

## **Capstone (5 ECTS)**

The aim of the course is to develop an understanding on how to systematically integrate and manage all functions of a company in order to compete successfully in the corporate world of stock-exchange listed companies in the twenty-first century. A major perspective of this course is to synthesize prior coursework in order to help the student develop an integrated concept of issues affecting contemporary business environments. To help expose students to the realities of dynamic organizational issues CAPSTONE (a computer simulation) and combination of lectures and case studies will be utilized. By utilizing Capstone, students will be able to test alternative actions of operating a business in a competitive environment without incurring costs or the risk of implementing them in a real setting. Most organizational strategic and tactical decisions will be made after consulting with the colleagues/Board Members. Each student will have the opportunity to simulate this form of organizational life when working within his or her Capstone Team. A great deal of reputable multinational companies continuously applies Capstone simulation to improve managerial skills of their employees.

Each Team/Management Board will manage and analyze their Capstone Company as well as competitors in the marketplace. Over the period of eight years (eight rounds), the Team will make decisions about various aspects of their company. The Team/Management Board's decisions will affect not only respective company sales and profits but also a vast number of quantitative and qualitative outcomes. The students will have insight into problems facing top managers (CEOs, Marketing Directors, CFOs, Sales Directors, and Production Directors/Planners). The students are, just as are the Management Directors, expected to set up a strategy, objectives and pursue the best business policy in order to maximize the value of the firm they manage. The objectives are achieved more systematically and successfully by considering and applying concepts previously developed in other courses as well as in this course. To evaluate the firm's/Team's performance, several criteria will be examined. Each Team's performance will be evaluated on the basis of both financial and non-financial key performance indicators that signal whether the shareholder value has been created or destroyed.

### **COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Apart from learning how to steer a company toward long-term maximization of shareholder value, students will learn theoretical concepts on how to measure company performance as well as what critical success factors influence value of a company. In particular, students will learn how to:

1. Strategically think in terms of creating long-term value for shareholders
2. Identify critical success factors that contribute to strategic management processes within a multinational business environment
3. Formulate and evaluate an organization's capabilities and competitive position in order to make intelligent choices in the establishment of strategies that achieve defined objectives
4. Recognize the relationship between integrated functional business operations and competitive success as well as monitoring measurements of organizational performance
5. Forecast performance having in mind the company's future economics which goes beyond short-term outlook
6. Contrast alternative strategic management concepts, models, and systems
7. Develop one's interpersonal abilities by interacting as a team within an organizational setting
8. Enhance writing skills through a formal analysis of several organizational situations

|    | <u>Course goals</u>   | <u>Course objectives</u>   |
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| 1. | ZSEM students will be able to apply the acquired knowledge in new and unknown circumstances through conceptual understanding of certain fields within a chosen discipline | The students will be challenged so as to link theoretical knowledge with real business cases. When they face a business problem, in order to solve it, they will apply adequate methods, coming from different fields of a chosen discipline (Finance, Marketing, Management, HRM, etc). |
| 2. | ZSEM students will have enhanced capacity of critical and analytical thinking   | The students will discover problems and offer possible solutions, as well as identify possible risks of a proposed solution  |
| 3. | ZSEM students will communicate effectively in a way appropriate for management positions.   | The students will develop interpersonal and communication skills needed by business, such as teamwork, oral and written communication, and presentation skills.  |