

CONSULTING FOR COMMUNICATION

IE University

Professor: **BELÉN RODRÍGUEZ CÁNOVAS**

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Academic year: 22-23

Degree course: FOURTH

Semester: 2º

Category: COMPULSORY

Number of credits: 6.0

Language: English

PREREQUISITES

Research methods and curiosity. A significant part of the learning process will come from your project consulting engagement. External research (primary and secondary) will be key for the subject success.

SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on understanding and acquiring the specific skills to succeed in strategic and organizational consulting and communication. Communication consulting differs from other tree branches of consulting in a wide array of topics even though communication consultants work to support the implementation of strategies led by management consultants. The course overviews the profession and industry, the consultancy process and the tools and techniques that can be used to help organizations improve performance and become more effective.

The course has been conceived inversely not a typical lectures course. It is built on a variety of readings, written and oral assignments, case discussions, exercises and team projects. Students will learn the foundations of consultancy practice and communication, client management, diagnosis, planning and executing, common mistakes, ethical issues as well as a variety of diagnostic and problem-solving methodologies.

OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS

Eventually, the objective of this course is to prepare the student for a potential career in the communication consulting industry by acquiring skills through practical learning. Main goals are:

- Gaining a solid understanding of the consulting process
- Deepening your knowledge about basic consulting methodologies
- Understanding how to assess the communication requirements for a specific consulting engagement
- Managing the relationship with clients and communicate the consultancy projects and possible issues during the consultancy process

Specific goals are:

- Acquiring project management abilities

- Training reporting and interaction skills
- Acquiring decision making abilities
- Training planning and evaluation skills.
- Developing a deeper understanding of the communication consultancy industry.

METHODOLOGY

Individual Assignment

The student will write ONE essay referring to readings and/or unit of analysis

Assignments must be handed in punctually on Blackboard campus. Delayed delivery assignments will suffer from a grade depreciation up to a maximum of 48 hours delay. Assignments sent by email or later than 48 hours will not be evaluated. More than 8% of plagiarism with the Internet or other colleague in the subject will result in FAIL.

Discussion Board participation

Instructions to follow on each DB assignment.

Group Projects

The Group Project will be a complete consulting project providing consulting services to a fictional need from renowned organizations. Teams will be made up of 6 people and the students will decide their own teams. Remaining students will be grouped by the professor.

Consulting projects topics will be: branding, corporate communication, public affairs, social corporate responsibility, internal branding, digital marketing, crisis communication management.

The professor will assign the different projects. The consulting engagement will encompass all the steps of a consulting engagement: problem or dilemma identification and definition (do not focus on the symptoms), proposal, statement of work, budgeting (although no budget will be allocated), assessment and engagement, research (primary and secondary including academic literature), implementation plan and final report. Groups will present the proposal positioning paper on the assigned session and present the final report as both a written ppt report and an oral presentation at the end of the course. All members of the team project must participate in the consulting project. Every member of the group will be expected to participate in the presentations. Group presentations will be due during the last session(s) of the course. Topics will be assigned in the order they group themselves and are approved by the professor (First group will receive first choice, etc.)

Each team will produce a final 20-minute presentation and defend questions from the class and the professor (5 minutes Q&A).

Group projects will be graded upon the problem analysis, the proposal, engagement management, research, consulting skills and abilities application, final oral presentation and presentation materials, originality, innovation, design and creativity. All members of the team project must participate in all the consulting engagement steps.

If a team is having difficulties with a member who is not fully engaged and productive, you will try to solve it yourselves. If this is not successful, you are expected to bring the issue to the professor immediately. If you wait until the end of the course, it will impact the grades of the entire team.

Class Attendance & Participation

Participation in class should be appropriate to the academic goals of the sessions: contributing to moving the discussion forward; giving a new point of view; and, most importantly, contributing to other participants' learning. Participation will be evaluated based on the following qualitative elements:

- Just attending to class is not enough to get a high participation score. You must actively share in class discussions, participate in group activities and come to class prepared with insightful and interesting ideas.

- Besides attendance, positive attitude and active participation, some specific criteria to evaluate discussion contributions are: demonstration of listening skills; contribution to new points of view and insights; interest in the class and the subject.

- High quality comments have characteristics like the following ones: an in-depth analysis of a subject; appropriate application of theoretical models and concepts; proposal of specific action plans for a particular problem; advancement of the discussion; and connection of past learning to the present.

Teaching methodology	Weighting	Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in
Lectures	10.0 %	15 hours
Discussions	10.0 %	15 hours
Exercises	20.0 %	30 hours
Group work	40.0 %	60 hours
Other individual studying	20.0 %	30 hours
TOTAL	100.0 %	150 hours

PROGRAM

SESSIONS 1 - 2 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

What is consulting? Overview of the industry and trends

Review Syllabus. Describe learning process and methodology. Explain assignment: consultancy project (group) and individual assignment.

SESSIONS 3 - 4 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

What is Communication? Consulting for Communication: the concept

Article: Consulting is More than Giving Advice (HBS 82510-PDF-ENG)

Article: Consulting on the Cusp of Disruption (HBS R1310F-PDF-ENG)

SESSIONS 5 - 6 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Problem definition and framing

The Positioning paper: the starting point of every consulting project

Read prior to class to discuss: The McKinsey Way CHAPTER 4 / 5

The Positioning paper: group need to work on project proposal, budget and work plan. This report which should include background information, definition of the challenges, objectives, target publics as applicable, the challenges and a basic project plan or calendar.

Groups present project positioning paper

Book Chapters: The McKinsey way : using the techniques of the world's top strategic consultants to help you and your business; New York : McGraw-Hill, cop. 1999 (chapters 4 & 5) (ced)

SESSION 7 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Preread

Practical Case: Skills For Tomorrow: A Management Team in Crisis (HBS W13331-PDF-ENG)
Technical note: Using hypothesis-driven thinking in strategy consulting (HBS UV0991-PDF-ENG)

SESSION 8 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Discussion Forum

Activity: How to get the information from client. The right questions

SESSIONS 9 - 10 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Problem solving & idea leadership

Problem solving & Idea Leadership discussion

In pairs Review key Problem Solving approaches and tools from management consulting firms

In teams work on key Problem Solving approaches and tools from management consulting firms (<https://www.mindtools.com>) and apply some tools to the Final project.

SESSIONS 11 - 12 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Business Case to be solved in class: Corporate Comms / Internal Comms (Crisis communication)

Technical note: Nespresso: How to Protect Your Brand from Social Media Attacks (HBS IMD857-PDF-ENG)

SESSION 13 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Pre-read

Practical Case: Developing Professionals -The BCG Way (A) (HBS 903113-PDF-ENG)

Book Chapters: Andy Hunt: Your Research Project, How to manage it; ondon : Routledge, 2005.

(See Bibliography)

SESSION 14 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Discussion Forum

Consulting competences

SESSIONS 15 - 16 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Methodology & Data

Methodology team presentation, discussion & research for the client

Activity in pairs: review key frameworks <https://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/>

Discussion: "Using hypothesis-driven thinking in strategy consulting" by Jeanne M. Liedtka

Writing a consulting paper: How to write reports + The Pyramid principle

Technical note: Using hypothesis-driven thinking in strategy consulting (HBS UV0991-PDF-ENG)

SESSIONS 17 - 18 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

The client and the team

Client relationship & ethics issues: discussion

Team relationship & internal branding: discussion

Managing your own consulting firm: Peer discussion: Launching your Consulting Firm and communication consulting

SESSIONS 19 - 20 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Business Case to be solved in class: Branding / Product Comms (Innovation launch)

Practical Case: Suntory: Rebranding the Japanese Whisky Highball (HBS W20199-PDF-ENG)

SESSION 21 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Pre-read

How to present: - Review <https://extremepresentation.com>

Best practices and tools to improve client presentation

SESSION 22 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Discussion Forum

Presentation competences

SESSIONS 23 - 24 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

2 Guest speakers from the Consulting / Communication Sector will be sharing Real-life projects

SESSIONS 25 - 26 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Business Case to be solved in class: CSR Comms (Inclusion & Diversity case)

SESSIONS 27 - 28 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Individual Assignment delivery (see Methodology)

SESSIONS 29 - 30 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Group Work presentations (see Methodology)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compulsory

- Barbara Minto. (2021). *The Pyramid Principle: Logic in Writing and Thinking*. 3rd edition. Prentice Hall. ISBN 9781292372266 (Printed)

- Andy Hunt. (2005). *Your research project : How to manage it*. London : Routledge. ISBN 9780415344081 (Printed)

Recommended

- Peter Block. (2011). *Flawless consulting : a guide to getting your expertise used*.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

RE-SIT / RE-TAKE POLICY

Each student has four (4) chances to pass any given course distributed over two (2) consecutive academic years. Each academic year consists of two calls: one (1) ordinary call (during the semester when the course is taking place); and one (1) extraordinary call (or “re-sit”) in June/July.

Students who do not comply with the 70% attendance requirement in each subject during the semester will automatically fail both calls (ordinary and extraordinary) for that Academic Year and have to re-take the course (i.e., re-enroll) during the next Academic Year.

The Extraordinary Call Evaluation criteria will be subject to the following rules:

Ø Students failing the course in the ordinary call (during the semester) will have to re-sit evaluation for the course in June / July (except those students who do not comply with the attendance rule, and therefore will not have that opportunity, since they will fail both calls and must directly re-enroll in the course during the next Academic Year).

Ø It is not permitted to change the format nor the date of the extraordinary call exams or deadlines under any circumstance. All extraordinary call evaluation dates will be announced in advance and must be taken into consideration before planning the summer (e.g. internships, trips, holidays, etc.)

Ø The June/July re-sit will consist of a comprehensive evaluation of the course. Your final grade for the course will depend on the performance in this exam or evaluation only. I.e., continuous evaluation over the semester (e.g. participation, quizzes, projects and/or other grade components over the semester) will not be taken into consideration on the extraordinary call. Students will have to achieve the minimum passing grade of 5 and the maximum grade will be capped at 8.0 (out of 10.0) – i.e., “notable” in the extraordinary call.

Ø Re-takers: Students who failed the subject on a previous Academic Year and are now re-enrolled as re-takers in a course will need to check the syllabus of the assigned professor, as well as contact the professor individually, regarding the specific evaluation criteria for them as re-takers in the course during that semester (ordinary call of that Academic Year). The maximum grade that may be obtained as a retaker during the ordinary call (i.e., the 3rd call) is 10.0 (out of 10.0).

After exams and other assessments are graded by the professor (on either the ordinary or extraordinary call), students will have a possibility to attend a review session (whether it be a final exam, a final project, or the final overall grade in a given course). Please be available to attend the session in order to clarify any concerns you might have regarding your grade. Your professor will inform you about the time and place of the review session.

Students failing more than 18 ECTS credits after the June/July re-sits will be asked to leave the Program. Please, make sure to prepare yourself well for the exams in order to pass your failed subjects.

In case you decide to skip the opportunity to re-sit for an exam or evaluation during the June/July extraordinary call, you will need to enroll in that course again for the next Academic Year as a re-taker, and pay the corresponding tuition fees. As you know, students have a total of four (4) allowed calls to pass a given subject or course, in order to remain in the program.

Criteria	Percentage	Comments
Essay	30 %	
Discussion Boards	20 %	
Group Presentation	30 %	
Class Participation	20 %	

PROFESSOR BIO

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BELEN RODRIGUEZ CANOVAS

Prof. Belén Rodríguez Cánovas holds a PhD with honors and she is specialized in Statistics, Branding and Strategic Marketing. She began her studies in Universidad Pontificia Comillas, where she succeeded in two degrees: Economics & Business Administration. She holds a Bachelor with honors in Statistics and a Master in Data Mining and Business Intelligence at Complutense University. She has a long professional career as Marketing Manager and Customer Marketing Manager in FMCG (Kimberly-Clark), auto and electronics (Robert Bosch), luxury markets (L'ÓREAL, Lancôme, Giorgio Armani, Polo Ralph Lauren), pharma (own family-run company) and real estate industry (in Eastern Europe). She combines a professional position as OTC Marketing Manager with academic and research positions (Associate Professor and Vice Dean of Career Development at the Faculty of Commerce and Tourism at Universidad Complutense of Madrid and Professor, Advisor at IE University).

She has published 17 peer reviewed papers, 35 book chapters and she participates as speaker in marketing & business international conferences. She has coached more than 50 final master projects, 14 final bachelor projects and she supervises 3 PhD students. At IE, she has received three teaching awards and the 2021 best professor of Executive Master in Communication and best award case 2018 with Huawei brand.

OTHER INFORMATION