

November 1, 2014

An MBA/MS Accounting elective course
Managing the Professional Services Firm
BSPP 2060 (13982)

Overview: A 1.5 credit course, intended for MBA and MS Accounting students interested in managing a professional firm.

Offering: Spring II, 2015

Prerequisite Course: For MBA candidates: the Consulting Field Projects.
For MS Accounting candidates: suitable professional experience.

Instructor: Professor G.M. (Bud) Smith, Jr., Visiting Clinical Professor. Experienced professionals will also participate, drawn from Katz executives-in-residence and current/past professionals experienced in teaching at the graduate level.

Intended Learning Outcome: This course differs from and builds upon the Consulting Field Projects (CFPs). Rather than teaching the mechanics of consulting as in the CFPs, this course deals with management issues. Participating students will learn the structures, professional approaches, practices, and issues involved in managing professional services firms. Students interesting in enrolling in this course are will be:

- Students interested in pursuing a career as professionals in business, public accounting or IT consulting,
- Students expecting during their careers to hire, assist and benefit from professional service providers,
- Students wishing to better understand how professional consultants apply project-oriented and cross-functional approaches to solving complex problems in their area of specialty.

By the end of this course, students should be able to intelligently discuss the practice of consulting, and how it is approached by various types of professional firms. Additionally, he or she will gain an understanding for the highly fluid and evolving environment in which professional operate, and how consultants bring order to such chaos. Finally, students will understand and appreciate basic management tasks such as scoping out and sell a client engagement, organizing field work, handling client stakeholders and developing actionable recommendations.

Student Teams: Students work in small teams, both during case discussions and the practicum.

Deliverables for students are as members of their team. Deliverables fall into two areas (see proposed class schedule and content set forth below):

- For assigned cases, teams will present and defend their position relative to pre-assigned questions pertaining to an assigned case. Teams will deliver at least twice during the course.
- For the end-of-term consulting practicum, teams will propose how to conduct a fictitious client engagement.

Text: Students should refer to “Hands-on Consulting”, used in the Consulting Field Projects and available at Pitt Bookstore or on Amazon.

Grading

Grade	Expected Distribution
A+, A and A-	40% to 50%
B+ and B	40% to 60%
B- and below	0-5%

Grading will be determined as follows:

Team grade, based on team presentation and delivery of assigned cases	1/3 of grade
Team grade, based on team proposal relative to the end-of-term consulting practicum.	1/3 of grade
Individual grade, recognizing leadership or lack of participation/class attendance.	1/3 of grade

Proposed Class Schedule and Content:

1. First module: **Building a Consulting Practice.**
Preparatory Case study: *McKinsey & Company: Managing Knowledge and Learning.*
Lecture: Course introduction, team formation. Lecture: history of business consulting, client needs, types of consultants
Case discussion, led by two teams who will address pre-assigned questions relative to the case.
2. Second module: **Managing a Consulting Engagement.**
Preparatory Case study: *Deloitte & Touché Consulting Group .*
Lecture followed Case discussion, led by teams addressing pre-assigned case questions.
3. Third Module: **Building a Client Portfolio.**
Preparatory Case Study: *Exeter Group, Inc.*
Lecture followed Case discussion, led by teams addressing pre-assigned case questions
4. Fourth module: **Expanding a Consulting Practice.**
Preparatory Case study: *Infosys Consulting in 2006: Leading the Next Generation of Business and Information Technology Consulting.*
Lecture followed Case discussion, led by teams addressing pre-assigned case questions.
5. Fifth Module: **Managing Professional Ethics**
Preparatory Case Study: *Arthur Anderson (A).*
Lecture followed Case discussion, led by teams addressing pre-assigned case questions.
6. Sixth module: **Practicum workshop.**
Preparatory Case Study: *Vickers, Incorporated: Omaha Plant.*
Instructor will review the practicum case. Thereafter, the instructor along with visiting professionals will work with teams in breakout, to review the issues raised in the case and guide the teams in developing a client proposal which includes scope, staffing, timetable and pricing.
7. Seventh module: **Practicum presentations.**
Teams present their proposal to the client (represented by Katz executives-in-residence), and are ranked in performance in this regard. Session ends with a wrap-up lecture.