

***Dissertation Seminar***  
**HOW FIRMS CAN COPE WITH CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS**

*Academic Year:* **2019/2020**

*Semester:* **1st**

*Instructor(s):* **PATRÍCIA MACHADO**

*Max. Number of Students:* **3**

*Seminar Description:*

This seminar is open to students that want to develop their master theses on the topic of how firms can cope with changing environments.

Increasingly frequent changes in the competitive arena and in the technological, social and regulatory domains challenge companies to cope with their environment, while having an efficient and effective management.

The seminar will address the topic using the main theoretical perspectives on strategic change, with a special emphasis on the Dynamic Capabilities view, while students are expected to proactively choose narrower and more specific themes for their theses. Some examples of working domains are (but not limited to):

- Capability and resources building;
- Environmental changes monitoring: sensing opportunities and threats;
- Decision making and market orientation;
- Managerial decisions timing;
- Learning mechanisms;
- Organizational change inside firms;

Students will build *Teaching Cases* that intend to illustrate given theories, and the respective *Teaching Notes*. The cases can be drawn upon one or more firms.

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*Seminar Content:*

The Seminar comprises both group and individual compulsory sessions. In each session, students will be given tasks that need to be fulfilled by the next session. During the group sessions, students will present their current work and actively provide feedback to the other students work. Attendance to all sessions is mandatory and students must be at CLSBE for the sessions, there is no possibility of participating remotely.

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Seminar Objectives:

The objective of this seminar is to help participating students to identify an interesting and relevant issue within the research topics and develop our knowledge about the chosen issue. Through this seminar, students will be guided in the process of preparing and writing their master theses focused on building *Teaching Cases* and respective *Teaching Notes*. More specific objectives are:

- Help students to select a topic for their dissertation.
- Support students in understanding how to do research and on the importance of a good Literature Review.
- Guide students on how to write a Teaching Case and on which conclusions can contribute to improve our understanding about the chosen topic.
- Train students to prepare a final dissertation document and to present their work to other students and to faculty members.

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Bibliography / Recommended Textbook(s) / Additional Readings:

**Textbooks on Research Projects**

- Fisher C. 2010. *Researching and Writing a Dissertation - An Essential Guide for Business Students*, UK: Prentice Hall (third edition).
- Sharp J., Peters J., Howard K. 2006. *The management of a student research project*, England: Gower (third edition).

**Readings on Dynamic Capabilities**

- Teece D., Pisano G., Shuen A. 1997. Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Management. *Strategic Management Journal* 18 (7): 509-533.
- Barreto I. 2010. Dynamic Capabilities: A Review of Past Research and an Agenda for the Future. *Journal of Management* 36 (1): 256-280.
- Eisenhardt K., Martin, J. 2000. Dynamic Capabilities: What are they?. *Strategic Management Journal* 21: 1105-1121.
- Teece D. 2007. Explicating Dynamic Capabilities: The nature and microfoundations of (sustainable) enterprise performance. *Strategic Management Journal* 28: 1319-1350.
- Zollo M., Winter S. 202. Deliberate Learning and the Evolution of Dynamic Capabilities. *Organization Science* 13 (3): 339-351.

**Readings on Behavioral Theory of the Firm**



- Argote L., Greve H. 2007. A Behavioral Theory of the Firm - 40 Years and Counting: Introduction and Impact. *Organization Science* 18 (3): 337-349.
- Barreto I. 2012. A Behavioral Theory of Market Expansion Based on the Opportunity Prospects Rule. *Organization Science* 23 (4):1008-1023.
- Gavetti G., Levinthal D. 2017. Looking Forward and Looking Backward: Cognitive and Experiential Search. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 45 (1): 113-137.
- Greve H. 2010. Performance, Aspirations, and Risky Organizational Change. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 43 (1): 58-86.
- Iyer D., Miller K. 2008. Performance Feedback, Slack, and the Timing of Acquisitions. *Academy of Management Journal* 51 (4): 808-822.

### **Readings on Strategic Change**

- Haynes K., Hillman A. 2010. The Effect of Board Capital and CEO Power on Strategic Change. *Strategic Management Journal* 31: 1145-1163.
- Herrmann P., Nadkarni S. 2014. Managing Strategic Change: The Duality of CEO Personality. *Strategic Management Journal* 35: 1318-1342.
- Quigley T., Hambrick D. 2012. When the former CEO Stays on as Board Chair: Effects on Successor Discretion, Strategic Change, and Performance. *Strategic Management Journal* 33: 834-859.
- Zajac E., Kraatz M., Bresser R. 2000. Modeling the Dynamics of Strategic Fit: A Normative Approach to Strategic Change. *Strategic Management Journal* 21: 429-453.
- Zhang Y., Rajagopalan N. 2010. Once an Outsider, Always an Outsider? CEO Origin, Strategic Change, and Firm Performance. *Strategic Management Journal* 31: 334-346

### **Readings on Organizational Change**

- Tsoukas H., Chia R. 2002. On Organizational Becoming: Rethinking Organizational Change. *Organization Science* 13 (5): 567-582.
- Van de Ven A., Poole M. 2005. Alternative Approaches for Studying Organizational Change. *Organization Studies* 26 (9):1377-1404.



Biography:

Patrícia Machado graduated from Instituto Superior Técnico, Lisbon, in Chemical Engineering, in 2001. She did her MBA at Católica Lisbon in 2005-2007, and since then she has been a Teaching Assistant for the “Introduction to Management” and “Strategy” courses in the undergraduate programs. After some experience as an engineer at Novartis Pharma in Basel, Switzerland, and at Portucel, Setúbal, she joined Galp Energia where she worked as a Controller and a Product Manager (2002-2007). Since then, she has acquired an extensive management experience, having worked as an Assistant Director of Corporate Finance at Caixa - Banco de Investimento (2007-2008) and as a Supply Chain Manager and Export Markets Director at Quilaban (2008-2016). She decided to embrace her personal project UPA Kids, a Portuguese brand of sustainable children’s furniture, in 2016, where she is co-founder and CEO.

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Contact(s) and Office Hours:

By appointment ([patricia.amaro.machado@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.amaro.machado@gmail.com))

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Schedule:

**Session #1: Group Session – 12th September, 15h30 - 17h00**

- Presentation of the topics and the literature
- The structure of a master thesis based on Teaching Cases
- Introduction to Teaching Cases and Teaching Notes
- How to write the Introduction section of the master thesis
- **ASSIGNMENT 1:** Selecting the topic of the thesis; Preparing the Introduction section.

**Session #2: Group Session – 26th September, 15h30 - 17h00**

- Presentation of Introduction section proposals, by students (assignment 1)
- Feedback on proposals
- How to choose relevant firms to study
- How to write the Literature Review of the master thesis
- **ASSIGNMENT 2:** Preparing the first draft of the Literature Review; Proposing relevant firms for the study.

**Session #3: Group Session – 10th October, 15h30 - 18h30**

- Presentation of firms chosen for study, by students (assignment 2)
- Presentation of the first draft of the Literature Review, by students (assignment 2)
- Feedback on proposals
- How to write a Teaching Case
- **ASSIGNMENT 3:** Preparing the last draft of the Literature Review; Collecting the data; Preparing the first draft of the Teaching Case.

**Session #4: Group Session – 24th October, 15h30 - 18h30**

- Presentation of the first draft of the Teaching Case, by students (assignment 3)
- Feedback on presentations



- **ASSIGNMENT 4:** Preparing the second draft of the Teaching Case.

**Session #5: Group Session – 7th November, 15h30 - 18h30**

- Presentation of the second draft of the Teaching Case, by students (assignment 4)
- Feedback on presentations
- How to write a Teaching Note
- **ASSIGNMENT 5:** Revising the Teaching Case and preparing the first draft of the Teaching Note.

**Sessions #6: Individual Meeting – 21st November, 15h30 - 18h30**

- Presentation of the final draft of the Teaching Case and of the first draft of the Teaching Note, by students (assignment 5)
- Feedback on presentations
- How to write the Discussion and Conclusions section of the master thesis
- **ASSIGNMENT 6:** Preparing the final draft of the Teaching Note and the Discussion and Conclusions section.

**Session #7: Individual Meeting – 28th November, 15h30 - 18h30**

- Individual presentation of the final version of the thesis
- Final feedback

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Deadlines:

Master Thesis Delivery Date to the Academic Advisor: 5th December 2018.

The full list of dates and deadlines will be available [here](#).