



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2025

8,218: Alliance and Network Strategy (SIM)

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

decentral - Written examination, Digital, Individual work individual grade (50%, 90 mins.)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Presentation, Digital, Group work group grade (50%)

Examination time: Term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,218,1.00 Alliance and Network Strategy \(SIM\)](#) -- English -- [Kreutzer Markus](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

There is no formal course prerequisite.

Learning objectives

Students will be highly competent in the relevant perspectives (theories, frameworks, tools) for the phenomena covered (strategic alliances, networks, and ecosystems) and will be able to directly transfer their knowledge from these tools/frameworks and case studies to practice.

Learning objectives:

1. You gain a deep insight into the challenges of cooperative relationships.
2. You understand the rationale for cooperative strategies and when they are most applicable.
3. You understand which different types of inter-organizational relationships exist and under which conditions to use them.
4. You are aware of challenges along the lifecycle of strategic alliances and know how to address them.
5. You know how to select alliance partners, set up the alliance governance, manage the relationship, measure joint progress, and terminate the alliance.
6. You know what is special about alliance portfolios and alliance networks.
7. You understand the increasing importance of ecosystems, specific ecosystem challenges, and how to address them.

Course content

This course introduces students to the issues and analytical arguments related to cooperative relationships (strategic alliances, joint ventures, multi-partner alliances, networks, and with a special focus on ecosystems). Cooperative relationships have emerged as inter-organizational designs that enable firms to cope with the increasing complexity of learning and of building new sources of competitive advantage to compete successfully in the global economy. The formation rate of inter-firm collaborations has increased dramatically in recent years. As a result of this proliferation, most companies are now placed within a framework of inter-organizational relationships that are crucial to their success and survival. In contrast to the



increasing popularity of alliances as a value-creating option, several studies find failure rates of alliances to lie above 50 percent. As a result, practitioners and researchers alike are intrigued by the phenomenon of inter-firm partnerships and search for ways to succeed in this challenging realm of competitive strategy. This course incorporates various theoretical perspectives and is designed to focus on the essential issues and problems of cooperative strategies experienced by managers. Questions include, for example:

- When to pursue a cooperative strategy?
- What is the right way to structure a collaborative venture?
- Which different types of inter-organizational relationships can be distinguished?
- When are alliances preferred to mergers & acquisitions or arm's length contracts?
- How to screen for collaborative partners?
- What are the benefits and risks of collaborating with (potential) competitors?
- What's special about alliance portfolios, alliance networks, multi-partner alliances, and ecosystems?

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course is structured as follows: After an introduction on (the importance and different types of) strategic alliances, we will discuss the main stages in alliance evolution and compare different theoretical perspectives in alliance research. Five main stages are distinguished:

- Stage 1: Analyzing (purpose and value logic)
- Stage 2: Preparing (types of inter-organizational relationships and partner selection)
- Stage 3: Shaping (negotiation and design & governance)
- Stage 4: Conducting (managing the alliance, trust, control, and alliance capability)
- Stage 5: Closing (assessment and termination)

We initially discuss these phase-specific questions for strategic alliances between two partners before we move beyond dyadic alliances to discuss particular management challenges in alliance portfolios, alliance networks, multi-partner alliances, and (with a particular focus on in) ecosystems.

The course will be offered in two main blocks on campus, i.e. face-to-face. In addition, there are digital sessions in which the content is deepened and the group work is discussed. The student-team presentations will take place digitally.

Course literature

For this course all compulsory readings (articles and cases) will be available for download on Canvas. These readings, on average one case study and one article per session, have to be prepared for each class.

Additional course information

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Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written examination
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written exam
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Synchronous
Examination location	On Campus



Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	50%
Duration	90 mins.

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Closed Book

The use of aids is prohibited as a matter of principle, with the exception of pocket calculator models of the Texas Instruments TI-30 series and, in case of non-language exams, bilingual dictionaries without any handwritten notes. Any other aids that are admissible must be explicitly listed by faculty members in the paragraph entitled "Supplementary aids" of the course and examination fact sheet; this list is exhaustive.

Procuring any aids, as well as ensuring their working order, is the exclusive responsibility of students.

Supplementary aids

Closed book.

2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Presentation
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Oral examination
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	50%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

Team presentation digital

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

The use of AI tools (such as Chat GPT) must be in accordance with HSG policy and must be made explicit by the students to their team members and the instructor.



Examination content

For the exam all readings (articles and case studies) and discussions in the classroom (including guest lectures and talks), are relevant. Topics include questions on the rationale for strategic alliances, the stages of their management, and the challenges faced within each of these stages as well as multi-partner, alliance portfolio, ecosystems, and network-related questions.

Examination relevant literature

For this course all compulsory readings (articles and cases) will be available for download on Canvas. Exam-relevant literature will be uploaded the latest by April 30, 2025.

Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2025) are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 23 January 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 17 March 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 14 (Monday, 31 March 2025);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 07 April 2025).