DRIVING STRATEGIC IMPACT: MASTERING THE SKILLS OF STRATEGY
CONSULTING
Fall A TERM 2016

CLASS DETAILS
A term, Fall 2016
Wednesdays: 4:00 – 7:15pm

PROFESSOR NAME: Brad Aspel
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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 not only 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 structure 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 and ASSIGNMENTS
Participation: 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. Missing any session without an excusable absence and clear communication of such absence to the Professor and TA will result in a lower grade.
• **Preparation:** Complete any pre-work needed for class discussion. Expect an engaging classroom environment that includes cold calling. Referencing the optional readings adds to your grade.
• **Participation:** We expect you to contribute to the learning of your classmates through class discussion and interactive exercises.

Note: There will also be some in-class individual and group work, some of which will be presented to the class. This work will count as part of your Class Participation.

Assignments: There will be various individual and group assignments during the course. At the first session (and on Canvas once the course begins), a breakdown of each assignment and the relevant percent of your grade per assignment will be posted. Samples of assignments include defining project engagements, case-based problem structuring, and case-based analysis and synthesis using various data and information.