

October 1, 2013

Course Syllabus and schedule:
Consulting Field Projects
Spring, 2014

Summary Description:

Intent of the course is to guide students in applying management consulting processes to solving business and organizational problems. This is accomplished by providing students with a real consulting “client” having a real-world problem or issue, requiring students to work across multiple disciplines while considering leadership, teamwork and social responsibility issues. In this way, students are provided a framework for applying the various analytical tools and concepts taught by Katz, and do so in such a manner both creative and valuable to the client. The course further prepares the student for a career in consulting or – of equal importance – as a decisive problem solver working within an organization. This three-credit course consists of these components:

1. The field project: Each includes three to five students assembled as a team, with one student designated by his team as team lead. Each project involves a single “client” organization, which may be an industrial, retail, financial, entrepreneurial, educational, governmental, healthcare, non-profit, or social enterprise entity. Each client will provide its team with a project of immediacy, as well as an executive dedicated to the team. A faculty advisor is assigned to each team. Student preferences are considered in team assignments, but student assignments are decided by the school.
2. The consulting workshops. Four workshops will be held, each three hours in duration and held on selected Saturday mornings. Professional consultants and experienced executives will lead these workshops. A textbook supports the workshop. For first-time students, the workshops focus on the frameworks and mechanisms used in solving client problems or issues. For students who are repeating the course, the workshop will focus on developing client proposals.
3. End-of-term competition held on a late-term Friday morning. Team presentations are judged by a series of faculty-alumni-executive panels. The top teams are recognized, with the winner team members’ names inscribed on the McKinsey Cup.

Students otherwise schedule their own time, dovetailing with client schedules and that of their faculty advisor. Attendance at these events is however required.

Faculty Coordinator: G.M. (Bud) Smith, Jr., Clinical Professor in Business Administration. Professor Smith holds a Mechanical Engineering degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a Masters degree from Sloan School of Management, M.I.T. He began his career as a management consultant with Booz-Alan & Hamilton. Thereafter, Smith built a successful international career, managing subsidiaries in the United States, Japan, Korea, and Brazil. He has been CEO over a number of US-based technology ventures with Swiss, German, and Japanese partners. Office in Mervis 218 or contact budsmith@pitt.edu.

Course Prerequisites: MBA students are expected to have completed at least one term. Undergraduate students are by invitation. Masters' or PhD-level students enrolled elsewhere may enroll on a case-by-case basis. Consult Bev Bolden or Professor G.M. (Bud) Smith, Jr, budsmith@pitt.edu for clarification.

No-Drop Date: Students may drop the course prior to the first client meeting (see dates below). No drops permitted thereafter.

Course Logistics: The course is fast-paced and front-loaded. Students should plan to meet or attend as follows. Attendance is required:

- An orientation during the first week of class.
- Four face-to-face client meetings are required at minimum: initial problem-defining session, work plan approval session, mid-term progress meeting, and final presentation. Client meetings are typically held early morning or late afternoon, held at client offices or at Katz, as agreed.
- Four consulting workshops held on selected Saturday mornings.
- The McKinsey Cup playoffs and championship, held on a Friday at end-on-term
- Faculty advisor meetings typically held weekly.

See course schedule below for specific dates. Teams may otherwise meet at their own schedule.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890/(412) 383-7355 (TTY), as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Enrolling in the Course: Following normal course enrollment, please e-mail your resume and a brief statement of your career interest to Professor Smith at budsmith@pitt.edu. Teams are assembled immediately prior to the term.

Faculty Advisor: A faculty advisor will have responsibility for each field project, providing student grades and quality control throughout.

Team Lead: One student from each team should be chosen by team members as team lead. The team lead is the primary contact with the client, and with the faculty advisor.

Course Deliverables include (1) A work plan signed off by the client & faculty advisor, (2) Mid-term progress report, and (3) final report to the client company. Report format (written, PowerPoint, verbal, etc.) will be decided by the company and faculty advisor.

Course Grading: The Katz School’s Masters Program grading guidelines are applicable, and the following criteria:

- I. The faculty advisor assigns a team grade, with input from the client.
- II. Grading based on three criteria, all dealing with how well each team’s supports its client: (1) Engagement management, (2) Value added to the client, and (3) delivery to the client.
- III. Grade breakdown:
 - 25% of grade: the team engagement plan.
 - 25% of grade: the team’s mid-term report to the client.
 - 25% of grade: the team’s final report to the client.
 - 25% of grade: each team’s performance during the McKinsey Cup Competition.

Also:

Individual grades may be adjusted by the faculty advisor, with input from the company and team members. Students failing to fully support their teams will see a lowering of their grade.

Students missing any workshop, key client meeting, or McKinsey Cup competition will be dropped from the course, and given a grade of “incomplete”. Makeups may be scheduled, case by case.

Course Text: “Hands-On Consulting”, published by Pearson Learning Solution, 2013. Available at the Pitt Bookstore or on Amazon.

Course Schedule Attendance is required for all events.

- January 8 or 9 (Wednesday or Thursday): Orientation, including a review of the course; student assignments to their client organization and team; Date of the first client meeting, role of the team lead, timetable. Mervis 115, 5:00 to 5:30 pm. Students must attend one of these orientation sessions.
- January 10 (Friday), client and faculty advisor seminar, 8:30 am to 10:00 am, Mervis Hall 114 (no student participation)
- January 11 (Saturday), 1st Consulting Workshop, 9 a.m. to noon, tentatively in Mervis 115. Topic: Initiating the Client Assignment. Attendance required. Topic: ***Preparation for first client meeting and developing the consulting work plan.*** Preparation: Read in the text pages 41-64 and 118-125 and Appendixes D and E. Breakout sessions tentatively in Mervis 104, 115, B75 and 209.
- January 13 (Monday): Last day to drop the course. Drops thereafter require approval by Dean’s office.
- On or during the week of January 13 (Monday or later), all clients and teams will hold their initial meeting. Meetings are generally held at the client’s site but may be held at Katz if agreed. The initial meeting date, time and location must be confirmed with client executive and faculty advisor.
- January 18 (Saturday): 2nd Consulting Workshop, 9 am to noon, Mervis 115. Topic: Applying the Right Methods. Attendance required. Topic: ***Selecting appropriate consulting methods.*** Read in the text pages 65-116. Teams should bring their engagement plans to the workshop. Breakout sessions tentatively in Mervis 104, 115, B75 and 209.

- On or during the week of January 20th (Monday): All clients and teams hold meeting to sign off on engagement plan.
- March 8th (Saturday): 3rd Consulting Workshop, 9 am to noon, Mervis 115. Topic: Delivering Value to the Client: part 1 of 2. Attendance required. Topic: ***Adding value to the client***. Read in the text: pages 117-150. Teams should bring their draft mid-term progress reports to the workshop. Breakout sessions tentatively in Mervis 104, 115, B75 and 209.
- During the timeframe of March 17 – 21 (or earlier if agreed): mid-term progress meeting with the client. Professor Smith or Executive-in-Residence Bill Slivka will attend this important meeting.
- April 5th (Saturday): 4th and final Consulting Workshop, 9 am to noon, Mervis 115. Topic: Delivering Value to the Client: part 2 of 2. Attendance required. Topic: ***Delivering and selling an actionable client recommendation***. Breakout sessions tentatively in Mervis 104, 115, B75 and 209.
- On or during the week of April 14th (Monday or later): the Team presents its final report to its Client.
- April 18th (Friday): The McKinsey Cup team competition, a morning event.

Address any questions to Professor Bud Smith, budsmith@pitt.edu.