



MGV 490A-1: GAME THEORY AND COMPETITIVE STRATEGY

UC Davis Graduate School of Management

Professor Victor Stango

Course Description

The highest-stake competitive decisions made by firms are game-theoretic: they involve asking not just “what should I do?” but also “how will my competitors respond to what I do?” questions. And the very best managerial thinking doesn’t just recognize that interdependency: it leverages it, taking forceful, forward-looking decisions that shape competitors’ actions and the very structure of the competitive environment.

This residential course begins by developing new tools for decision-making, and then applies those tools in experiential exercises and cases, yielding fundamental insights for managers in a wide range of competitive settings.

Course Materials

Readings/assignments will be available from the online platform in the “Reading Materials” section, as listed below by session. For example, you will find a zip file called “Session 1” that will contain the assignment for that session, as well as a .pdf file for each reading. The readings will preview the questions and topics we will tackle in each session..

Workload

This is a 2-unit course. Under the policies adopted by the GSM, we will have 20 hours of asynchronous and synchronous sessions, both leading up to the residential weekend and on that weekend. The workload beyond that will consist of readings and other pre-work, meetings with your teams, content preparation and so on.

Course Assignments and Grading

This course is graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis. To pass the course, students must:

1. Work through all asynchronous content;
2. Complete and submit answers to the pre-work questions;
3. Participate in all residential sessions.

Expectations for Class Behavior

- Class rules are simple: act as you would in any other professional setting. Turn off all cell phones, computer sound, and so on. Refrain from speaking when others are speaking. It is expected that all class members will treat each other with respect and consideration. Professional business behavior should be modeled in the classroom, including use of appropriate language, jokes, or stories.
- Students should adhere to the UC Davis Principles of Community, found [here](#).
- All students must familiarize themselves with, and abide by, the UC Davis Academic Code of Conduct, which can be found [here](#)

Statement on Accommodation

- UC Davis is committed to educational equity in the academic setting, and in serving a diverse student body. All students who are interested in learning about how disabilities are accommodated can visit the [Student Disability Center](#) (SDC). If you are a student who requires academic accommodations, please contact the SDC directly at sdcc@ucdavis.edu or 530-752-3184. If you receive an SDC Letter of Accommodation, submit it to your instructor for each course as soon as possible, at least within the first two weeks of a course.

Rights and Responsibilities

- All participants in the course, instructor and students, are expected to follow the UC Davis [Principles of Community](#), which includes affirmation of the right of [freedom of expression](#), and rejection of discrimination. The right to express points-of-view without fear of retaliation or censorship is a cornerstone of academic freedom. A diversity of opinions with respectful disagreement and informed debate enriches learning. However, in this course, any expression or disagreement should adhere to the obligations we have toward each other to build and maintain a climate of mutual respect and caring. You are expected to take UC Davis's [Code of Academic Conduct](#) as seriously as we do. You were given this code of conduct with explicit explanations of violations (e.g. plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, etc.) and your responsibilities in regard to them during orientation, and you signed a statement affirming that you understand it. Academic conduct violations will not be tolerated, and your instructor will not hesitate to turn violators over to Student Judicial Affairs. If you are uncertain about what constitutes an academic conduct violation, please refer to the code linked above, contact your instructor, or refer to the [Office of Student Judicial Affairs](#).

Safety and Emergency Preparedness

- UC Davis has many resources to help in case of emergency or crisis. While reviewing campus [Emergency Information](#), you may want to register for UC Davis Warn Me and Aggie Alert, which will give you timely information and instructions about emergencies and situations on campus that affect your safety. If there is an emergency in the classroom or in non-Davis locations, follow the instructions of your instructor.

Student Wellness

- You deserve respect, and are encouraged to [practice self-care](#) so that you can remain focused and engaged; that might mean getting a drink of water, leaving to use the restroom, taking a moment to stretch, or doing something else you need to do to take care of yourself. Please be respectful of others by minimizing distractions when practicing self-care – especially in lab, field or studio settings where safety is imperative. You can visit [Virtual UC Davis](#) to find resources related to health and well-being, academics, basic needs (food and housing) and more.

Disclaimer

- Unexpected events might require elements of this syllabus to change. Your instructor will keep you informed of any changes.