

BSM933 INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Academic Year 2013/14

Number of Aston Credits: 15

Number of ECTS Credits: 7.5

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

Dr. Stephanie Decker, Economics & Strategy Group
Main Building South Wing Room SW1007 Extension: 3268
Email: s.decker@aston.ac.uk
Office Hours: See online appointment system (WASS)

Or contact the Economics and Strategy Group administrator:
Ms Lynne Woolley, SW907B, Extension: 3038
Email: l.woolley@aston.ac.uk

Pre-requisites for the module:

None.

Mode of Attendance:

On Campus

Module Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

The international dimension (changes in comparative and competitive advantage, integration of markets and globalisation, government policies) is becoming increasingly important for business activities within Europe and worldwide. Nations are more economically integrated than at any other point in history. The aim of this module is to provide a systematic understanding of the fundamental aspects of the global business environment that influence business decisions and behaviour. This course is designed to provide a basic understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in the operation of multinational enterprises. Major areas of discussion include the economic, political, social and cultural influences on the operation of multinational enterprises, as well as key concepts in international management. Managers must understand the structural economic factors that determine locational advantages, the way government policies both promote and restrain the integration of national economies with the global

economy, and the impact of volatility in the global macroeconomic environment on international business strategy.

Module Content:

- Week 1:** Introduction to module.
The new international environment of business
- Week 2:** The evolution of international business
- > Varieties of capitalism
 - > The emergence of multinationals
 - > The “Triad”
- Week 3:** Managing international environments
- > Culture and business
 - > Expatriates in multinational firms
- Week 4:** Firm competitiveness and national competitiveness
- > Porter’s diamond
- Week 5:** Why do firms invest abroad? 1/2
- > Vernon’s international product life cycle
 - > Johanson & Vahlne’s internationalisation model
- Week 6:** Why do firms invest abroad? 2/2
- > Dunning’s OLI model
- Week 7:** How do firms invest abroad?
- > Entry modes
- Week 8:** How do multinationals organise and manage subsidiaries?
- > Bartlett & Ghoshal’s Managing across Borders
- Week 9:** Course review and revision
- Week 10:** Timed essay

Corporate Connections:

The module makes extensive use of case studies of major international companies.

International Dimensions:

The course is entirely international in terms of its content, case-study material and examination.

Contribution of Research:

Staff teaching on this module conduct research in the area of international business, especially in the area of multinational company strategy.

Ethics, Responsibility & Sustainability:

By embedding the study of international business in its wider economic, political, social, cultural and historical context, this module addresses the diversity of the subject. Several cases and key concepts explicitly address business sustainability issues.

Method of Teaching:

The module employs a combination of lectures, case study discussion, and syndicate group work. Lectures are used to impart the basic knowledge on key theories, models and ideas of international business strategy and provide guidance on the use of appropriate techniques. Case studies and exercises permit students to experience the application of theories and techniques, while class discussions permit their evaluation and appraisal.

Method of Assessment and Feedback:

1. **Group report and presentation in the tutorial** (weeks 3-8): based on a written summary available to the whole group via Blackboard (Wiki) that deepens the weekly topic, **worth 20%** (continuous assessment).
2. **Timed essay**: 2,500 words. choose two questions out of four, question are equally weighted. Question paper will be released to students via Blackboard in week 9 to be submitted tbc, **worth 80%** (summative assessment).

Types of feedback available in the module: Students will receive feedback on their continuous assessment from peers and tutors, as well as a subsequent mark which is worth 20% and is thus mainly formative in nature and will clarify marking criteria and assessment style to students. Moreover, class discussion of cases and examples provides informal feedback within the group.

Assessment rationale:

- > Group report and presentation: This allows students to collaboratively deepen their knowledge of key concepts and complex interactions; the presentation, beyond training basic skills, serves as an opportunity to get feedback, which should be integrated in the written group report before assessment. The purpose is formative, i.e. preparing students for the final assessment.
- > Timed essay: Students have to show in this individual, summative assignment that they can integrate both the theoretical/conceptual and empirical knowledge that they have acquired during this module (with reference to their own material, under time constraint). It also tests basic written presentation, and rudimentary research skills. Extensions are not usually granted.

Learning Hours:

Pre-reading	25
Contact hours (lectures/case study work)	27
Revision	3
Directed learning and reading	50
Private study and group report preparation	45
Total	150

The following readings are subject to change. Students should not therefore purchase textbooks prior to commencing their course. If students wish to undertake background reading before starting the course, many of the chapters/readings are available in electronic form via on-line library catalogues and other resources

Pre-reading:

Hill, Charles W.L., Ch. 1: "Globalisation", from *International Business*, pp. 2-39.

Podcast: BBC Worldservice, "Peter Day's World of Business: The incredible Mr China", 16 February 2009. Available online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/news/inbusiness/inbusiness_20090205.shtml (you will need RealPlayer to access the podcast).

Fallows, James (2007) "China Makes, the World Takes", *The Atlantic*, July/August.

Available online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/07/china-makes-the-world-takes/5987/>

Jones, Geoffrey (2005) Ch. 9: "Multinationals and home economies", in:

Multinationals and Global Capitalism, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 231-254.



Hall, Peter A. and Soskice, David eds. (2001) *Varieties of capitalism: the institutional foundations of comparative advantage*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Essential Reading:

Please consult the weekly reading list that is released on Blackboard.

As a core textbook I recommend two titles:

Either:

Hill, C.W.L. (2009); *International Business: competing in the global marketplace*; 7th ed.; McGraw-Hill.

Or:

Peng, Mike & Meyer, Klaus (2011), *International Business*; 1st ed.; Cengage

Please note that although both are available from the library, they tend to be in high demand.

Indicative Bibliography:

Bartlett, C.A., and Ghoshal, S. (2002); *Managing across borders: The transnational solution*; 2nd ed.; Harvard Business School Press.

Dicken, P. (2007); *Global Shift*, 5th ed.; Sage.

Jones, G., and Hill, C.W.H. (2010); *Case Studies in Strategic Management*; 9th ed.; Cengage.

Peng, M. (2009), *Global Business*, Cengage.

Porter, M.E. (2004); *Competitive Advantage: creating and sustaining superior performance*, Free Press.

Recommended Journals:

Journal of International Business Studies
Strategic Management Journal
Journal of World Business (Colombia)
Management International Review
Thunderbird International Business Review
Transnational Corporations
International Business Review