BUS 486 (Spring 2011) Syllabus

INSTRUCTORS: Ashay Desai; Telephone: (920) 424-7269; Email: Desai@uwosh.edu Office: Clow Faculty 222, Office Hours: Thursday 11.00-2.00 pm, Tue 10.00-2.00 pm and by appointment.
Michael Tippins; Telephone: (920) 424-2094; Email: Tippins@uwosh.edu Office: CF 213 Office Hours: T-W 11.30-1.30 and by appointment

REQUIRED MATERIAL: Will depend on the projects and be added to D2L or handed out in class

OPTIONAL MATERIAL: Additional readings based on project needs.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is intended to be a consulting experience which provides students the opportunity to apply the concepts and techniques they have learned throughout the BBA program. The need to effectively integrate material from a variety of courses will be critical to success in this course.

This is a project course intended to provide students with a hands-on experience with management consulting. Our classes do a good job of teaching concepts and principles that continue to be useful in the business world. However, students also need practical on-the-job skills and training to get the job that allows them to demonstrate their conceptual understanding. For most of our students, that comes through full- or part-time work, internships, class projects, or other similar practical exposure. BUS 486 provides an additional avenue.

PREREQUISITES:
It is open to students who have taken the following courses.

Students who did not take all of the courses can only register for this course with the consent of the professors. This is a limited enrollment course. Students will be admitted to the course to the extent that we can identify appropriate projects for students to work on. Students must apply to the course by completing an application for the course. The student who will get the most out of this course has the following characteristics:

- Has an analytical mind, a strong quantitative background, and is very comfortable with computers;
- Is a hard worker, can perform under pressure, and is comfortable in a team setting;
- Can deal with uncertainty and ambiguity, is creative and resourceful, can work with minimal instruction;

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to the management consulting sector and to improve the analytical problem solving, team work, communication, and presentation skills.

COURSE FORMAT:
The goal of the course is to simulate a management consulting experience as closely as possible. To this end, students will:
• Form groups (or "companies")
• Listen to clients discussing problems
• Prepare proposals for the project(s) (milestones, and deliverables)
• Sign a contract with a client
• Work with the client on the problem all semester
• Present a progress report to the class and the client (not necessarily at the same time)
• Present a final report (written and oral) to the class and the client (not necessarily at the same time)

There will be weekly class meetings. **First few sessions of the course will cover many of the tools used by consultants at the various stages of a project to devise solutions and avoid pitfalls during the engagement.** The guest speakers will be chosen for their consulting knowledge and experience.

The Project course is operated on a team basis. Students will observe the environments, practices and challenges of actual entrepreneurs. They will serve as members of a management consulting team responsible for identification of and solutions to problems facing small local firms. Management consulting projects are conducted in teams. **To compose them, we will first require a copy of your resume.**

Groups will first meet with the client to formulate the project and prepare a proposal. Groups meet with faculty on a regular basis preceded by progress reports (details to be discussed in class). A final report is due at the conclusion of the project.

The professors will act as resource persons and supervisors, but not as project managers. Additionally, there will be a Faculty panel (from various business disciplines) sufficiently involved in the project to contribute to the student’s educational experience, as well as to provide meaningful feedback and assessment to the students. Groups meet at least once a week with the professors during the term. **(We will not divide the projects up among the professors. Each group should probably meet with both professors -- not necessarily at the same time/place.)** It is the **students’ responsibility** to arrange additional meetings with the professors whenever they feel the need.

The load for each student will depend on several factors: student's background, group characteristics, depth and breadth of the project. Careful planning in the first two weeks is crucial for success.

**Consulting Project**

The professors will recruit the projects from local companies and organizations. The scope and depth should challenge students in their academic studies as well as providing the opportunity for the hands-on practice. Students will then prepare an Engagement letter that will **include** scope of work, work products, and time frame for same **(to be completed in the first 2 weeks of class).**

Examples of appropriate projects may include (but not limited to) a combination that consists of 3-4 of the following areas (at a minimum):

At the conclusion of the project, it is the responsibility of the student to prepare a final report for the project sponsor, the faculty instructor, this report usually is a major component in the faculty instructor's evaluation and assessment of the student's project. Final Report should include:

Executive Summary, Introduction, Objectives of the Consulting Engagement, Description & Background of Company, Various analysis (For example Environment/Industry Analysis, Competitive Analysis, Financial Assessment, SWOT analysis) Conclusions, Recommendations (both Strategic and operational), Implementation of recommendations, and relevant appendices (Financial Reports, Business Ratios (Comparisons such as past/present or peer or benchmarks). As a general rule, students MUST use a minimum of 15 references (Articles and other sources) for the projects.

USE OF COURSE-SITE

Groups will use the group discussion area in the course site for project related discussion. They will also provide updates here. The group discussion helps other group members to access information collected by you and helps us keep track of how well the project is moving. This WILL be used as input during your grades.

GRADING

There are no home work assignments, quizzes, or exams. Student performance will be measured solely on the contents and the presentation of the project.

Attendance and in class behavior  50 points
Initial Proposal and engagement letter  25 points
Weekly Discussion updates  25 points
Progress report presentation  50 points
Final presentation  75 points
Written final report  100 points
Client evaluation  100 points
Peer evaluation  100 points
Total:  475 points

The team consulting project will be evaluated based on data collection and analysis and the completeness and professionalism of the written report and class presentation.

Students should check the web site regularly for announcements regarding class meetings and guest speakers.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

(please note that this schedule may change to accommodate client’s requirements)

Week 1 Introduction; Lecture on Basics of consulting

MEET WITH CLIENT BEFORE WEEK 2 (Firms describe projects; get information on resources, timeline, meeting protocol, provide contact information)

Week 2 Discuss meeting with the client (first impressions; document all details and concerns)
   Lecture on client relationship skills; marketing services; Engagement letters

Week 3 Contracts are signed
   Project work begins Tools and Techniques (External Analysis) (Internal Analysis)

Week 4 Project related work (Additional speakers based on student requests from Faculty panel)

Week 5 Presentation skills

Weeks 6 Project related work (Additional speakers based on student requests from Faculty panel)

Week 7 Interim presentation;
   Present first round proposals to Client and prepare report of meeting
   Teams informally report Client reactions and brainstorm implementations.

Week 8 Project related work (Additional speakers based on student requests from Faculty panel)
   Lecture on How to write a proposal/final report?

Weeks 9 and 10 Project related work (Additional speakers based on student requests from Faculty panel)

Week 11 Final deliverables presented to professors
   Prepare report feedback on formal implementation proposals

Week 12 Project related work

Week 13 Final deliverables presented to professors and clients

Week 14 Wrap up and debriefing
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