture Recordings. Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the instructor. (Dr. Roberts gives permission to any student to record his lectures in accordance with the directives stated above.)

Academic Integrity. The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [this link](#)) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. I will immediately forward any suspicious cases to the Associate Dean of the Undergraduate Program. *Plagiarism will lead to the evaluation of assignments as "fail" (0%). Plagiarism can also lead to a student failing the course.*

Other Resources. If you have any personal concerns, the following support numbers may be helpful resources.

- Support Network, Crisis Support: 780.482.4357
- Community Urgent Services and Stabilization: 780.342.7777



#	Date	Day	Topic	Activities	Preparation	Deliverables
1	Jan 14	Sat	<p><b>Introduction to Korea</b></p> <p><i>(I anticipate we will need the entire time from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introductions               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Instructors and Staff</li> <li>b. Students</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Overview of the Study Tour               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Study Tour Itself</li> <li>b. 3 Saturday Sessions</li> <li>c. Expectations of Students</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Group Project: Introduction to Group Project</li> <li>4. Lundbeck Case</li> <li>5. Overview of Korea. Korea: A country to Watch</li> </ol>	Read: Lundbeck Case	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participant in Class</li> <li>2. Establish Groups</li> </ol>
2	Mar 11	Sat	<p><b>Introduction to Thailand</b></p> <p><i>(I anticipate we will finish by 2:00 pm but instructor will stay as needed)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ABB's Hydropower Sustainability Dilemma</li> <li>2. Detailed overview of the Study tour</li> <li>3. Individual group meetings and meetings with instructor (Professor Roberts will be available all afternoon to help with project development.)</li> </ol>	<p>Read: ABB's Hydropower Sustainability Dilemma</p> <p>Prepare to work on Group Assignment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participant in Class</li> <li>2. Work with group</li> </ol>
3	Apr 1	Sat	<p><b>(Group Presentations)</b></p> <p><i>(I anticipate we will finish by 2:00 pm)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ellen Moore (A): Living and Working in Korea</li> <li>2. Group Project Presentations</li> <li>3. Last minute instructions</li> </ol>	<p>Read: Ellen Moore (A): Living and Working in Korea</p> <p>Prepare for Presentations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participant in Class</li> <li>2. Group Presentations</li> </ol>