

Multi-disciplinary Problem Solving in Environmental Sustainability

(CONS 680/BUSI 698)

Spring 2012; M&W 1:00-4:30 pm

117 Cole Field House

Faculty:

Dr. Karen Lips (klips@umd.edu); 4219 Biology-Psychology Bldg.; (301) 405-5030

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TA: Nicole Angeli (nangeli@umd.edu)

Course Objectives: CONS 680/BUSI 698 is a 3 credit elective course. The projects are one-semester consulting engagements with clients who have contracted with the CONS Program and Robert H. Smith School of Business for delivery of services. These engagements afford CONS students and MBAs the opportunity to hone a number of skills in a "living case" environment. In addition to applying knowledge gained in CONS and MBA courses, students should bring to bear knowledge and skills from past work experience and prior education. Students are expected to spend an average of 100 hours over the semester on the project. With an average team size of four students plus one faculty advisor, approximately 500 hours of consulting time is dedicated to our clients on each project.

While working in cross-functional teams, students will accomplish the following:

1. Define the project goals, deliverables, timelines, and processes with input from the client and faculty advisor.
2. Conduct appropriate investigation and analysis to add value and maximize client satisfaction while maintaining the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct.
3. Deliver oral and written reports to the client at times and places mutually agreed upon.

This course has two important dimensions. You are representing the University of Maryland and the highest degree of professionalism is expected. You will get out of this project as much as you put into it.

Classes and Meetings: We have set aside two afternoons to allow for teams to meet in person. Much of the work can be done independently, but we have found it is critical to set aside regular meeting times, especially for multidisciplinary teams. Multidisciplinary teams are expected to set aside time to meet on Wednesday afternoons. The syllabus indicates days when all students are expected to attend and participate in group activities. Because of differences in college credits and scheduling between CONS and the MBA program, activities and important deadlines will be scheduled for Wednesdays and these are the only required days for the MBAs (outside of team meetings). We will accommodate the PT MBA students working full-time in the DC Metro region through the use of conference calls and virtual group meeting tools as well.

Faculty Roles and Responsibilities The faculty supervisors act in three capacities: 1) student evaluation, 2) student technical support, and 3) client buffer. First and foremost this is a 3-credit graduate course and faculty will observe and collect the necessary information to allow them to assign grades to individual team members at the end of the semester. *Grading is individual, not team, and this is NOT an automatic "A" course.*

Faculty will attend regular team meetings and important meetings between client and team.

Faculty are available to students as a technical subject matter expert on an as needed basis. The faculty supervisor will work with the client to assure that client expectations are being met by the team, and that team expectations and information requests are being respected by the client. The faculty advisor will also buffer the team from unreasonable client requests or changes in project definition (“scope creep”).

Office Hours: Faculty are available during scheduled class times or by appointment throughout the semester. The course TA will be present both days throughout the semester. The CONS Classroom (Cole Room 117) is reserved M&W from 1:00-4:30 pm for team meetings. It is likely teams will need to meet outside of this time, and we offer use of this space on a first-come, first-served basis for any time when not in use by other classes. Additionally, MBA students can often reserve meeting rooms in VMH on a daily basis.

Course website: We have set up a course website on Blackboard that will provide all handouts, lecture notes, readings and resource materials for the course. Here you can find a list with suggested background readings, info on group projects, leadership, ethical issues, communication tools, and creating presentations. We have also provided samples of letters of engagement, team charters, and meeting agendas from past classes. We encourage Teams to use this space for communication and exchange of materials. We will activate the course calendar function on BB so we can schedule meetings and presentations and avoid double booking. We will also activate the listserver, email, and Wimba functions to facilitate communication within and among groups. All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard, except for evaluations, which will be sent to the Course TA to maintain confidentiality.

Grading Criteria

You will be evaluated on both content and process for each of these categories. Content is the academic content, intellectual contribution of the project. Process is how well you met deadlines, worked with clients and team members, faculty members. *It is important that we are able to evaluate each Team member on their contribution to both the content and process of the project throughout the semester.*

- 20% Class participation, faculty evaluation
- 5% Attendance at Social Enterprise Symposium (1 March)
- 5% Midterm Peer evaluation
- 10% Midterm presentation
- 5% Final Peer evaluation
- 5% Client evaluation
- 20% Final Presentation
- 30% Final written report

Project Deliverables and Timelines: There are several key dates for deliverables that are common across all projects (see below).

Letter of Engagement (Terms of Reference): Prepared by the student team following the initial meeting with the client, the letter of engagement spells out in some detail:

- 1) What the student team will accomplish
- 2) The methods to be used
- 3) The resources required
- 4) Work products, reports, and briefings to be delivered
- 5) A Gantt or similar timeline chart showing due dates for project milestones

6) A budget, especially for any unusual or large expenses.

Mid-Term Presentation to the Client: This is an oral presentation that serves to assure all parties that the project is on track, the right issues are being examined, and the timeline for completion is still realistic. In many instances, enough information will have been gathered to give the client a flavor for what the final results will look like. Client preferences regarding content, tone, location, etc. should be honored as much as possible.

Final Report and Presentation to the Client: The student team will present their findings in a formal presentation setting with clients in attendance. The team will present its final report and any presentation materials and engage in conversation with the client on next steps, feedback, assumptions, etc.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wednesday 25 January

Introduction to Problem Solving

- Review Syllabus
- Steps to solving complex problems

Overview of projects

- Working in small groups & team charters
- Multidisciplinary Teams

Meeting with your client

- Interview tasks (agenda, note taking, facilitation)
- Questions to Ask
- Things to Consider
- Drafting your Terms of Reference

ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop a Team Charter
- Prepare agenda & questions for meeting with client
- Assign interview tasks
- Research project

Sunday 29 January

***Frank Auditorium (VMH 1524), 8:30 am to 5:30 pm*

Consulting Bootcamp for MBA students & CONS students in joint projects

Monday, 30 January

Consulting Bootcamp for CONS-only project teams

Meeting with your client

- Interview tasks (agenda, note taking, facilitation)
- Questions to Ask
- Things to Consider
- Drafting your Terms of Reference
- Prepare agenda & questions for meeting with client
- Assign interview tasks
- Research project

Nicole: *Getting the most out of your Team Charter*

- Developing a Team Charter: the basics
- The team charter as a toolbox for personal development (or, how not to end up doing the

same job you always do)
Helpful Hints

Wednesday 1 February

Groups meet, prepare for interview with client

ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop a Team Charter
- Prepare agenda & questions for meeting with client
- Assign interview tasks
- Research project
- Schedule meeting with client, coordinate dates & times with Faculty –first client meeting must take place by Feb. 10.

Monday, 6 February

Groups meet, work on project

Wednesday 8 February

Team Charter due (Electronic copy to faculty)

Groups meet, work on project

Monday, 13 February

Groups meet, work on project

Submit draft of Letter of Engagement to faculty on or before Feb. 13 for comments.

Wednesday 15 February

Signed, completed Letter of Engagement due to clients (Electronic copy to faculty)
Include date of mid-term presentation (week of March 12) & time and location of final presentation (week of May 7)

Monday, 20 February

Groups meet, work on project

Wednesday 22 February

Groups meet, work on project

Monday, 27 February

Groups meet, work on project

Wednesday 29 February

Groups meet, work on project

Monday, 5 March

Groups meet, work on project

Wednesday, 7 March

ACTION ITEM:

Schedule mid-term presentations to Clients for next week

In class Workshops:

- Giving presentations
- Writing Final Reports

Monday, 12 March***ACTION ITEM:***

- Mid-semester Progress Reports to client (CONS Projects). Coordinate dates & times with Faculty. This is a brief (20 minutes) oral summary of progress to date, any problems, next steps, projected timeline. Same format as research paper: Introduction to problem, objectives, methods, results, discussion, literature cited.

Wednesday, 14 March***ACTION ITEMS:***

- Midterm Peer evaluations due. Complete parts 1&2 for each team member, complete part 3 once for the entire team. Email 3 sections to Nicole Angeli by 5 pm today.
- Mid-semester Progress Reports to client (MBA/CONS Projects). Coordinate dates & times with Faculty. This is a brief (20 minutes) oral summary of progress to date, any problems, next steps, projected timeline. Same format as research paper: Introduction to problem, objectives, methods, results, discussion, literature cited.

17-24 March

Spring Break - No Class

Monday, 26 March

Groups meet, work on project

Wednesday, 28 March

Groups meet, work on project

Monday, 2 April

Groups meet, work on project

Wednesday, 4 April

Groups meet, work on project

Monday, 9 April

Groups meet, work on project

Wednesday, 11 April

Groups meet, work on project

Monday, 16 April

Groups meet, work on project

Wednesday, 18 April

Groups meet, work on project

Monday, 23 April

Groups meet, work on projects

****Draft of WRITTEN REPORT DUE** (printed, double spaced) – you will get edited versions back during dress rehearsals

Monday, 30 April

Dress Rehearsals **CONS** Projects– 1 hour total for each presentation, plan for 15 minutes for questions.

Edited, draft reports returned to Teams.

Wednesday, 2 May

Dress Rehearsals **MBA/CONS** Projects – 1 hour total for each presentation, plan for 15 minutes for questions.

Edited, draft reports returned to Teams.

Monday 7 May

Final presentations to Clients this week; coordinate dates & times with Faculty

Wednesday, 9 May

Final presentations to Clients this week; coordinate dates & times with Faculty

Wednesday, 16 May

Course evaluation and debriefing

Submit peer evaluation to Nicole Angeli. Complete parts 1&2 for each team member, complete part 3 once for the entire team

Submit CD of final presentation and final report

Submit on-line evaluations at www.courseevalum.umd.edu

The fine print:

The University of Maryland requires that the following statements be included in all course syllabi:

Academic Accommodations: If you have a documented disability, you should contact Disability Support Services 0126 Shoemaker Hall. Each semester students with documented disabilities should apply to DSS for accommodation request forms which you can provide to your professors as proof of your eligibility for accommodations. The rules for eligibility and the types of accommodations a student may request can be reviewed on the DSS web site at http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/receiving_serv.html.

Religious Observances: The University System of Maryland policy provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs, students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. Notice should be provided as soon as possible but no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period. Prior notification is especially important in connection with final exams, since failure to reschedule a final exam before the conclusion of the final examination period may result in loss of credits during the semester.

Academic integrity: The University of Maryland has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>. The University of Maryland is one of a small number of universities with a student-administered Honors Code and an Honors Pledge, available on the web at <http://www.jpo.umd.edu/aca/honorpledge.html>. The code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures.

CourseEvalUM: Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University as well as to the tenure and

promotion process. CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses between Tuesday, December 1 and Sunday, December 13. Please go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations starting December 1. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online, at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

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