

## Changing Business Dynamics in the Digital Age

**How technology-based business models are transforming the economy – Challenges of the Digital Age for post-modern businesses**

**Course code:** MGT323

**Semester and year:** Spring 2024

**Day and time:** Tuesday, 14:45 – 17:30

**Instructors:** Gabriele Meissner, MBA

**Instructor contact:** via NEO email, gabriele.meissner@aauni.edu

**Consultation hours:** 14:15h – 14:45h or after class

<b>Credits US/ECTS</b>	3/6	<b>Level</b>	Advanced
<b>Length</b>	15 weeks	<b>Pre-requisite</b>	MGT301
<b>Contact hours</b>	42 hours	<b>Course type</b>	Bachelor/Master Elective

### 1. Course Description

During the past decade, the internet has fundamentally changed the way business-to-consumer (B2C) industries relate to their markets. Platforms already disrupt traditional business models and re-shape whole industries. The way business-to-business (B2B) operate will also be fundamentally altered in the future by the Industrial Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning - it will change manufacturing, energy, agriculture, transportation, health care - almost all sectors of the economy. Global manufacturing corporations will need to compete on different levels in different areas as suddenly powerful Silicon Valley companies like Alphabet/Google, Apple, Microsoft and other software and technology firms are challenging industry incumbents in their own playing fields.

This latest wave of technology progress offers incredible opportunities along with new risks and ethical as well as legal challenges to business and society. The industrial internet will merge the global physical and digital world. What started mainly in consumer markets is moving towards a fundamental change which will affect all businesses and all our lives.

This course will not only explore the B2C strategies focusing on peer-to-peer and on-demand multi-sided platforms. This will help to explain some of the main strategies, concepts and ideas on how platform based business models work. However, the focus will also be on the emerging digitalization strategies of MNCs, the impact of AI resp. algorithms, the evolution of ERP systems and how the Industrial Internet shapes innovative corporate strategy, business models and practices. And we will take a look at innovative concepts like Smart Cities, Smart Cars or Smart Farming. It will also discuss the ethical issues involved.

Challenges facing students of business, and young enterprises today have never been greater. The digital revolution has dovetailed with globalization, and created a dynamic and different new commercial paradigm. The largest hotel company in the world doesn't own a single room and has very few employees. The largest taxi company in the world doesn't own a single taxi. These are examples of disruption in traditional industries, and the course will explore what these business models mean for the people involved and why in spite of huge losses companies have no problem finding huge amounts of venture capital.

This course is designed to assist students to make sense of technology terms and concepts to enable them to evaluate technological impact in an increasing digital and globalized environment. Ethical, legal, financial and commercial considerations are amongst the domains examined to provide the student with an overview to complement other studies undertaken in this program.

## 2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand and explain the meaning, impact and economic/business changes of digitalization strategies
- Understand and explain platform-based business models B2C and B2B
- Understand and explain the financial impact of digitalization strategies
- Understand and explain digital banking and digital currencies
- Understand and explain ethical and legal problems and implications

## 3. Reading Material

### ***Required Materials***

Currently there is no appropriate textbook available, but you find a collection of books reserved for the class in the library. However, the class is to a large extent based on the following book of which there are several copies in the library:

### **M. Iansiti, K.R. Lakhani, *Competing in the Age of AI*, Boston, 2020**

Further readings will be provided on the course website. The library has purchased some current books which discuss the different topics the course covers:

Benjamin, R., 2019. *Race after Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code*. Polity Press.

Bostrom, N., 2013. *Superintelligence: the coming machine intelligence revolution*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Colin Crouch, 2019. *Will the Gig Economy Prevail?*

DeLoach, D., Berthelsen, E., Elrifai, W., 2017. *The future of IoT: leveraging the shift to a data centric world*.

Fry, H., 2019. *Hello world: being human in the age of algorithms*.

Gassmann, O., Böhm, J., Palmié, M., 2019. *Smart Cities: Introducing Digital Innovation to Cities*. Emerald Publishing Ltd, United Kingdom ; North America.

Hardjono, T., Shrier, D.L., Pentland, A., 2016. *Trust::data: a new framework for identity and data sharing*.

Mayer-Schönberger, V., Ramge, T., John Murray (Londyn), 2019. *Reinventing capitalism in the age of big data*. John Murray, London.

O'Neil, C., 2017. *Weapons of math destruction: how big data increases inequality and threatens democracy*. Penguin Books, Great Britain.

Prassl, J., 2019. *Humans as a service: the promise and perils of work in the gig economy*.

Srnicek, N., 2017. *Platform capitalism*.

**Please note that readings will be provided as reference links. Students must apply for access to the online library access immediately at beginning of the course!**

### ***Recommended Materials***

Readings will be provided on NEO.

## 4. Teaching methodology

In this subject, you will participate in the following activities designed to enhance your learning throughout the subject:

In-class discussions related to the lecture, cases and videos; debates; experiential exercises based on short cases, and

- a. Readings, lectures and project discussions
- b. Team assignment

- c. An individual paper/project and presentation
- d. Class discussions, individual and team exercises
- e. Guest lectures (if possible)

We will be taking an active learning approach in this class. Research has shown that active learning is more effective, and interesting for both the students and the instructor. Successful active learning does require you to prepare for class every time. This means that you should do the readings before class each week, think about the issues, and be prepared to contribute to class discussions.

Our goal is to engage your interest and facilitate your learning through highly varied classroom activities. We think it is important to provide expert, logically structured input via lectures, and to orchestrate frequent opportunities for you to participate, think, apply, test your understanding, and build skills via in-class activities. We intend to develop your skills beyond merely learning the material to becoming able to critically and selectively apply and adapt your knowledge to specific contexts and problems in the real world.

The final team project provides a powerful opportunity to develop and test your skills and understanding of key course concepts. It will also give you an opportunity to collaborate in a virtual team and develop your project management skills.

We will invite several guest lecturers.

**All class online communication is done via the NEO class site. Especially, you must upload all your assignments as pdf-files on NEO.**

## 5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Class 1 6.2.2024	<b>Topic:</b> Introduction to digitalization Introduction to academic literature research, writing and bibliography
Class 2 13.2.2024	<b>Topic:</b> Ecosystems, algorithms, platforms, AI, machine learning: meaning, application and consequences of technology-based business models
Class 3 20.2.2024	<b>Topic:</b> The strategy of ecosystems Implications on management, M&A, customer relationships  <b>Assessment Procedure / Allocation of topics for in-class presentations / establishing study groups for final group project</b> <b>Introduction: Mid-term Home Assignment / Academic Essay</b>
Class 4 27.2.2024	<b>Topic:</b> Big Data – the new currency - and algorithms
Class 5 5.3.2024	<b>Topic:</b> The emerging trends in AI / when human decision making is replaced by algorithms / how machines learn without explicit programming
Class 6 12.3.2024	<b>Topic:</b> Smart everything – phones, cars, homes.... The Internet of Things in daily life

Class 7 19.3.2024	<b>Topic:</b> Smart Cities – advantages and challenges <b>Deadline: Mid-term Home Assignment / Essay</b>
<b>25.3.2024</b> – <b>29.3.2024</b>	<b>Mid-term Break</b>
Class 8 2.4.2024	<b>Topic:</b> Predictive behaviour – can algorithms predict what people will become or do in the future?
Class 9 9.4.2024	<b>Topic:</b> New social contracts: Humans as a Service - attacking labour laws and the future of work
Class 10 16.4.2024	<b>Topic:</b> Digital finance: Banking, Fintech, Blockchains, virtual currencies
Class 11 23.4.2024	<b>Topic:</b> Reality Mining – super surveillance on the workplace
Class 12 30.4.2024	<b>Topic:</b> The Industrial Internet of Things How global corporations like GE, Siemens, IBM and SAP are changing the rules of the game
Class 13 7.5.2024	<b>Topic:</b> The firm of the future – business models, structures, management
Class 14 14.5.2024	<b>Final Exam / Group Project Presentation/Report</b>

**All readings, homework and other assignments will be provided and detailed on NEO.**

**IMPORTANT: The sequence of topics might change due to possible research project and guest lecturers. Topics might also change if some current innovations need to be discussed additionally. The course will try to introduce current innovations in technology (i.e. face recognition vs. weapon recognition).**

#### **6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Workload (average)</b>	<b>Weight in Final Grade</b>	<b>Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*</b>
Class Participation	42	10%	Students learn to take a pro-active approach as well as professional behavior in class.	1, 2, 3
In-class Presentations	38	30%	Students choose a current case, research the digitalization strategies of the organization, the relevant literature and theories and critically discuss the case	1, 2, 3
Final Group Project	40	30%	Students learn to work in a virtual project team. They will research and assess the policies and activities of a company of their own choice	1, 2, 3

			and evaluate the organizations current behavior and make suggestions for further activities and/or change.	
Mid-term Home Assignment / Essay	30	30%	The mid-term test will give students the opportunity to check out their actual understanding and application of the issues discussed so far and their ability to wrote academic papers	1, 2, 3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>		

\*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

Not from the Dean of Students approved excuses for absence from the exams won't be accepted – this includes graded in-class presentations; the dates are stated above and in the detailed assessment descriptions. This is especially valid for the final group project presentations.

### ***Deadlines:***

**Deadlines in business are critical.** Each student is responsible for checking the class course space and their AAU Student e-mail box regularly, attending every class on time, and completing the assignment on time.

**No papers are accepted after the final class and group presentation.**

**Meeting all requirements: The formal requirements are clearly stated in all assignment descriptions. It is your duty to read and follow them. If you don't meet the requirements your grade will drop down at least 2 levels.**

## **7. Detailed description of the assignments**

### ***Class Participation:***

Participation is evaluated on the quality of your contribution to the learning experience of the class. Participating by actively responding to questions, asking questions yourself, and engaging in class discussions will help you earn your participation grade. Simply attending every class is not participation. If you are not sure, please ask your course leader what you can do to increase your participation.

Note that the quality of your participation is not necessarily a function of the quantity of your participation. Your participation grade will be evaluated, (at the end of the course), as follows:

- Outstanding: Contributions provided important insights for the class. Arguments were well supported (with evidence) and persuasively presented. If this student were not a member, the quality of the class would have been significantly less.
- Good: Contributions were on target, fairly well supported and persuasive. If this student were not a member, the quality of the class would have been slightly less.
- Attending nonparticipant: Contributed nothing to the class. The student attended every class but was silent and did not participate.

- Repetitive: If a student's class comments were repetitious and obvious and did not add value to the class. That is, you will be penalized for 'airtime' without value.
- Unsatisfactory: Unsatisfactory contribution occurs due to inadequate preparation. If this student were not a member of the class, the quality of the discussions would have been enhanced.

### ***Professional Behavior in Class***

Think of the following as an "Employee Handbook" setting out expected behavior and mutual obligations between us, like that which would exist between employer and employee. I undertake to treat students with respect, be well-prepared for class always, provide extensive developmental feedback, and respond quickly to your inquiries.

Reciprocity in the form of professional behavior is expected from you. You should behave as if employed by a major organization, taking responsibility for your actions and treating your colleagues with respect.

Class will begin on time. Lateness, taking phone calls, sending SMSs, browsing the internet or checking e-mails, private conversations especially during a presentation of your class mates, wandering in and out at will, eating and other unprofessional behaviors are rude, inappropriate, disrupt the learning of others, and may result in sanctions being applied.

Pro-active verbal participation is required.

For students in another time zone: you need to follow the recorded lecture of each class and write a summary of the content. You also need to answer the questions for the case studies in writing. All your papers (summaries and case analyses) need to be uploaded on NEO. You will find a special assignment for you there.

### **Assessment breakdown**

<b>Assessed area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Quality contributions to class discussions (s.a.)	35%
Focus – paying attention to class activities (i.e. staying online while not being available anymore)	30%
Quantity of contributions to class discussions	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### ***In-class Presentation:***

Students are asked to prepare a presentation of a case they choose themselves of max. 15 minutes followed by a discussion of again max. 10 minutes for which they also need to prepare the questions and which they will facilitate.

### **Requirements for the presentations:**

1. You need to write an abstract about your presentation of one A4-page.
2. If you present in a team each team member also needs to write a meaningful peer evaluation using the template on the course website.
3. All sources you might use must be valid academic/professional sources (four is the minimum) and named in the usual scientific form as an appendix. This is also valid for Internet sources (don't base your presentation on Wikipedia!)
4. Please format the presentation professionally, that means title (put a title on the abstract and peer evaluations as well, but separate it from your main paper), page numbers and your name on each page.
5. You need to cover and structure your topic along certain research questions, which you will develop on your own. Please note, that just presenting facts and figures will not meet the learning objectives and will only earn mediocre grades. I expect you to see your topic in a holistic context and to critically evaluate the different ethical concepts involved.

Please prepare a set of open questions and facilitate the class discussion on your topic, and hand in a copy of these questions. You are responsible for keeping within the time limit!

**You need to submit your slides, the abstract and peer evaluations via the NEO course site in the assignment section as pdf-files. Mind the deadline.**

**Assessment breakdown**

Assessed area	Percentage
In-depth research of the case incl. relevant literature	30%
Application of theories discussed in class	20%
Critical evaluation and discussion of case	30%
Meet formal requirements	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

***Mid-term Home Assignment / Essay:***

Students will write an academic essay asking for theoretical and conceptual knowledge. The essay needs to be researched by the students using academic literature in the library and databases. The details of this assignment will be discussed on March 23, when it will be given.

You find an extended bibliography at the end of the syllabus, for which you need to have access to the online library databases to research and make use of the sources.

**Deadline: March 19, 2024**

**Assessment breakdown**

Assessed area	Percentage
Analysis, coherence, conclusions	25%
Reference to concepts, tools and methods discussed in class and in readings	25%
Application of concepts, tools and methods to relevant examples	25%
Outline of relevance to current business practice	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

***Final Group Project:***

The final exam is a group project consisting of a group presentation and a report. The details will be communicated at the beginning of the course, as we might have a research project client.

**Deadline for presentation and report: May 14, 2024**

**Assessment breakdown**

Assessed area	Percentage
Critical analysis; application of concepts, tools and methods; coherence; conclusions; recommendations	25%
Structure of the report; validity of sources and references; bibliography; professional editing and formatting	25%
Quality of presentation (focus, analysis, critical application of concepts and methods, time management)	25%
Meeting all formal requirements, especially meaningful peer evaluations and keeping relevant deadlines – upload as pdf and print-outs –	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **8. General Requirements and School Policies**

### ***General requirements***

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

### ***Electronic communication and submission***

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams. Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question". All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

### ***Attendance***

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, at AAU courses is default mandatory; however, it is not graded as such. (Grades may be impacted by missed assignments or lack of participation.) Still, students must attend at least two thirds of classes to complete the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are excused, they will be administratively withdrawn from the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are not excused, they will receive a grade of "FW" (Failure to Withdraw). Students may also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (for example by arriving late or leaving early).

### ***Absence excuse and make-up options***

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), and the student wishes to request that the absence be excused, the student should submit an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence to the Dean of Students within one week of the absence. Each student may excuse up to two sick days per term without any supporting documentation; however, an Absence Excuse Request Form must still be submitted for these instances. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

***Late work:*** No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

### ***Electronic devices***

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

***Eating*** is not allowed during classes.

### ***Cheating and disruptive behavior***

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the student's Dean.



Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the student will fail the exam or assignment and be expelled from the exam or class.

### ***Plagiarism***

Plagiarism obscures the authorship of a work or the degree of its originality. Students are expected to create and submit works of which they are the author. Plagiarism can apply to all works of authorship – verbal, audiovisual, visual, computer programs, etc.

Examples are:

- **Verbatim plagiarism:** verbatim use of another's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source and designation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Paraphrasing plagiarism:** paraphrasing someone else's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **Data plagiarism:** use of other people's data without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **False quotation:** publishing a text that is not a verbatim quotation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Fictitious citation:** quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to an incorrect or a non-existent work,
- **Inaccurate citation:** citing sources in such a way that they cannot be found and verified,
- **Ghostwriting:** commissioning work from others and passing it off as one's own,
- **Patchwriting:** using someone else's work or works (albeit with proper acknowledgement of sources and proper attribution) to such an extent that the output contains almost no original contribution,
- **Self-plagiarism:** unacknowledged reuse of one's own work (or part of it) that has been produced or submitted as part of another course of study or that has been published in the past,
- **Collaborative plagiarism:** delivering the result of collective collaboration as one's own individual output.

At minimum, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student's Dean. A mitigating circumstance may be the case of novice students, and the benefit of the doubt may be given if it is reasonable to assume that the small-scale plagiarism was the result of ignorance rather than intent. An aggravating circumstance in plagiarism is an act intended to make the plagiarism more difficult to detect. Such conduct includes, for example, the additional modification of individual words or phrases, the creation of typos, the use of machine translation tools or the creation of synonymous text, etc. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Intentional or repeated plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

### ***Use of Artificial Intelligence and Academic Tutoring Center***

The use of artificial intelligence tools to search sources, to process, analyze and summarize data, and to provide suggestions or feedback in order to improve content, structure, or style, defined here as AI-assisted writing, is not in itself plagiarism. However, it is plagiarism if, as a result, it obscures the authorship of the work produced or the degree of its originality (see the examples above).

AAU acknowledges prudent and honest use of AI-assisted writing, that is, the use of AI for orientation, consultation, and practice is allowed. For some courses and assignments, however, the use of AI is counterproductive to learning outcomes; therefore, the course syllabus may prohibit AI assistance.

A work (text, image, video, sound, code, etc.) generated by artificial intelligence based on a mass of existing data, defined here as AI-generated work, is not considered a work of authorship. Therefore, if an AI-generated work (e.g. text) is part of the author's work, it must be marked as AI-generated. Otherwise, it obscures the authorship and/or the degree of originality, and thus constitutes plagiarism. Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, submission of AI-generated work is prohibited.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, and to improve their academic writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

**Course accessibility and inclusion**

Students with disabilities should contact the Dean of Students to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive.

**Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.**

**Grading Scale**

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95 – 100	<b>Excellent performance.</b> The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	<b>Good performance.</b> The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 – 86	
B-	80 – 82	
C+	77 – 79	<b>Fair performance.</b> The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 – 76	
C-	70 – 72	
D+	65 – 69	<b>Poor.</b> The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 – 64	
F	0 – 59	<b>Fail.</b> The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

\* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: Gabriele Meissner  
Date: 2024/01/05

Approved by: Greg Pezda, Chair of Department of Management  
Date: 2024/01/08

Approved by: Jan Vašenda, Vice Dean, School of Business Administration  
Date: 2024/01/24

## Appendix / Bibliography

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