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Ross Reflections: 5 Most Impactful Business Classes I've Taken

BY: ALEXA TRAN ON FEBRUARY 09, 2021 | 0 COMMENTS 1,454 VIEWS

5) STRAT 390: Corporate Strategy

STRAT 390 is a required class that all BBA seniors take their fall semester of senior year. I thought that the class would simply be an extension of **STRAT 290: Business Strategy**, another required class that BBAs take in the winter semester of their sophomore year.

In some ways, STRAT 390 was a refresher of concepts that I had previously learned. However, I found the class to actually be more relevant than I initially thought. As nerdy as it sounds, I enjoyed being able to apply class concepts to everyday life.

For example: a couple weeks ago, I read that McCormick Spice Co. bought Cholula hot sauce for \$800 million dollars. The firm had previously acquired the hot sauce category leader Frank's RedHot. The Cholula acquisition exemplified the concept of resource relatedness, which determines the range of products and services that a firm should offer and refers to the similarity of resource requirements across businesses. Because McCormick already has Frank's RedHot under its brand portfolio, they also have the capabilities to sell and distribute Cholula.

STRAT 390 was also an impactful class because Professor Jue-Rajasingh helped to push me out of my comfort zone. I don't really like to participate in class; however, participation plays a significant part of your grade in any Ross class.

One day, Professor Jue-Rajasingh emailed me to tell me that she found my comment on our class discussion board to be insightful and that she wanted me to share my comment in our class that day. To be honest, I was caught off guard by her email. However, I really appreciated her reaching out to me. Her email was validating and after that particular class, I made more of an effort to participate in future class discussions.



Professor Diana Jue-Rajasingh

Meet Professor Jue-Rajasingh:

How long have you been teaching at Ross? I have been teaching at Ross for two years, while working toward my doctorate.

What is your favorite thing about teaching? My favorite thing about teaching is getting to know students and hopefully impacting them in some positive way. Perhaps the impact comes from helping students learn something that they hadn't realized or appreciated before, either about the class material or about themselves. For example, I find immense satisfaction in observing the different ways that my students contribute to the class over the course of the semester and ultimately sharing with each person the unique ways

in which I see them adding value to the classroom, even if these contributions are somewhat hidden or aren't directly measured by standard performance metrics. I think it's important for students to receive feedback on how they are making a positive impact on their immediate environment, and I'm in a position to provide this input.

What is the biggest takeaway that you want students to take away from your class? I teach business and corporate strategy, so in relation to the class material, I want students to draw connections between strategy frameworks we learn in class and decision making in their personal and professional lives. Strategy concepts are helpful for understanding where and how to compete, and they bring choices and tradeoffs to the forefront. The implementation of strategy requires consistency across our actions and between our actions and our values. I hope that students can reflect on their own values, actions, and choices as much as they reflect on what firms are doing in the markets around them. This will make them internalize the concepts and make them better strategists!

As a student, what was your favorite business class and what was your most valuable takeaway from it? My favorite business class was probably a class that I took about the positive role of business in international development, which I took at MIT. This class inspired my work as a social entrepreneur in India, which was what I was doing before I came to Ross.

Here's what I wish someone would've told me about being a business school professor: Ross BBAs are extremely intelligent and passionate, but they can be very hard on themselves. While it's important to teach the material well, it's probably more important to teach with humanity.

When did you know when you wanted to be a business school professor? I never had an ah-ha moment when I knew that I had to be a business school professor. I have always strived, however, to positively impact the people around me, and being a professor is one of those professions in which I get to do this on a regular basis. It helps that I have experience running a company and a natural desire to instruct and mentor others!

I hope you found my thoughts (and my professors' thoughts) insightful and interesting. I am extremely grateful to be attending a top-ranked business school where I have access to such amazing professors and where I am constantly being challenged. I know that the lessons that I learned in all of these classes will serve me well post-grad.

My name is Alexa Tran and I am a senior at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business studying Business Administration with a minor in Religion. I was born and raised in Ann Arbor, so I knew that I always wanted to be a Wolverine! I am passionate about traveling, mentorship, iced coffee, and Trader Joe's. I enjoy spending time with friends and family and managing my travel Instagram and blog: [@adventuringwithalexa](#).