

OM 386.4
OPERATIONS PRACTICUM
Unique No. 03940
Spring 2010

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Operations Consulting Practicum provides a hands-on experience in tackling real-world consulting projects in operations, that is, the cost-effective management of material and resources to achieve an organization's goals. Groups of 4-6 students will manage a substantial project with well-known firms in order to hone their abilities in operational strategy, process analysis and design, supply-chain management, and total quality management. The spirit of the class will be very much "learning-by-doing."

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Provide the student with an understanding of the operational challenges faced by managers in the industry through a hands-on project.
2. Enhance the student's skills in solving problems in collaborative environments.
3. Prepare the student for managing projects with demanding deadlines in a complex organization.

You should take this class if you would like to. . .

1. Learn more about operations after taking the core class.
2. Solve practical problems in process analysis or supply-chain management.
3. Integrate your operations and information management toolkits.
4. Differentiate yourself for the job market with real-world experience in the application of cutting-edge techniques.
5. Take a closer look at some promising prospective employers.

LEARNING METHODOLOGY

From the beginning, we will focus on making rapid and substantial progress on projects through regular one-on-one meetings with the instructor and project sponsors. I will work very closely with the teams to offer help in solving the problem. However, it is your job to meet the high expectations of our sponsors as well as myself.

BOOKS/SOFTWARE

No specific books are needed. However, you may want to get a copy of Microsoft Visio for your computer if you need to draw flowcharts.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The final grade in this class will be based on your demonstrated performance as determined jointly by the collaborating firms and myself. Because each project will be performed as a team, all members of a team will receive the same score for all criteria except for the peer review, the evaluation of which is described below.

The criteria are weighted as follows:

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|---|------|
| • Project Statement of Work and Gantt Chart (see description below) | 20% |
| • Project progress reports (weekly) | 20% |
| • Mid-term project review | 10% |
| • Final project presentation | 10% |
| • Final project final deliverable | 10% |
| • Peer review | 30%* |

*A poor peer review can either decrease or elevate your grade relative to that of the team's.

Project Statement of Work and Gantt chart (rough draft due Feb. 3, final draft due Feb. 7)

A key deliverable for this class is the Statement of Work. This document is a statement of work outlining the project scope and detailed schedule (including deliverables for each week). It describes clearly what the project is and what it is not. The Gantt chart graphically outlines when each task will be performed. *A first draft of the document and the Gantt chart will be submitted to the project sponsors (the company sponsors and myself) by 9 AM on the first date listed above.* Discussions with the projects sponsors during the following several days will help you finalize the document. The final version of the document is due on the second date listed above. Example SOWs and Gantt charts are on my web page.

Project progress reports (beginning week of Feb. 8)

Beginning the week immediately after the final version of the SOW is turned in, each team will e-mail me a weekly one-page progress report (as a Word attachment) that outlines the tasks completed during the week, percentage of the project work completed, roadblocks encountered, and outstanding issues. This will be due by 5:00 on the day before our weekly meetings. *Late progress reports will only get partial grades.*

Mid-term project review (week of Mar. 22)

A mid-term project review meeting will be held with the company executive sponsors as well as myself. The team will present its progress to obtain feedback and suggestions for the direction of future effort.

Final project presentation (week of April 26)

Each team will present its results during the last class session. The presentation grade will be based on both content and delivery. The purpose of these presentations is to develop the skill to make professional presentations. **Note that I will be gone from Austin on business from May 5 – May 11, so please do not schedule a final presentation during this time.**

Class project final deliverable (May 7)

The project final deliverable may be a report, a white paper, a case study, or a decision support tool, or some combination of these items. The quality of these tools will be assessed jointly by the company sponsors and myself. The process followed during the project will also be considered in awarding the final grade.

Peer Reviews (May 7)

Teamwork is a crucial element of this class. Each consulting practicum will be performed as a team. Your evaluations will also depend on how well you work as a team. That said, your final individual grade on the team project will also depend on **an evaluation of your team participation** by your fellow team members. The team evaluations will be anonymous and confidential (seen only by the instructor). You will assess each team member (including yourself) based on the following criteria:

- Participation in team events: did the team member participate in most, if not all of the assigned team assignments?
- Fair workload: did the team member take on his or her share of the overall work load?
- Quality of work: was the quality of the team member's work high, adequate, or inadequate (required re-working by another team member). Evaluate written work, presentation skills, and in-class exercises.
- Team interaction skills: did the team member interact effectively with other members of the team? Did the member handle conflicts constructively? Did the member communicate often with other team members?

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

McCombs Classroom Professionalism Policy

The highest professional standards are expected of all members of the McCombs community. The collective class reputation and the value of the Texas MBA experience hinges on this.

Faculty are expected to be professional and prepared to deliver value for each and every class session. Students are expected to be professional in all respects.

The Texas MBA classroom experience is enhanced when:

- **Students arrive on time.** On time arrival ensures that classes are able to start and finish at the scheduled time. On time arrival shows respect for both fellow students and faculty and it enhances learning by reducing avoidable distractions.
- **Students display their name cards.** This permits fellow students and faculty to learn names, enhancing opportunities for community building and evaluation of in-class contributions.
- **Students minimize unscheduled personal breaks.** The learning environment improves when disruptions are limited.
- **Students are fully prepared for each class.** Much of the learning in the Texas MBA program takes place during classroom discussions. When students are not prepared they cannot contribute to the overall learning process. This affects not only the individual, but their peers who count on them, as well.
- **Students respect the views and opinions of their colleagues.** Disagreement and debate are encouraged. Intolerance for the views of others is unacceptable.
- **Students do not speak unless they are speaking to the entire class.** Unless otherwise instructed by the instructor, please do not engage in private conversations, however short or innocuous, while the class is in progress. They are disruptive and discourteous to the speaker. Raise your hand if you have a question or comment.
- **Laptops are closed and put away.** When students are surfing the web, responding to e-mail, instant messaging each other, and otherwise not devoting their full attention to the topic at hand they are doing themselves and their peers a major disservice. Those around them face additional distraction. Fellow students cannot benefit from the insights of the students who are not engaged. Faculty office hours are spent going over class material with students who chose not to pay attention, rather than truly adding value by helping students who want a better understanding of the material or want to explore the issues in more depth. Students with real needs may not be able to obtain adequate help if faculty time is spent repeating what was said in class. There are often cases where learning is enhanced by the use of laptops in class. Faculty will let you know when it is appropriate to use them. In such cases, professional behavior is exhibited when misuse does not take place.
- **Phones and wireless devices are turned off.** We've all heard the annoying ringing in the middle of a meeting. Not only is it not professional, it cuts off the flow of discussion when the search for the offender begins. When a true need to communicate with someone outside of class exists (e.g., for some medical need) please inform the professor prior to class.

Remember, you are competing for the best faculty McCombs has to offer. Your professionalism and activity in class contributes to your success in attracting the best faculty to this program.

Academic Dishonesty

We have no tolerance for acts of academic dishonesty. Such acts damage the reputation of the school and the degree and demean the honest efforts of the majority of students. The minimum penalty for an act of academic dishonesty will be a zero for that assignment or exam.

The responsibilities for both students and faculty with regard to the Honor System are described on <http://mba.mcombs.utexas.edu/students/academics/honor/index.asp> and on the final pages of this syllabus. As the instructors for this course, we agree to observe all the faculty responsibilities described therein. During Orientation, you signed the Honor Code Pledge. In doing so, you agreed to observe all of the student responsibilities of the Honor Code. If the application of the Honor System to this class and its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your

responsibility to ask us for clarification.

Academic Accommodations

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a condition (e.g. learning disability, chronic medical condition, etc.), or holiday that needs accommodation, please see me early in the semester so that we can take appropriate steps. For additional information about the University's policies, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 or 471-4641.

Honor Code Purpose

Academic honor, trust and integrity are fundamental to The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business community. They contribute directly to the quality of your education and reach far beyond the campus to your overall standing within the business community. The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business Honor System promotes academic honor, trust and integrity throughout the Graduate School of Business. The Honor System relies upon The University of Texas Student Standards of Conduct (Chapter 11 of the Institutional Rules on Student Service and Activities) for enforcement, but promotes ideals that are higher than merely enforceable standards. Every student is responsible for understanding and abiding by the provisions of the Honor System and the University of Texas Student Standards of Conduct. The University expects all students to obey the law, show respect for other members of the university community, perform contractual obligations, maintain absolute integrity and the highest standard of individual honor in scholastic work, and observe the highest standards of conduct. Ignorance of the Honor System or The University of Texas Student Standards of Conduct is not an acceptable excuse for violations under any circumstances.

The effectiveness of the Honor System results solely from the wholehearted and uncompromising support of each member of the Graduate School of Business community. Each member must abide by the Honor System and must be intolerant of any violations. The system is only as effective as you make it.

Faculty Involvement in the Honor System

The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business Faculty's commitment to the Honor System is critical to its success. It is imperative that faculty make their expectations clear to all students. They must also respond to accusations of cheating or other misconduct by students in a timely, discrete and fair manner. We urge faculty members to promote awareness of the importance of integrity through in-class discussions and assignments throughout the semester.

Expectations Under the Honor System

Standards

If a student is uncertain about the standards of conduct in a particular setting, he or she should ask the relevant faculty member for clarification to ensure his or her conduct falls within the expected scope of honor, trust and integrity as promoted by the Honor System. This applies to all tests, papers and group and individual work. Questions about appropriate behavior during the job search should be addressed to a professional member of the Career Services Office. Below are some of the specific examples of violations of the Honor System.

Lying

Lying is any deliberate attempt to deceive another by stating an untruth, or by any direct form of communication to include the telling of a partial truth. Lying includes the use or omission of any information with the intent to deceive or mislead. Examples of lying include, but are not limited to, providing a false excuse for why a test was missed or presenting false information to a recruiter.

Stealing

Stealing is wrongfully taking, obtaining, withholding, defacing or destroying any person's money, personal property, article or service, under any circumstances. Examples of stealing include, but are not limited to, removing course material from the library or hiding it from others, removing material from another person's mail folder, securing for one's self unattended items such as calculators, books, book bags or other personal property. Another form of stealing is the duplication of copyrighted material beyond the reasonable bounds of "fair use." Defacing (e.g., "marking up" or highlighting) library books is also considered stealing, because, through a willful act, the value of another's property is decreased. (See the appendix for a detailed explanation of "fair use.")

Cheating

Cheating is wrongfully and unfairly acting out of self-interest for personal gain by seeking or accepting an unauthorized advantage over one's peers. Examples include, but are not limited to, obtaining questions or answers to tests or quizzes, and getting assistance on case write-ups or other projects beyond what is authorized by the assigning instructor. It is also cheating to accept the benefit(s) of another person's theft(s) even if not actively sought. For instance, if one continues to be attentive to an overhead conversation about a test or case write-up even if initial exposure to such information was accidental and beyond the control of the student in question, one is also cheating. If a student overhears a conversation or any information that any faculty member might reasonably wish to withhold from the student, the student should inform the faculty member(s) of the information and circumstance under which it was overheard.

Actions Required for Responding to Suspected and Known Violations

As stated, everyone must abide by the Honor System and be intolerant of violations. If you suspect a violation has occurred, you should first speak to the suspected violator in an attempt to determine if an infraction has taken place. If, after doing so, you still believe that a violation has occurred, you must tell the suspected violator that he or she must report himself or herself to the course professor or Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Business. If the individual fails to report himself or herself within 48 hours, it then becomes your obligation to report the infraction to the course professor or the Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Business. Remember that although you are not required by regulation to take any action, our Honor System is only as effective as you make it. If you remain silent when you suspect or know of a violation, you are approving of such dishonorable conduct as the community standard. You are thereby precipitating a repetition of such violations.

The Honor Pledge

The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business requires each enrolled student to adopt the Honor System. The Honor Pledge best describes the conduct promoted by the Honor System. It is as follows:

"I affirm that I belong to the honorable community of The University of Texas at Austin

Graduate School of Business. I will not lie, cheat or steal, nor will I tolerate those who do."

"I pledge my full support to the Honor System. I agree to be bound at all times by the Honor System and understand that any violation may result in my dismissal from the Graduate School of Business."

McCombs Classroom Professionalism Policy:

The highest professional standards are expected of members of the McCombs community. The collective class reputation and the value of the McCombs experience hinges on this.

Faculty are expected to be professional and prepared to deliver value for each and every class session. Students are expected to be professional in all respects. Classroom expectations of students include:

- Students will arrive on time.
- Students will be fully prepared for each class.
- Students will attend the class section to which they are registered.
- Students will respect the views and opinions of their colleagues. Disagreement and debate are encouraged. Intolerance for the views of others is unacceptable.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be dealt with severely.
- Phones and wireless devices are turned off.