

ACCT-559: STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS THROUGH A CFO LENS
Fall 2019

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, we will address strategic and operational issues that companies face in multiple industries, and the responses of chief financial officers who are responsible for the accounting and financial planning and decision making. We will view the business as a whole – from the eyes of the Chief Financial Officer within the business.

The class contains nine industry segments, each focusing on key issues that an industry faces and how specific CFOs address them. Each segment contains three sessions. During the first, we discuss strategic objectives and performance within one industry group, focusing on the key moving parts, relevant issues and where to look to effectively measure performance. During the second, we use a Board Meeting format to focus on how one company within that industry drives performance with respect to these key issues. During the third, we hear from the CFO of that company in a heavily interactive session as to how he or she manages the business with respect to the issues and the sources of information used to manage them.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who participate in this class will be working to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Apply practical thinking skills from various business disciplines to industry issues
2. Develop an appreciation for a financial management perspective on strategic and operational issues
3. Increase resources and skills for business problem-solving
4. Broaden awareness of industry risks and strategies and apply this knowledge to on-the-job situations
5. Experience direct interaction with chief financial officers of major, locally-based entities
6. Grow in excitement for long-term career opportunities

COURSE MATERIALS

Forms 10-K for each of the following companies are available on the internet:

Activision Blizzard	Amgen
KB Home	Nordstrom
Netflix	PG&E

Materials will be posted on Blackboard for Precision Castparts, TCW and Cedars Sinai. Articles to be announced will be posted on Blackboard. Class assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

GRADING

We will adhere to the USC Leventhal School of Accounting and Marshall School of Business grading standards for graduate programs. For elective courses, the class average is usually around 3.4, which is between a B+ and an A-. You must receive a C or better to pass this course and you must have an overall B average (3.0 minimum) in order to graduate from USC.

All assignments must be turned in on time in order to receive any credit. No late materials will be accepted.

Assignments	# of Points	% of Overall Grade
2 Written Company Board Meeting Analyses	100	20%
Leadership of 2 Board Meetings (50% group grade and 50% individual grade)	100	20%
Oral Participation	85	17%
Assignments and Attendance	85	17%
2 CFO Question Outlines	30	6%
Final Company Comparison Project	100	20%
TOTAL	500	100%

Teams

Teams will be used in the Board Meetings described below. Each student will be on two Board Meeting teams during the semester. Each team will engage as a team in one Board Meeting. The Board Meeting teams will typically have three or four members. Every student will have an opportunity to agree with one other student to pair up on a team. The professor will then join the pairs or individuals not opting to pair up onto Board Meeting teams.

Board Meetings

The class will engage in nine Board Meetings throughout the semester, each focusing on a single entity that we are studying. During the first, the entire class will participate and debate three specific hypothetical proposals by the Board of Precision Castparts. In each of the other eight, three teams will lead each Board Meeting and each will propose a specific action by the entity and support that action from the perspective of the CFO. The rest of the class functions as the board of directors and will participate in the discussion. The three groups will support their positions and refute the positions of the other groups, all striving to use relevant data.

The Board Meetings will be graded for the written four-page outlines, the group oral performance (both group grades) and for individual performance. Grading criteria include strength of support for the group position, effectiveness of countering other group positions, data used in all aspects of the Board Meeting and level and quality of the oral comments made, both individually and as a group.

Oral Participation

This course has a heavy emphasis on participation. Students will be graded on the quality and consistency of oral participation in all class sessions. Examples of high quality comments are those that pertain to CFO dashboards or measures and how they are used, current leading issues in a particular industry, aspects of Board Meeting positions (when interacting with a CFO in a subsequent session), and typically any comment that reflects advance relevant research on a company, industry or issue. I stress that all students should participate in the Board Meetings, not only the students in the debating groups. Students are welcome and encouraged to discuss any aspects of oral participation with me in my office at your convenience. If this is difficult for you, see me at the beginning of the semester and I will give you some tips that will make oral participation much easier for you.

Assignments and Attendance

Students complete approximately seven written assignments. I expect the completed assignments to each be about 1 to 2 pages and require about one hour to complete. Six of the assignments will relate to six entities for which students are not in a debating group. There will be one introductory assignment about CFO goals and measurements. Those assignments must be typed and turned in on Blackboard on the due date according to the syllabus (normally on the dates of the Board Meetings).

CFO Question Outlines

Nine chief financial officer guest speakers will address the class throughout the semester. The guest speaker's remarks should comprise up to twenty minutes of the class time and the remaining time will consist of questions and answers. (Some CFOs have no opening remarks and rely only on student questions.) Each student will be assigned to prepare question outlines relating to two companies and their industries by the dates of the guest speaker presentation for both of those companies. These students will be expected to lead the questioning of the speaker during the presentation, with strong participation of all students in the class.

I expect the question outlines to be approximately two pages and to be tailored to the specific CFO or specific entity. Preparation of the outline should require about one to two hours.

Final Company Comparison Project

Each student will complete a four-page final paper selecting a single strategic priority that is shared by two of the entities we have analyzed (from different industries) and evaluating their comparative business objectives and operational responses. The papers will be graded on how effectively they address the following points about that single topic:

- Discuss each company's environment and business objectives that surround the strategic priority.
- Compare and contrast the companies' operational responses.
- How can the CFO measure performance with respect to the strategic priority and operational responses?
- How can the company (and CFO) drive behavior and performance to meet the desired objectives? (Include the use of measures, resource allocation and potential returns or rewards to the company.)
- In your opinion, which company (or industry) is more effective in managing these issues and why?
- Finally, what can each company learn from the other?

CLASS DAY AND TIME

This class will be entirely online. Synchronous class sessions will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 to 9:20 a.m. or from 9:30 to 10:50 a.m. The Zoom link is posted with your Blackboard course pages.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours will be held on Thursday from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and as needed by students via Zoom. The Zoom link is posted with your Blackboard course pages.

COURSE FORMAT

All course materials can be found in Blackboard (<https://blackboard.usc.edu>). Session activities may include reading assignments, weekly lessons, interactive exercises, homework assignments, Blackboard discussion forums, class sessions, and quizzes or exams. It is expected that students will have completed all required activities and assignments *before* attending each class session.

Students should ensure that they can access all online tools via Blackboard prior to the start of classes.

Zoom is the platform used for all online sessions and online office hours. A link and instructions to join the Zoom sessions will be posted in the Blackboard Course Pages. For more information about Zoom, go to: [Zoom Support Tutorials](#)

CLASSROOM POLICIES

1. Class attendance and participation is important in developing a coherent view of the materials covered in the course. Unless accommodated as described in (b) below, attendance and active participation is expected at the synchronous Zoom class sessions.
 - a. Students are expected to have cameras on during the synchronous Zoom sessions, and preferably use headsets or earphones to ensure the best audio quality. *Please advise me if you have circumstances under which you will not be able to meet these expectations.*
 - b. For students located in a time zone where the synchronous class sessions or exams fall outside the window of 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. in your local time zone, please contact me. You will not be penalized for not attending the live Zoom class sessions. The Zoom sessions will be recorded and posted on Blackboard, and you will be responsible for watching the recorded sessions. Exams and other synchronous assessments will be scheduled for students to be able to complete the assessment between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. in your local time zone.
 - c. In addition, for any student who does not attend the Zoom session live, please notify the professor in advance and you will be required to complete a supplementary assignment as an alternate method of contribution to the class.

2. During synchronous Zoom sessions, the following netiquette is expected, as if you were in a physical classroom.
 - a. Please do:
 - i. Log into class early or promptly
 - ii. Arrange to attend class where there is a reliable internet connection and without distractions
 - iii. Dress respectfully. Video conference business meetings are and will be the norm, so practice your professional telepresence.
 - iv. If you use a virtual background, please keep it respectfully professional.
 - v. Display both your first and last name during video conferencing and synchronous class meetings.
 - vi. Respectfully minimize distractions by muting and or turning off video if necessary and when appropriate.
 - vii. Engage in appropriate tone and language with instructors and classmates.
 - b. Please try not to:
 - i. Engage in a simultaneous activity not related to the class.
 - ii. Interact with persons who are not part of the class during the class session.
 - iii. Leave frequently or not be on camera for extended periods of time.
 - iv. Have other persons or pets in view of the camera.
3. All Zoom sessions will be recorded and posted in the Blackboard Course pages.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

The following equipment and system requirements are recommended to successfully participate in this online course:

- Computer with webcam
- Earphones or headset
- Reliable (preferably high speed) Internet connection
- Current operating system for Windows or Mac
- Current browser
 - Google Chrome
 - Firefox
 - Internet Explorer (not recommended)
 - Safari (Mac)

For technical support please see:

- **USC Systems** (Blackboard, USC Login, MyUSC, USC Gmail, GoogleApps)
For assistance with your USC login or other USC systems, please call +1 (213) 740-5555 or email Consult@usc.edu. They are open Mon – Fri 9:30am – 5pm and weekends from 8am - 5pm (all Pacific time).
- **Zoom Video Web Conferencing System** (MarshallTALK)
For assistance using Zoom, go to [Zoom Support Page](#). You may also call +1 (888) 799-9666 ext. 2. They are available 24/7.

- **Marshall Systems** (MyMarshall, Marshall Outlook email)
For assistance with Marshall systems you can call +1 (213) 740-3000 Mon-Fri 8am-6pm (Pacific), email HelpDesk@marshall.usc.edu, or use our self-help service portal as shown below. The portal allows you to get immediate assistance by searching for the information you need. You can also use it to chat with a technician or input a request. To access the service portal, follow these steps:
 - On a computer or mobile device, go to [MyMarshall Home Page](#) and click the “**Help**” link on the upper right.
 - Log in using your Marshall username and password.
(If you don’t know your Marshall login please follow the onscreen instructions pertaining to login issues)

If your computer does not have Microsoft Word, Office 365 package is available to you free of charge and allows you to install Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote, Publisher, and Access on up to 5 PCs or Macs and Office apps on other mobile devices including tablets. Office 365 also includes unlimited cloud storage on OneDrive. To download Office 365 log into your student (University) email through a web browser, choose Settings (top right corner), and select software. If you have further questions or need help with the software, please contact the USC ITS service portal.

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS
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USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. Students are expected to submit original work. They have an obligation both to protect their own work from misuse and to avoid using another’s work as their own. All students are expected to understand and abide by the principles of academic honesty outlined in the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00) of SCampus (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>). The recommended sanctions for academic integrity violations can be found in Appendix A of the Student Conduct Code.

Students with Disabilities:

USC is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If you have a disability which may impact your performance, attendance, or grades in this course and require accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Services and Programs (www.usc.edu/disability). DSP provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to your TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS (Grace Ford Salvatori Hall) 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.– 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. Email: ability@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance - (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

Student Support & Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC - <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

Tab for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

Technology Policy:

Laptop and Internet usage is not permitted during academic or professional sessions unless otherwise stated by the respective professor and/or staff. Use of other personal communication devices during academic or professional sessions is considered unprofessional and is not permitted. ANY e-devices (cell phones, iPads, other texting devices, laptops, I-pods) must be completely turned off during class time. Upon request, you must comply and put your device on the table in off mode and FACE DOWN. You might also be asked to deposit your devices in a designated area in the classroom. Videotaping faculty lectures is not permitted due to copyright infringement regulations. Audiotaping may be permitted if approved by the professor. Use of any recorded or distributed material is reserved exclusively for the USC students registered in this class. Exceptions to this policy may be granted to individual students with appropriate documentation on a case-by-case basis.

TOPICS, READINGS AND PROJECTS

- Aug 18 The Role of the Chief Financial Officer - Strategic priorities and operational responses
Readings: *Evolution of the CFO*
 Defining Business Performance Measurement
 (Both posted on Blackboard)
- Aug 20 Consumer and Industrial Products
Prepare: Readings on Precision Castparts (Posted on Blackboard)
 Nordstrom Form 10-K Business section and financial statements
- Aug 25 Navigating the Future of Medical Technology
Readings: Amgen Form 10-K Business section and financial statements
- Aug 27 Class Board Meeting – Precision Castparts
Prepare: Arguments for and against selected positions
- Sept 1 Ms. Shawn Hagel, CFO – Precision Castparts
Prepare: Assigned students prepare question outlines and all students prepare
 to lead questioning of speaker
- Sept 3 Nordstrom Board Meeting
Prepare: Mattel Class Assignment
 Assigned groups prepare to lead board meeting
- Sept 8 Asset Management in the Era of Low Interest Rates
Readings: Readings on TCW (Posted on Blackboard)
- Sept 10 Homebuilding: Managing Through Cycles
Readings: KB Home Form 10-K Business section and financial statements
- Sept 15 Ms. Anne Bramman, CFO – Nordstrom –
Prepare: Assigned students prepare question outlines and all students prepare
 to lead questioning of speaker
- Sept 17 Convergence of Media, Communications and Technology
Readings: Netflix Form 10-K Business section and financial statements
- Sept 22 TCW Board Meeting
Prepare: Financial Services industry Class Assignment to be announced
 Assigned groups prepare to lead class Board Meeting
- Sept 24 Providing Energy in a Regulated Environment – Who is the Stakeholder?
Readings: PG&E Form 10-K Business and financial statements
- Sept 29 Mr. Richard Villa, CFO - TCW
Prepare: Assigned students prepare question outlines and all students prepare
 to lead questioning of speaker

- Oct 1 Amgen Board Meeting
Prepare: Amgen Class Assignment
Assigned groups prepare to lead class Board Meeting
- Oct 6 Mr. Peter Griffith, CFO – Amgen Inc.
Prepare: Assigned students prepare question outlines and all students prepare to lead questioning of speaker
- Oct 8 KB Home Board Meeting
Prepare: KB Home Class Assignment
Assigned groups prepare to lead class Board Meeting
- Oct 13 Interactive Entertainment: Continuous Transformation
Readings: Activision Blizzard Form 10-K Business section and financial statements
- Oct 15 Mr. Jeff Kaminski, CFO – KB Home
Prepare: Assigned students prepare question outlines and all students prepare to lead questioning of speaker
- Oct 15 Voluntary Final Paper Review Session at 9:30 a.m.
This session will be recorded and posted on Blackboard.
- Oct 20 Healthcare Challenges in a Volatile Environment
Readings: Cedars-Sinai background reading (Posted on Blackboard)
- Oct 22 Netflix Board Meeting
Prepare: Netflix Class Assignment
Assigned groups prepare to lead class Board Meeting
- Oct 27 PG&E Board Meeting
Prepare: PG&E Class Assignment
Assigned groups prepare to lead class Board Meeting
- Oct 29 Activision Blizzard Board Meeting
Prepare: Activision Blizzard Class Assignment
Assigned groups prepare to lead class Board Meeting
- Nov 3 Mr. Spencer Neumann, CFO – Netflix
Prepare: Assigned students prepare question outlines and all students prepare to lead questioning of speaker
- Nov 5 Mr. Jason Wells, CFO – PG&E
Prepare: Assigned students prepare question outlines and all students prepare to lead questioning of speaker
- Nov 10 Cedars-Sinai Medical Center Board Meeting
Prepare: Cedars Sinai Class Assignment
Assigned groups prepare to lead class Board Meeting

Nov 12 Mr. Dennis Durkin, CFO – Activision Blizzard
Prepare: Assigned students prepare question outlines and all students prepare to lead questioning of speaker

Nov 17 Mr. Ed Prunchunas, CFO – Cedars Sinai Medical Center
Prepare: Assigned students prepare question outlines and all students prepare to lead questioning of speaker

Final paper due on November 10 (if *not* addressing Activision Blizzard or Cedars Sinai Medical Center)

Final paper due on November 20 (if addressing either Activision Blizzard or Cedars Sinai Medical Center)

Appendix IA. MARSHALL GRADUATE PROGRAMS LEARNING GOALS

How ACCT 559 Contributes to Marshall Graduate Program Learning Goals

Marshall Graduate Program Learning Goals	ACCT 559 Objectives that support this goal	Assessment Method*
<p><i>Learning Goal #1: Develop Personal Strengths.</i> Our graduates will develop a global and entrepreneurial mindset, lead with integrity, purpose and ethical perspective, and draw value from diversity and inclusion.</p>		
<p>1.1 Possess personal integrity and a commitment to an organization’s purpose and core values.</p>	3,4,5,6	Board Meetings
<p>1.2 Expand awareness with a global and entrepreneurial mindset, drawing value from diversity and inclusion.</p>	1,2,4,5	Industry study, final paper
<p>1.3 Exhibit awareness of ethical dimensions and professional standards in decision making.</p>	1,3,4,5	Board Meetings, CFO sessions
<p><i>Learning Goal #2: Gain Knowledge and Skills.</i> Our graduates will develop a deep understanding of the key functions of business enterprises and will be able to identify and take advantage of opportunities in a complex, uncertain and dynamic business environment using critical and analytical thinking skills.</p>		
<p>2.1 Gain knowledge of the key functions of business enterprises.</p>	2,3,4,5	Industry study, HW assignments, CFO sessions
<p>2.2 Acquire advanced skills to understand and analyze significant business opportunities, which can be complex, uncertain and dynamic.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	Board Meetings, final paper, CFO sessions
<p>2.3 Use critical and analytical thinking to identify viable options that can create short-term and long-term value for organizations and their stakeholders.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	Board Meetings, final paper, HW assignments
<p><i>Learning Goal #3: Motivate and Build High Performing Teams.</i> Our graduates will achieve results by fostering collaboration, communication and adaptability on individual, team, and organization levels.</p>		

3.1 Motivate and work with colleagues, partners, and other stakeholders to achieve organizational purposes.	3,5,6	Board Meetings, CFO sessions
3.2 Help build and sustain high-performing teams by infusing teams with a variety of perspectives, talents, and skills and aligning individual success with team success and with overall organizational success.	3,5,6	Board Meetings, CFO sessions
3.3 Foster collaboration, communication and adaptability in helping organizations excel in a changing business landscape.	3,5,6	Board Meetings, CFO sessions

**Appendix IB. USC LEVENTHAL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR
MASTER OF ACCOUNTING
AND MASTER OF BUSINESS TAXATION PROGRAMS**

How ACCT 559 Contributes to Leventhal Graduate Program Learning Goals

Leventhal Graduate Program Learning Goals	ACCT 559 Objectives that support this goal	Assessment Method*
<p><i>Learning Goal #1: Technical, Conceptual, Problem-Solving</i> Students will be competent in and be able to apply discipline-specific knowledge and skills in the fields of accounting or taxation. This learning outcome includes the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as an understanding of the strategic role of accounting and taxation in business organizations and society.</p>	1,2,3,5	Industry study, HW assignments, Board Meetings
<p><i>Learning Goal #2: Applied Data Analytics</i> Students will be able to analyze business and audit objectives, issues and problems and identify the data necessary for solutions. They will learn to integrate data tools and languages and communicate the answers in pragmatic and understandable terms. Students will learn to be effective in unstructured environments and productive in live business situations.</p>	1,2,3,5	Industry study, HW assignments
<p><i>Learning Goal #3: Professional Development</i> Students will be able to communicate clearly and strategically, after considering the relevant audience, situation, and purpose of the communication. Students will demonstrate the ability to work productively with others to accomplish established goals.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	Board Meetings, Final paper
<p><i>Learning Goal #4: Research/Life-Long Learning</i> Students will be able to use relevant research databases and academic/professional literature to gain new knowledge and analyze business situations.</p>	1,3,4,5	Industry study, Board Meetings, Final paper
<p><i>Learning Goal #5: Ethical Principles and Professional Standards</i> Students will be able to apply ethical principles and professional standards in analyzing situations and making informed decisions.</p>	1,3,4,5	Board Meetings, CFO sessions
<p><i>Learning Goal #6: Globalization and Diversity</i> Students will be able to demonstrate an international perspective and appreciation for diversity and cultural differences, along with their significance in global business.</p>	3,4,5,6	Board Meetings, CFO sessions

Appendix II

SAMPLE PEER EVALUATION FORM

Please identify your team and team members for your Board Meeting. Then rate all your team members, *including yourself*, based on the **contributions** of each team member for the Board Meeting performance according to the criteria listed below. On a scale of 0 - 2 with 0 indicating does not meet expectations, 1 meets expectations and 2 exceeds expectations, rate each person on each of the five criteria. Lastly, add up the points for each person with the maximum number of points for each person being 10. In the box below, describe the exact contributions of each team member, including yourself.

Team Members/ Assessment Criteria of Team Contributions in Preparing for the Board Meeting	Team Member 1	Team Member 2	Team Member 3	Yourself
1. Role Performance				
2. Assists Team Members				
3. Listening and Discussing				
4. Research and Information Sharing				
5. Time Management				
Total				

Contribution details:

Appendix III

SAMPLE CLASS PARTICIPATION STATEMENTS

Class participation is an extremely important part of the learning experience in this course as the richness of the learning experience will be largely dependent upon the degree of preparation by *all* students prior to each class session.

This course includes highly interactive sessions and prominent outside speakers. Such sessions are only effective if all students are consistently prepared. In addition, the participation of the leading CFOs in Southern California is conditioned by them on the attendance of every student for each session. My expectation and that of your classmates are that you are prepared for and attend *all* classes and will actively participate in and meaningfully contribute to class discussions.

In-class participation is also a critical part of this course's learning experience. Cold calling may take place to encourage active participation and to gain multiple perspectives and points of view, thus lending itself to the richness of the learning experience. In-class participation grading will be based on students' demonstrated willingness to participate and the quality of the comments expressed, rather than quantity. While some students are far more comfortable than others with class participation, *all* students should make an effort to contribute meaningfully.

Students will offer their opinions in group settings many times in their careers; thus, class participation serves to prepare students for this business experience. The evaluating of in-class participation is based on the following:

- *Relevance* – Does the comment or question meaningfully bear on the subject at hand? Irrelevant or inappropriate comments can detract from the learning experience.
- *Responsiveness* – Does the comment or question connect to what someone else has said?
- *Analysis* – Is the reasoning employed consistent and logical? Has data from course materials, personal experience, or general knowledge been employed to support the assertions/findings?
- *Value* – Does the contribution further the understanding of the issues at hand?
- *Clarity* – Is the comment concise and understandable?

During class sessions, I frequently assume the role of a facilitator to encourage a discussion that includes perspectives from a variety of viewpoints and, secondly, to help pull together prevailing analyses and recommendations. The direction and quality of a discussion is the *collective responsibility of the class*. During the Board Meetings and CFO sessions, I will take notes but will not facilitate the discussions. As a result, all students (not just Board Meeting teams) will need to be self-starting throughout the session.

To underscore the importance of participation, 17% percent of the course grade are allocated to class participation. Your participation on Board Meeting teams for your two Board Meetings is graded separately and is not part of the oral participation grade.

Class Participation – Behavioral Anchor Rating Scale:

Excellent Performance

- Initiates information relative to topics discussed
- Accurately exhibits knowledge of assignment content
- Clarifies points that others may not understand
- Shares personal experiences or opinions related to topic
- Offers relevant / succinct input to class
- Actively participates in class exercises
- Demonstrates ability to apply, analyze, evaluate & synthesize course material.
- Demonstrates willingness to attempt to answer unpopular questions
- Builds on other students' contributions
- Contributes meaningful comments in the vast majority of class sessions

Average Performance

- Participates in group discussions when asked
- Demonstrates knowledge of course material
- Offers clear, concise, "good" information on class assignments
- Offers input, but tends to reiterate the intuitive
- Attends class regularly
- Contributes meaningful comments in up to one-half of class sessions

Unacceptable Performance

- Fails to participate even when directly asked
- Gives no input to discussions
- Does not demonstrate knowledge of the readings
- Shows up to class: does nothing
- Distracts group / class
- Irrelevant discussion
- Contributes meaningful comments in only a few class sessions