



MARK/GENB 7393 and MARK/GENB 7394
BUSINESS CONSULTING LAB
Fall 2021

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Learning Objectives:

This course provides a unique opportunity for the student to learn-by-doing with a real business or institution, solving real problems. While each project will provide very specific and unique learning opportunities, the primary areas of knowledge and skill development for each will be:

1. Business Analysis and Decision Making.
2. Consultative Business Relationships.
3. Project Management.
4. Communication, Both Written and Oral.
5. Teamwork.

The above will be developed against a backdrop of real business world dynamics. While the classroom allows for lively, one-dimension discussions around a controlled set of issues, these projects will begin with a greater level of ambiguity that will need to be addressed by the teams. As the semester progresses, some of the projects will experience changes or unexpected events and results that will allow the teams to experience real business and organizational dynamics. These issues will need to be understood and resolved expeditiously for the timely completion of a successful project.

This course will allow students to work in teams through the six-credit hours on a project operating much like a consultancy.

During the first 4 class sessions, students will be exposed to various important topics:

- Communication Skills.
- Focus on Proposals, Reports, and Presentations.
- Project Management Skills.
- Teamwork

Most of the time in the course will be devoted to working on a project in a team for a real-client.

Administrative Details:

1. Since the clients are real companies or institutions, all student teams are expected to demonstrate professional behavior. This involves appropriate dress code, arriving on time for meetings and proper communication with the client and the rest of the team.
2. We will meet each Thursday to review work and coach teams. The scheduled classes will cover:
 - Wednesday 8/25; 6:00 – 9:00 (Introductions, syllabus, & assignments, project CPM charts)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUXkThfQx6A>
 - Critical components of the text to review.
 - Wednesday 9/1 6:00 – 9:00 Proposal/ Project Management/ Value Creation
 - Wednesday 9/8 6:00 – 9:00 –Letter of engagement, consulting process
 - Wednesday 9/15; 6:00 – 9:00 (Presentation skills and techniques)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iwpi1Lm6dFo>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LSnINgIkQA>
 - http://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks
 - Wednesday 9/22; 6:00 – 9:00 (Proposal/LOE presentations)
 - Wednesday 9/29 through 11/10; 6:00 – 9:00 Review of project progress, coaching case studies practice presentations and discussion of consulting process. 10/20 Siemens Guest speakers, 10/27 Maurice Nasser - guest speaker
 - Wednesday 11/17; Report Rough Draft and Presentation Run-Through
 - Wednesday 12/1; 6:00 – 9:00 (Final Report and Presentation)
 - Week of 12/6, Final presentation to Client
 - The classroom and Faculty will be available on every Wednesday evening.
3. Student teams will be expected to provide a brief progress report/update on the project to the instructors once a week by email (Monday mornings). The updates will follow a Gannt or CPM chart developed in the Scope phase of the project. Each update will describe each team member's responsibilities for the week, Deadlines missed, Actions to get project back on target etc. A Wednesday class meeting with faculty can be scheduled at that time. Teams should also be meeting and interacting with the client on a frequent basis. Attendance by all members of the team at such meetings is expected but not mandatory.
4. Progress Reviews: Each team member will complete a team assessment at the 5 week, 10 week, and 15 week (end-of-semester) periods, providing feedback at the team, peer, self, and course level. These will be brief and high level in nature. This will assist the professor in determining how to guide and support each team.
5. Each team must identify a team member who will be responsible for interacting with the client and instructors.
6. Grading – Semester grades will be based on the following:
 - a. Scope/Proposal/Engagement Letter – 20%
 - b. Peer Reviews – 30% – (3 reviews at 10% each)
 - c. Final paper and Presentation – 30%
 - d. Client Feedback – 20%

Key Dates and Deliverables to Faculty:

Scope Statement	by 9/1
Letter of Engagement	9/8
5 Week Review	9/22
10 Week Review	10/27
Rough Run-Through of Presentation	11/17
Rough Draft of Report	11/17
Final Presentation and Report to Faculty	12/1
Final Presentation to Client	w/o 12/6

Reports and Presentations:

Project Ownership

By enrollment in this class, you expressly consent to ownership of your work product by the organization for which your project is completed and understand that work produced is not your own intellectual property.

Scope

- Maximum 1 typed page (single-spaced, 12 point font)
- Faculty must approve prior to delivering to client.
- Format:
 - Background and problem statement. May include some discussion of industry background, company position, and relevant research.
 - Specific focus and scope of the project, what is included and excluded in deliverables.

Project Proposal

The proposal for the project should include:

- A. Overview – An overview of the company, the competition and the environment.
- B. Objective – The objective portion of the proposal will describe the challenge facing the client.
- C. Scope – The scope will identify the areas that will be studied and analyzed, providing a specific limit to the scope of the project to avoid “scope creep”.

- D. Methodologies – The methodology section will describe the approach(es) that will be employed to gather and analyze information as well as the communication structures to be used throughout the project.
- E. Deliverables – This section will describe what the client can expect to receive from the team at the end of the project.

The proposal will be 6 to 8 pages (12 point, single spaced) and be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation that will be used to present the proposal to the client. The scope and proposal will have to be agreed to and signed by the client before proceeding with the project.

Final Project Report and Presentation

The final project portion of the course should result in a team presentation and report that includes the following sections formatted as follows:

- A. Executive Summary - this is a summary of the total report and is probably the last section of the report that is written.
- B. Mission and Vision - this portion of the report describes the overarching reason for your client company's business focus (mission) and how your assigned objective creates value for collaborators, the company and customers (vision).
- C. Situation analysis - this portion of the report will discuss the nature of the industry, the customer base and potential segments (key customers, under potential, and nonusers), competitors, potential disruptors, a "blue ocean" review along several of the product characteristics and a SWOT analysis. This is an expansion of the overview in the proposal.
- D. Objective and Scope Parameters - A description of the objective (here discuss what job the customer is "hiring" the team to do) and the goal(s) you have been assigned. The goals will have a timeframe element (e.g. within 2 years) and performance benchmark element (e.g. create revenues of \$1 million). It will be important to define the boundaries of the project (what was done and what was not done).
- E. Methods and Process – Describe the approaches and the procedures used to gather information and develop a foundation for the recommendations.
- F. Analyses and Findings – Include relevant data, charts and findings.
- G. Recommendations – Specific recommendations based on the analyses and findings
- H. Execution - This part of the report should discuss how cash, workforce etc will be planned for, organized, directed and controlled. This should also point out which indi-

vidual, department or division should be responsible for leading the implementation process.

I. Financial Impact – Financial proformas projecting costs and revenues expected at various levels of success.

J. Deliverables – any promised analyses, charts or implementation schedules (including Gantt or CPM charts).

Final Report:

- Maximum of 30 typed pages (single-spaced, 12 point font)
- Additional material may be provided in the Appendix.
- Must be provided to faculty prior to client.

Final Presentation:

- Faculty - Plan for 25 minutes of presentation and 30 minutes of Q&A.
- Client – Individual consideration for client scheduling.
- Preferably the same as Faculty format PowerPoint presentation. It is recommended that one team member act as the presenter and defer questions to team members according to their area of focus.

Course Materials:

The Basic Principles of Effective Consulting, Linda Stroh and Homer Johnson, Routledge, 2009
ISBN: 0-8058-5420-7. Order online.

Creating a Successful Consulting Practice, Gary Randazzo 2018
ISBN: 978-1-94897-682-4 Order online – amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com

AVAILABILITY OF COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. Also, there is no appointment necessary for the “Let's Talk” program, which is a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy is strictly enforced by the C.T. Bauer College of Business. No violations of this policy will be tolerated in this course. A discussion of the policy is included in the University of Houston Student Handbook which can be downloaded at <http://www.uh.edu/dos/publications/handbook.php>. Students are expected to be familiar with this policy.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The C. T. Bauer College of Business would like to help students who have disabilities achieve their highest potential. To this end, in order to receive academic accommodations, students must register with the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) (telephone 713-743-5400), and present approved accommodation documentation to their instructors in a timely manner.

COVID Requirements

Face Covering Policy (required for courses with a face-to-face component)

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the University [requires face coverings](#) on campus including classrooms for both faculty and students. Face coverings must cover your mouth and nose and be worn throughout the class session. A mask with a valve is not considered an adequate face covering and should not be used, as it can expel exhaled air, increasing the risk to others. Eating or drinking during class is discouraged and is not an excuse for removing the face covering for any extended length of time. For additional information on the use of face coverings, please see [Face Covering FAQs](#). Failure to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering in class will result in your being asked to leave the classroom immediately and a disciplinary referral through the Dean of Students Office. Requests for accommodations relating to the face covering policy may be directed to the [Center for Students with DisABILITIES \(CSD\)](#).

Required Daily Health Self-Assessment (required for courses with a face-to-face component)

Your presence in class each session means that you have completed a daily self-assessment of your health/exposure and you:

- Are NOT exhibiting any [Coronavirus Symptoms](#)
- Have NOT tested positive for COVID-19
- Have NOT knowingly been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or suspected/presumed COVID-19

If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms that are not clearly related to a pre-existing medical condition, do not come to class. Please see [COVID-19 Diagnosis/Symptoms Protocols](#) for what to do if you experience symptoms and [Potential Exposure to Coronavirus](#) for what to do if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Consult the (select: [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) or [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#)) for information regarding excused absences due to medical reasons.

Excused Absence Policy (required for all courses)

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Interim Undergraduate Grading Policy (required for undergraduate courses)

Due to the unique and unprecedented challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Houston has implemented an [Interim Undergraduate Grade Policy](#) for undergraduate grades which applies to all undergraduate students in courses offered in all sessions during fall 2020. Under this policy, students have the option of converting final assigned letter grades to S (Satisfactory, applicable to any letter grade from A to D-) or NCR (No Credit Reported COVID-19, applicable to grades of F) on their transcripts. Please visit [FAQs](#) for additional information.

Recording of Class (required for all courses)

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Center for Students with DisABILITIES](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Syllabus Changes (required for all courses)

Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through (*specify how students will be notified of changes*).

Resources for Online Learning

The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our [Power-On](#) website. Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, and Blackboard; requesting a laptop through the Laptop Loaner Program; using your smartphone

as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact UHOnline@uh.edu.

UH Email

Email communications related to this course will be sent to your [Exchange email account](#) which each University of Houston student receives. The Exchange mail server can be accessed via Outlook, which provides a single location for organizing and managing day-to-day information, from email and calendars to contacts and task lists. Exchange email accounts can be accessed by logging into Office 365 with your Cougarnet credentials or through Access UH. They can also be configured on [IOS](#) and [Android](#) mobile devices. Additional assistance can be found at the [Get Help](#) page.

Webcams

Access to a webcam is required for students participating remotely in this course. Webcams must be turned on (*state when webcams are required to be on and the [academic basis for requiring them to be on](#)*). (*Example: Webcams must be turned on during exams to ensure the academic integrity of exam administration.*)

Honor Code Statement

Students may be asked to sign an honor code statement as part of their submission of any graded work including but not limited to projects, quizzes, and exams: *"I understand and agree to abide by the provisions in the (select: [University of Houston Undergraduate Academic Honesty Policy](#), [University of Houston Graduate Academic Honesty Policy](#)). I understand that academic honesty is taken very seriously and, in the cases of violations, penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the University of Houston."*

Course Delivery Formats and Final Exams

HyFlex Courses: This course is a HyFlex course. Some students may have a designated face-to-face spot reserved, but alternative ways to participate will also be provided. These alternatives may include (but are not limited to) attending class sessions through synchronous streaming, viewing recordings of class meetings asynchronously, participating in discussion boards, and/or completing self-directed activities. This course will have a final exam per the [University schedule](#). As the University will be transitioning all classes and final exams given after the Thanksgiving Break to online delivery, the exam for this course will be delivered in the synchronous online format, and the specified date and time will be announced during the course. Prior to the exam, descriptive information, such as the number and types of exam questions, resources and collaborations that are allowed and disallowed in the process of completing the exam, and procedures to follow if connectivity or other resource obstacles are encountered during the exam period, may be provided.

Synchronous Online Courses: This course is being offered in the Synchronous Online format. Synchronous online class meetings will take place according to the class schedule. There is no face-to-face component to this course. In between synchronous class meetings, there may also be asynchronous activities to complete (e.g., discussion forums and assignments). This course will

have a final exam per the [University schedule](#). The exam will be delivered in the synchronous online format, and the specified date and time will be announced during the course. Prior to the exam, descriptive information, such as the number and types of exam questions, resources and collaborations that are allowed and disallowed in the process of completing the exam, and procedures to follow if connectivity or other resource obstacles are encountered during the exam period, may be provided.

Asynchronous Online Courses (or asynchronous exam in another course format): This course is taught Asynchronously, which means there is no designated day or time assigned to the course (although optional synchronous sessions are possible, such as virtual office hours or discussion groups). Asynchronous instruction generally involves accessing content, such as recorded video lectures, readings, discussion prompts, assignments, and assessments during a flexible time frame, with due dates as specified. This course will have a final exam at the course conclusion. The exam will be asynchronous, and the date and time that it will be released and due will be announced during the course. Prior to the exam, descriptive information, such as the number and types of exam questions, resources and collaborations that are allowed and disallowed in the process of completing the exam, and procedures to follow if connectivity or other resource obstacles are encountered during the exam period, may be provided.

Alternative Assessment in Any Course Format: An alternative assessment will be used in the place of the traditional final exam at the course conclusion. Instructions will be provided, including the date and time that the assessment materials will be released to the class and will be due, resources and collaborations that are allowed and disallowed in the process of completing the assessment, procedures to follow if connectivity or other resource obstacles are encountered during the assessment period, acceptable submission formats, and submission location.

Helpful Information

COVID-19 Updates: <https://uh.edu/covid-19/>

Coogs Care: <https://www.uh.edu/dsaes/coogscare/>

Laptop Checkout Requests: <https://www.uh.edu/infotech/about/planning/off-campus/index.php#do-you-need-a-laptop>

Health FAQs: <https://uh.edu/covid-19/faq/health-wellness-prevention-faqs/>

Student Health Center: <https://uh.edu/class/english/lcc/current-students/student-health-center/index.php>

Project Weekly Update

Date _____

PERT STAGE _____

Activities initiated in past week:

Activities Completed in past week:

Project Status versus PERT, CPM or Gannt Chart:

Deadlines missed in past week:

Actions to be taken to get back on schedule:

Team member assignments completed in past week:

Research/Activities required in upcoming week:

Team member assignments for upcoming week:

Commentary on progress of overall project:

Peer/Course Feedback Form
5th Week

Please evaluate each member of your team on quality and quantity of their contribution to the **team project**. This evaluation is **strictly confidential** and will not be shared with anyone. You may enclose this evaluation in a sealed envelope.

Your name: _____

Client: _____

Name of team member	Quality of effort	Quantity of effort
Self appraisal on this line		

Grading Scale:

- A Excellent
- B Above Average
- C Marginal – Not worthy of an MBA student
- D Unacceptable/Failing performance

Using the grading scale above, how would you rate your team's performance to date and why do you say that?

Additional feedback (team member comments, professor suggestions) – What 1 thing can Gary do *right now* to improve the experience:

Peer/Course Feedback Form 10th Week

Please evaluate each member of your team on quality and quantity of their contribution to the **team project**. This evaluation is **strictly confidential** and will not be shared with anyone. Please turn in the evaluation at **final presentation**. You may enclose this evaluation in a sealed envelope.

Your name: _____

Client: _____

Name of team member	Quality of effort	Quantity of effort
Self appraisal on this line		

Grading Scale:

- A** **Excellent**
- B** **Above Average**
- C** **Marginal – Not worthy of an MBA student**
- D** **Unacceptable/Failing performance**

Using the grading scale above, how would you rate your team's performance between week 6 and week 10 and why do you say that?

Additional feedback (team member comments, professor suggestions) – What 1 thing can Gary do *right now* to improve the experience:

Peer/Course Feedback Form Final

Please evaluate each member of your team on quality and quantity of their contribution to the **team project**. This evaluation is **strictly confidential** and will not be shared with anyone. Please turn in the evaluation at **final presentation**. You may enclose this evaluation in a sealed envelope.

Your name: _____

Client: _____

Name of team member	Quality of effort	Quantity of effort
Self appraisal on this line		

Grading Scale:

A

Excellent

B Above Average
C Marginal – Not worthy of an MBA student
D Unacceptable/Failing performance

Comments: