

**AMBERTON UNIVERSITY**  
**e-COURSE SYLLABUS**

**BUS3310.E1 Competitive Analysis**  
**SPRING 2021**

**PROFESSOR INFORMATION:**

Name: Dr. Blair Stephenson, Ph.D.  
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Email Address: **BStephenson@Amberton.edu**

**COURSE INFORMATION:**

BUS3310.E1 Competitive Analysis  
Level: Undergraduate  
Beginning Date of Session: Saturday, March 13, 2021  
Ending Date of Session: Thursday, May 20, 2021  
**Student access available to the Student Portal: Saturday, March 13, 2021)**

*Students enrolled in distance learning courses are not assessed any additional fees for security or identity verification.*

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

None

**TEXTBOOK(S) AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

Title: Business and Competitive Analysis: Effective Application of New and Classic Methods  
Author: Craig S. Fleisher and Babette Bensoussan  
Publisher: Pearson Education, Inc.  
Year Published: 2015  
Edition: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
ISBN: 10: 0-13-308640-2 or 13: 978-0-13-308640-9 (New, Used, or Electronic Texts Are Okay.)  
Price: Available at <http://amberton.ecampus.com>

Amberton University has an agreement with eCampus.com to provide a full-service online bookstore to students. The Amberton University Virtual Bookstore is accessible through the University's website, [www.Amberton.edu](http://www.Amberton.edu). There is also a bookstore link in the Student Portal.

The AU Virtual Bookstore provides an easy to use interface, online buyback of books, and same day shipment of most titles with an average delivery time of 2-3 days depending on the student's location. Textbook options include new, used, rental, and electronic media as available.

Since no books are sold on campus, students should plan accordingly and purchase their books in advance of the first day of class, allowing time for shipping. Be certain you are enrolled in the course before purchasing your book(s). All textbook information (Title, Author, ISBN, etc.) is available in the course syllabi so students can shop competitively. Most textbooks can be purchased from many different textbook vendors. Some textbooks may only be available on the University's Virtual Bookstore. Students should be careful to obtain the exact resource(s) required for the course.

**APA Requirement**

APA (American Psychological Association) style is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the 7th edition, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page. For more information, please consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (7th ed.). All coursework at Amberton University will comply with the standards contained in the APA Publication Manual.

**UPON COMPLETION OF THE COURSE, THE STUDENT WILL BE COMPETENT IN:**

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| 1. Analyzing the variables that influence demand and their economic and marketing significance for |
|--|

competitive strategy.
2. Interpreting the relationship between the demand function and the various revenue relationships of a firm and distinguishing revenue relationships in terms of market structure.
3. Applying research techniques and data sources to analyze competitors within an industry.
4. Comparing the link between price changes, elasticity of demand, and changes in total revenue.
5. Identifying the market structures of perfect competition, monopolistic competition, oligopoly, and monopoly.
6. Evaluating the overall pricing objectives of firms which may be demand based, cost based or competition based.
7. Interpreting the economic and marketing significance of various pricing practices such as price discrimination, target return pricing, penetration pricing, product line pricing, and the market conditions favoring such strategies.
8. Applying a specified model to assess the essence and degree of competition within an industry.
9. Evaluating the use of competitive strategy to create a competitive advantage for a firm.
10. Comparing the effects of economies of scale on market entry and pricing strategies.
11. Evaluating the economic impact of prosperity, recession, scarcity, and stagflation on marketing decisions.
12. Analyzing the influence of industry structure on competitive marketing strategies.
13. Identifying the effects of price, promotion, product, and distribution on demand.
14. Understanding how company objectives should lead to marketing objectives.
15. Understanding the different channels of distribution: manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing, internet sellers.

#### **COURSE POLICIES:**

1. Read and complete all assignments, papers, and exams by the scheduled due date. Assignments are due **no later than midnight**, Central Standard Time (time in Dallas, TX) on the published due date.
2. Late Assignments: An assignment submitted after the due date will be assessed a penalty of **5%** for each day or partial day that it is late. Work submitted more than five (5) days after the scheduled due date will **NOT** be accepted without written permission from Dr. Stephenson. There are **no options for extra-credit or make-up work** in this course.
3. Assignments must be submitted through Moodle Course Management System and Dr. Stephenson must be able to open each assignment in order for it to be considered on time.
4. Assignments will typically be available at one (1) minute after midnight on the first day the assignment is open on Moodle; and will close at one (1) minute (23:59) until midnight on the last day the assignment is open on Moodle.
5. When submitting an assignment as an attachment to an email or an attachment to a Moodle assignment, please include your name, MKT6210.E1, and the assignment number in the subject line of the email as well as on the first page or title page of the assignment. If required, file attachments may be submitted in **Word 2010 or later versions of Word** for this course.
6. **Plagiarism is strictly forbidden in this class. All written assignments will be submitted to an online review service to check for plagiarized material. If 15% or more of a student's assignment is found to be plagiarized, the assignment will be given a zero score. Be certain that all of the material that is drawn from a specific reference source is properly cited according to APA 7<sup>th</sup> ed. standards.**
7. **The last day to submit any and all assignments is May 18, 2021.**

#### ***Student's Responsibilities***

This syllabus contains information, policies and procedures for a specific course. By enrolling, the student agrees to read, understand and abide by the policies, rules, regulations, and ethical standards of Amberton University as contained in the current university catalog and schedule of classes.

#### ***Attendance Policy:***

Regular and punctual class attendance and engagement is expected at Amberton University. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor as soon as possible. If a student intends on withdrawing from a course, it is the student's responsibility to follow the university's policy on formally withdrawing from a course. Ceasing to attend classes **does not** constitute an official withdrawal.

Attendance in a lecture course is defined as punctual arrival to, and engagement in, a full lecture session. Attendance in a distance learning course is defined as active participation in the weekly online class sessions. "Active participation" can be defined as: submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, engaging in an interactive tutorial, participating in an online discussion forum (or chat session), or initiating (or responding to) a communication with a faculty member about an academic assignment or the subject matter of the course. A student not meeting these requirements may be dropped at the discretion of Amberton University.

**Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism is using another person’s work as your own. Plagiarism is a violation of the University’s code of student ethical conduct and is one that is taken seriously. Amberton University operated on an honor system, and honesty and integrity are essential characteristics of all who are associated with the institution. All Amberton University students are expected to abide by the honor system and maintain academic integrity in all of their work. Amberton University and its instructors monitor student work for plagiarism and reserve the right to submit such work to technology-based anti-plagiarism services and applications at any time.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR:**

**E-Mail Contact:** Send a message via Moodle to Dr. Stephenson by March 21<sup>st</sup> to verify your ability to send and receive messages via the Moodle BUS3310.E1 course’s messaging function. Your message should confirm that you have read and understand the course syllabus, course expectations, and Moodle Communications Guide. *To send a message through Moodle, log onto this course in Moodle; click on “Participants” in the left navigation bar; select my name; click on “Send a Message”; type your confirmation message in the box provided; and click “Send Message”.*

This course covers the methods which could be applied to effectively perform a competitive analysis within a modern organization. **The course will be divided into sections Defining & Performing Competitive Analysis, Avoiding Pitfalls & Communicating Analysis, Performing a Better SWOT Analysis, and an Examination of Four Competitive Analysis Methods.** Two written exercises (20% each), five discussion forums (5% each), and a final research paper (35%) will be included. The sections will have due dates spread throughout the semester. The written exercises will contain essay-type questions. Each discussion forum will require that a student posts a well-developed answer to the question(s) posed by Dr. Stephenson for that specific forum – AND a well thought out response to **at least TWO** other student’s postings. The final research paper will require the student to prepare an in-depth competitive analysis of an existing business or business concept of his/her own choosing (with the prior approval of Dr. Stephenson).

- See **Moodle Course Calendar** for Weekly Assignment Due Dates.
- See **Moodle Weekly Assignments** for the Content of Specific Assignments and Readings. If a conflict exists between the syllabus and Moodle, Moodle will take priority.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Competencies Covered</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<b>Week 1:</b> March 13, 2021 – March 20, 2021	<b>Topic: Business &amp; Competitive Analysis</b> a. Understanding the Terminology b. Analysis as a Component in the Intelligence Cycle c. Competitive Analysis & Decision Making	<b>Readings:</b> Text: Chapter 1 Read and become familiar with course expectations, syllabus and materials <b>Assignments:</b> Expectations Acknowledgement: Complete Personal Profile Week 1 – Discussion Forum Welcome and Introductions:	1, 3, 8, 14	03/21/21

<p><b>Week 2:</b> March 21, 2021 – March 27, 2021</p>	<p><b>Topic: Performing an Analysis Process</b>  a. Understanding the “Customers” of Your Analysis  b. Intelligence Analysis at Different Org. Levels  c. Evaluating Inputs into Analysis  d. Making Sense of the Analysis</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Text: Chapter 2  <b>Assignments:</b>  Week 2 – Discussion Forum #1: Graded 5 Points</p>	<p>1, 3, 8, 14</p>	<p>03/28/21</p>
<p><b>Week 3:</b> March 28, 2021 – April 03, 2021</p>	<p><b>Topic: Avoiding Analysis Pitfalls</b>  a. Trade-Offs  b. Analysis of Failure &amp; Four-Level Model  c. Movement to New Generation of Analysis  d. Overcoming Barriers</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Text: Chapter 3  Marketing Article/Case Study  <b>Assignments:</b>  Week 3 – Discussion Forum #2: Graded 5 Points</p>	<p>3, 8, 12</p>	<p>04/04/21</p>
<p><b>Week 4:</b> April 04, 2021 – April 10, 2021</p>	<p><b>Topic: Applying the FAROUT Method</b>  a. Evaluation scheme for Assessing Adequacy of Tools &amp; Techniques</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Text: Read Chapter 5  Review: Chapters 1,2, 3  <b>Assignments:</b>  <b>Essay Question Exercise #1: 20 points</b></p>	<p>1, 3</p>	<p>04/11/21</p>
<p><b>Week 5:</b> April 11, 2021 – April 17, 2021</p>	<p><b>Topic: Communicating Analysis Results</b>  a. Art of Effective Communication  b. Packaging Analysis Results  c. Delivering the Message  d. Creating Analysis Reports &amp; Products  e. Communication Difficulties</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Text: Chapter 4,  <b>Assignments:</b>  Week 5 – Discussion Forum #3: Graded 5 Points</p>	<p>3, 7, 8, 9, 14</p>	<p>10/18/21</p>
<p><b>Week 6:</b> April 18, 2021 – April 24, 2021</p>	<p><b>Topic: A Better SWOT Analysis</b>  a. Strategic Rationale  b. Key Intelligence Topics  c. Strengths &amp; Advantages  d. Weaknesses &amp; Limitations  e. Process for Applying SWOT Technique</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Text: Chapter 6,  Marketing Article/Case Study  <b>Assignments:</b>  Week 6 – Discussion Forum #4: Graded 5 Points  <b>TOPIC SELECTION FOR FINAL RESEARCH REPORT DUE</b></p>	<p>3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15</p>	<p>10/25/21</p>
<p><b>Week 7:</b> April 25, 2021 – May 01, 2021</p>	<p><b>Topic: Critical Success Factors Analysis.</b>  a. Strategic Rationale &amp; Implications  b. Strengths &amp; Advantages  c. Weaknesses &amp; Limitations  d. Process for</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Text: Chapter 12  <b>Assignments:</b>  <b>Essay Question Exercise #2: 20 points</b></p>	<p>1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15</p>	<p>05/02/21</p>

	Applying the Technique			
<b>Week 8:</b> May 02, 2021 – May 08, 2021	<b>Topic: Business Model Analysis</b> a. Strategic Rationale & Implications b. Strengths & Advantages c. Weaknesses & Limitations d. Process for Applying the Technique	<b>Readings:</b> Text: Chapter 9 <b>Assignments:</b> Week 8 – Discussion Forum #5: Graded 5 Points	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	05/09/21
<b>Week 9:</b> May 09, 2021 – May 15, 2021	<b>Topic: Competitive Positioning Analysis</b> a. Strategic Rationale & Implications b. Strengths & Advantages c. Weaknesses & Limitations d. Process for Applying the Technique	<b>Readings:</b> Text: Chapter 10 <b>Assignments:</b> Prepare Final Research Report	3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14	05/16/21
<b>Week 10:</b> May 16, 2021 – May 18, 2021	<b>Topic: Final Research Report AND Technology Forecasting</b> a. Strategic Rationale & Implications b. Strengths & Advantages c. Weaknesses & Limitations d. Process for Applying the Technique	<b>Readings:</b> Text: Chapter 27 Research for Final Report <b>Assignment:</b> Prepare and Submit Final Report: 35 Points	All	05/18/21

### GRADING CRITERIA:

Since the exercises and assignments in this course contain written assessments, Dr. Stephenson expects each student to present his/her material with well-written, coherent, properly structured English appropriate for a high level, undergraduate course with reference citations included correctly. The thoughts and material presented should be original, well-developed and relevant to the specific topic(s) of the assignment. An assignment that is too brief or sparse will typically **NOT** provide an adequate basis for assessing a student's knowledge and research effort on that particular assignment topic. English grammar, spelling, word choice, and usage (APA compliant) are a part of your grade.

Grading for this course will be as follows:

Exercises (2)	40%
Discussion Forums (5)	25%
Final Research Paper	35%

### Zoom Chat Sessions

During the semester, **Dr. Stephenson will be available for online Zoom sessions each Tuesday evening from 8:00 to 8:30 p.m. CST.** These online Zoom sessions will be an opportunity for students to exchange ideas and ask questions. This time is provided as a resource to students in this course. Participation is optional; but Dr. Stephenson does encourage each student to take advantage of this option for personal interaction with other students and the instructor. These Zoom sessions offer an opportunity to gain insight and clarification regarding Dr. Stephenson's expectations – and occasionally, hints that might improve a student's grade. Just sayin'!

### Moodle Discussion Forum

Courses offered on Moodle are also provided with a Discussion Forum area. During this semester, Dr. Stephenson will post a weekly discussion topic question on the Moodle Discussion Forum. During the following week, students are expected to post their **thoughts and responses** regarding the posted topics. These postings will be graded **(25 points during the semester)**; and they do provide an excellent tool for interaction and discussion regarding marketing topics of interest. Each discussion forum will require that a student posts a well-developed answer to the question(s) posed by Dr. Stephenson for that specific forum – **AND** a well thought out response to **at least two other student's postings**.

Undergraduate

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
Below 60	F

### **GRADE NOTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK:**

A successful distance learning experience requires a flow of communication between instructor and student throughout the session. Instructor comments are considered essential to the learning process. Therefore, each assignment/exam submitted will be reviewed, graded and returned to the student in a timely manner along with the appropriate commentary. Students should carefully review all comments.

Final grades are mailed approximately one week after the last day of the session to the student's address of record. Amberton University staff will not post or release grades over the phone. University instructors will not leave a message with comments or grades in any type of media that is not secure.

For questions regarding grades after the semester has ended, students should use their University email account and contact the instructor at the faculty email address as provided above in *Professor Information* area.

### ***Incomplete Grades***

An "I" (incomplete grade) is given at the discretion of the professor and may be given only when an emergency or illness prevents the student from completing course requirements. Should an "I" be granted, the student has 30 days from the end of the session to complete the conditions of the incomplete. An "I" which is not properly removed within 30 days following the session enrolled will become an "F" grade.

### ***How To Withdraw From a Course***

To be official, the class withdrawal must be in writing and signed by the student requesting the withdrawal; no withdrawal is accepted verbally. Please review the "Schedule of Classes" (online or in-print) for procedures for class changes or withdrawals and the refund policy and schedule.

### **COURSE DELIVERY METHODOLOGY:**

This course is offered as a distance-learning course through the Moodle Learning Platform. Amberton's distance learning courses, called e-Courses, are identical to classroom courses in terms of learning outcomes, competencies, and instructor expectations. A student choosing to take an e-Course must have the following skills and technical capabilities:

1. Access to the Internet
2. General knowledge in:
  - Internet browser settings and configuration
  - e-mail and file attachments
  - Uploading and downloading files
  - Using a word processing package
3. Ability to conduct on-line research

Students who have not mastered these skills should not enroll for this course, but should consider enrolling in MIS2110 Computer Concepts and Internet Technologies for instruction in these areas.

## HOW TO ACCESS YOUR COURSE:

### ***Through the Amberton University Student Portal***

Students enrolled in distance learning courses using the Moodle Learning Platform may access the course through the Amberton University Student Portal. The site may be accessed through the University's main page (<http://www.Amberton.edu>) or at <http://apps.Amberton.edu>. After selecting the "Student Portal" link, you will be prompted for a Username and Password.

Use your assigned **username and password** (AUID) as described below to enter the AU Student Portal:

**Username** = your capitalized firstname **initial**+lastname+last 3 digits of your SSN.

\* Use your name exactly as it is listed on the University's records, including any suffixes or hyphenations, such as Jr, Sr, or II, as a part of your username.

For example: James Jones, Jr. SSN: 123-45-6789

Username: JJonesJr789

**Password** = your Amberton University ID# (AUID) **including the dashes**

For example: 04-999-999

Once your login has been validated, you may select from a variety of menu options, including your individual E-Course, email account, Remote Research, General Tools, all Syllabi, Research Tutorials and Electronic Instructor Folders (FTP).

If you are accessing the Student Portal from a public or shared computer, close the browser completely when finished, or click on the Logout button. For security purposes, no other person should have access to your Username or Password. If you feel your information has been compromised or if you experience technical difficulties, contact the e-course system administrator at: [e-sysop@amberton.edu](mailto:e-sysop@amberton.edu)

If you have lost or do not know your Amberton ID#, please contact the Student Services Office 972/279-6511 or [advisor@Amberton.edu](mailto:advisor@Amberton.edu) for a replacement AUID card. You must know your Amberton ID# to gain access to the course and to send email to your professor.

### ***Through the Amberton University Moodle Website***

Students enrolled in distance learning courses using the Moodle Learning Platform may also access the course by going to: <http://moodle.Amberton.edu>

For those utilizing Moodle for the first time, the **username and password** for the Moodle Learning Platform will be emailed to the student's University email account prior to the start of the course. For those returning to Moodle who do not remember their username and password, click on the link "*Forgotten your username or password*" available on the Moodle log in page (<http://moodle.Amberton.edu>). Otherwise use the same username and password as previous session.

### **Moodle Tutorial:**

Upon successful log in and access to the Moodle learning platform, there is a *Student Moodle Tutorials* course available, to learn about the basics of Moodle. Simply click on the link for the *Student Moodle Tutorials* and read through the various learning topics: Navigating; Communicating; Assignments & Exams; Grades; and Student Resources.

### **COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:**

Students will communicate with faculty through the Moodle Learning Platform or the Amberton University email system.

Each student enrolled is assigned an Amberton email account, which gives the student access to the Amberton email system ([my.Amberton.edu](mailto:my.Amberton.edu)). This email account is provided by Google Apps for Education.

Students are encouraged to check their email regularly for University news, notices, and to communicate with instructors.

The student's assigned email address would be Username@my.Amberton.edu

Example: LJones-Smith789@my.Amberton.edu

The student Username is determined by:

firstname initial+lastname+last 3 digits of student ssn.

For example: Linda Jones-Smith   SSN: 123-45-6789  
Email Address = LJones-Smith789@my.Amberton.edu

Students will be prompted for a Username and Password when accessing their email account. Use the Username portion of the email address as the username (Example: LJones-Smith789) and your Amberton ID# (including the dashes) as the password.

If you already have a Google gmail account, you might be prompted to add this account to your current account. Click 'Yes' and you will be logged into your my.Amberton.edu email account. It will be a separate email account from your personal gmail account.

If you need assistance with your email account, please visit <https://support.google.com/mail>

**Students are responsible for reviewing the "Communication Guidelines" provided on the individual E-Course for specific instructor requirements.**

Upon completion of a session, all communication and course specific information is removed from the Moodle system. If a student needs to maintain a record of communications or assignments, the student is strongly encouraged to print out or download these items to a disk for their own records.

#### **FORMAT AND SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

Assignments are to be submitted to the appropriate assignment Drop Box in the Moodle system. Specific directions and guidelines for submission of assignments are located on-line in the "Communication Guidelines" of the e-course. Due to compatibility issues, Office 2007 files cannot be read by earlier versions of Microsoft Office. Before submitting an exercise file, confirm the file is in the proper format for grading by the instructor.

#### **INSTRUCTOR/COURSE EVALUATION:**

Each session, all Amberton students are provided with the opportunity to evaluate their courses and instructors. The evaluation process is an important one and provides students with an anonymous and confidential way to give meaningful feedback to the University. Summary information and comments are provided to faculty after the close of the session. All information provided is anonymous.

The Instructor/Course Evaluation will be open for completion during week 9 of the session. An evaluation assignment will be placed in week 9 of the Moodle course, along with the instructions on how to complete the evaluation. Prior to week 9, the University will send out an email containing instructions and dates for the evaluation period.

#### **ACADEMIC HONESTY/PLAGIARISM:**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's information as though it were your own. If you use another person's words, ideas or information, or if you use material from a source – whether a book, magazine, newspaper, business publication, broadcast, speech, or electronic media – you must acknowledge the source. Failure to do so violates Amberton University's ethics policy.

**RESEARCH RESOURCES:**

The student is encouraged to use the Amberton Electronic Library as a research resource for this course. The Electronic Library provides access to full-text and abstract articles as well as links to a variety of remote research tools. Students can search Amberton Library Resource Center holdings through the on-line public access circulation system. The physical library contains a specialized collection of research materials specifically chosen to support the degrees and courses offered at Amberton. Interlibrary loan and document delivery services are available. The TexShare Card offers borrowing privileges in libraries all across the state of Texas. Students with research questions or questions about Library services are encouraged to visit the Library or email their questions to [library@Amberton.edu](mailto:library@Amberton.edu).

**RESEARCH TUTORIALS:**

Online research resources are available through "Research Tools Database", accessible through the Student Portal. (For additional assistance, students may access the "Research Tutorials" link located in the General Tools area on the Student Portal.) Access the Portal by clicking "Student Portal" from the University's website. You must know your Amberton ID to access the Portal.

***Library Live Chat Feature***

The website allows for a live chat feature with librarians on the library pages. This service allows students to connect with librarians on questions regarding resource assistance, searching data bases and access to library services. [www.amberton.edu/current-students/library/index.html](http://www.amberton.edu/current-students/library/index.html)