DRIVING STRATEGIC IMPACT: MASTERING THE SKILLS OF STRATEGY CONSULTING
SPRING A TERM 2015

CLASS DETAILS
B term, Spring 2014
Tuesdays: 2:15pm-5:30pm (W416)

PROFESSOR NAME: Brad Aspel
Professor Office Location: 206 Uris
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Office Hours: By Appointment Only

TEACHING ASSISTANTS
TBD

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL

There is no required text or printed casebook for this course. Required readings will be provided electronically via Canvas.

REQUIRED PREREQUISITES AND CONNECTION TO THE CORE

This course builds on knowledge primarily from Strategy Formulation, Marketing Strategy, and LEAD.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course exposes students to a complete suite of consulting skills that can be applied to any corporate environment. This course is targeted to students interested in consulting, but can also be relevant for anyone looking to apply these skills in everyday corporate situations.

The emphasis in the course is on developing structured problem-solving skills, with additional focus given to communication and influencing skills. The learnings from the course are broadly applicable across business functions and across industries, and besides their relevance to consulting, will be valuable in corporate strategy assignments, business development and entrepreneurship.

The course is organized around the phases of a typical strategy engagement: problem definition, problem structuring, data gathering & analysis, recommendations development, presentation & implementation. Students will get to learn and practice specific consulting tools and principles associated with each of these five phases, such as issue trees, hypothesis-driven problem-solving, interview guides and the pyramid principle.

The course emphasizes hands-on practice and real-time feedback. Formal discussion of consulting tools and skills will be supplemented by mini-cases and strategy cases based on real-life engagements. Students will get a number of opportunities to exercise and hone the skills they are introduced to during the course.
COURSE OBJECTIVES
Each session will convey frameworks for particular situations and experiential exercises for practicing them. You will go through the lifecycle of a real consulting case. The topics covered will be:

• Defining an ambiguous project and gaining alignment on the project objective
• Structuring a complex problem into its highest priority components
• Understanding how to collect, refine, and analyze data in an organized and comprehensive manner
• Synthesizing the analysis and data into actionable, relevant insights
• Communicating in a way that ensures buy-in, understanding, and follow-through
• Managing a project, team, and clients through the lifecycle of a project

GRADING
Participation (50%): Your participation grade will be based on:
• Presence: Given that there are only 6 sessions of this course, students are expected to attend every section and be on time. Attendance is 20 of the 50 percentage points of participation.
• Preparation: Complete any pre-work needed for class discussion. Expect an engaging classroom environment that includes cold calling.
• Participation: We expect you to contribute to the learning of your classmates through class discussion and interactive exercises. Active participation also calls for no electronic devices such as laptops, tablet computers, or smartphones during class, except when explicitly stated as needed in class.

Assignments (50%): The assignments will be:
1. Readings (every session): a. There will be a number of supplemental readings posted in Canvas for each session
   b. You will be called upon to present the learnings or takeaways from the reading that you completed in class as both a way to share learnings with your classmates and also to practice your synthesis skills

2. Group Presentation (presented in final session): a. You will form teams of 5-6 students
   b. You will be asked to apply the learnings in class to a real world business situation and present your recommendations to the class on the final session

3. Final Project (Due 11:59pm March 13th): No final exam a. This will be an individual written project that is handed in
   b. You will be asked to apply the learnings in class to an actual project you worked on in the past or will work on in the next 6-9 months