**Proposal**

**Syllabus**

**Strategy Consulting Practicum**

MGT 4196

Scheller College of Business

Georgia Institute of Technology

**Overview**

The Strategy Consulting Practicum integrates actual strategy issues currently confronting major corporations with an experiential course combining:

* the application of theory to practice
* strategy analysis and formulation
* strategy implementation plans
* skills development (in planning, communicating, conducting research, and decision making), and
* interactions with strategy consultants and industry executives

In this practicum, students organize into study groups for the practicum project. Each group conducts comprehensive strategy research and then proposes recommendations and actions to address present issues and to answer a strategic challenge question. Students write a formal strategy report and make a formal presentation of their results at the end of term.

The purpose of this course is to expand and enhance understanding of the strategy process in action, including practical challenges and potential opportunities. The course includes exercises, discussions of case studies, field research, lectures, presentations by and discussions with guest speakers, and a group research project (i.e., the practicum project). This course develops skills and applies concepts students have learned in other business courses. The intensity of time constraints in this practicum reflects actual conditions in strategy work.

This course helps prepare students to excel in entry positions at strategy consultancies and with corporate strategy staffs. Companies participating in the practicum typically recruit at Georgia Tech, and this course offers an opportunity for students to position themselves for internships or full-time positions.

**Learning Outcomes**

Through this course, students should…

1. Gain practical knowledge of strategy consulting processes
2. Learn research skills
3. Build skillsets in strategy analysis, formulation, and implementation
4. Ascertain key corporate issues and their drivers, especially nonobvious ones
5. Acquire skills in developing analyses, conclusions, recommendations, and action plans
6. Identify subsequent-order effects and their implications
7. Develop presentation skills in oral and written communications

**Assessment**

Grades for this course are based on attendance and the practicum project.

*Class attendance*: This involves arriving on time at every class fully prepared and engaged. Signing the attendance roster at the start of class is essential, as the attendance roster is the only official record of attendance. Excused absences with the appropriate documentation have no effect on your grade. Unexcused absences immediately affect your grade. You begin the course with an attendance score of 100. Each unexcused absence reduces your attendance score by 10 points. For example, with one unexcused absence, the attendance score becomes 90; with two unexcused absences, the attendance score becomes 80; with three unexcused absences, 70; and so on to zero. In this course, the definition of an *unexcused absence* includes (1) arriving at class more than five minutes late, (2) leaving class early, (3) failing to sign the roll for a class at the start of that class, or (4) any absence other than an excused absence. Attendance constitutes 10% of the course grade. The Institute’s attendance policy can be accessed at: [http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/#](http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/).

*1st submission of the practicum project*: Your group submits a document (e.g., a Word® file or a Pages® file) presenting (1) your project plan and (2) all research data collected and analyzed by your group on all topics covered by the submission date. This submission constitutes 25% of the course grade.

*2nd submission of the practicum project*: Your group submits a document (e.g., a Word® file or a Pages® file) presenting (1) a progress report and your current project plan and (2) all research data collected and analyzed by your group on all topics covered by the submission date. This submission constitutes 25% of the course grade.

*3rd and final submission of the practicum project*: Toward the end of term, your group (1) submits your project write-up as a document (e.g., a Word® file or a Pages® file) of not less than 30 and not more than 50 pages (single spacing and excluding, for example, exhibits, references, and appendices) and (2) makes a class presentation, for which your group submits 10 slides and presents them in 15 minutes to the class and visitors. The project document and the class presentation each constitutes 20% of the course grade, totaling 40% of the course grade for both.

N.B. All assignment submissions must follow the format that the course instructor provides.

For the final course grade, a student’s weighted-mean numerical score (comprising grades for class attendance, the first submission, the second submission, and the third and final submission) converts to a letter grade within these brackets:

* 90.00% and higher: A
* 80.00% to 89.99%: B
* 70.00% to 79.99%: C
* 60.00% to 69.99%: D
* Below 60.00%: F

**More on the Practicum Project**

Students organize themselves into 14 groups of four or five students. Each group selects five companies from a list, identifying the group’s first through fifth choice. Each group elects a captain, who emails the list to the course instructor, who makes the final decision on matching groups and companies.

The companies participating this term are these 14:

1.

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3.

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14.

**Guest Speakers**

Guest speakers address these topics and others in their talks to the class.

1. The role of a strategy consultant
2. Skills of a strategy consultant
3. The client relationship
4. Managing a strategy engagement
5. Leading an engagement team
6. Making client presentations
7. The strategy consultancies
8. The career of a strategy consultant
9. The role of a chief strategy officer
10. The global strategist

**Course Resources**

All of these books, articles, and background notes are course requirements.

Books

The books are available in multiple formats, including electronic format.

1. HBR Guide to Better Business Writing, Harvard Business Review Editors, 2013, Harvard Business Review Press, ISBN-13: 978-1422184035
2. HBR Guide to Persuasive Presentations, Harvard Business Review Editors, 2012, Harvard Business Review Press, ISBN-13: 978-1422187104
3. HBR Guide to Project Management, Harvard Business Review Editors, 2013, Harvard Business Review Press, ISBN-13: 978-1422187296
4. Strategic Management, 2nd edition, Frank Rothaermel, 2014, McGraw-Hill Education, ISBN-13: 978-0077645069
5. Strategy: Create and Implement the Best Strategy for Your Business, Harvard Business School Press (Editor), 2005, Harvard Business School Press, ISBN-13: 978-1591396321

Articles and Background Notes

This is a coursepack for download at the Harvard Business Publishing website:

Course link: https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu…

Course pack Title: Strategy Consulting Practicum

Course Number: MGT \_\_\_\_

Reference Code: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You must first register on the site to create a user name unless you already have one. Once registered, sign in to buy and download the course materials immediately. Afterward you can go to the course by visiting hbsp.harvard.edu, logging in, clicking My Courses, and then clicking the course name. For technical assistance, the Harvard Business Publishing Tech Help line is (800) 810-8858 and email is techhelp@hbsp.harvard.edu. Business hours are 8am to 8pm Monday through Thursday, and 8am to 7pm Friday.

The coursepack contains these PDF files:

1. A Better Way to Map Brand Strategy
2. A Leader's Guide to Understanding Complex Organizations: An Expanded "7 S" Perspective
3. Beta, Leverage, and the Cost of Capital
4. Do You Have a Well-Designed Organization?
5. Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Breakeven Analysis
6. Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Customer Lifetime Value Analysis
7. Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Market Size and Market Share Analysis
8. Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Pricing and Profitability Analysis
9. Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Situation Analysis
10. Perceptual Mapping: A Manager's Guide
11. Simple Rules for a Complex World
12. The Cost of Capital: Principles and Practice
13. Understanding Economic Value Added

**Disability Accommodation**

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a documented disability are required to register with the Office of Disability Services. Please obtain a form from their office and turn it in to me at the beginning of the semester. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Smithgall Student Services Building, Suite 123. The phone number is 404-894 2563.

<http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/content/4/contact-us>

**Honesty**

This course follows the guidelines established by Georgia Tech’s honor code and student handbook. Students must certify that all work is their own and must appropriately acknowledge all sources. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, and complicity in academic dishonesty.

*The schedule for classes begins on the next page.*

**Schedule**

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignment** |
| 1a |  | Introduction to the course  Formation of groups | Obtain all course resources |
| 1b |  | Research plan, communications plan, and project plan  Assignment of project companies  Guest speaker: (business research librarian) | Read the Harvard Business guides on Project Management, Better Business Writing, and Persuasive Presentations |
| 2a |  | What are the vision, mission, and values of your project company? | Prepare your group’s project plan and communications plan. Give special attention to your research plan.  Read Strategic Management, chapters 1 and 2  Identify and analyze the vision, mission, and values of your project company |
| 2b |  | Industry analysis: PESTEL, Five Forces, Strategic Groups, SWOT, and other frameworks  Guest speaker | Read Strategic Management, chapter 3  Perform these analyses on your project company: PESTEL, Five Forces, Strategic Groups, and SWOT |
| 3a |  | Understanding your project company in the context of industry analysis: Core competence, the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities, and value chain analysis | Read Strategic Management, chapter 4  Identify the core competence or competencies of your project company  Perform a VRIO analysis and a value chain analysis of your project company |
| 3b |  | Strategic financial analysis: Accounting profitability, cost of capital, shareholder value creation, economic value created, and economic value added  Guest speaker | Read Strategic Management, chapter 5  Read these background notes:  “The Cost of Capital: Principles and Practices”  “Beta, Leverage and the Cost of Capita”  “Understanding Economic Value Added”  Perform these analyses on your project company: Accounting profitability, cost of capital, shareholder value creation, economic value created, and economic value added |
| 4a |  | Industry and Market Dynamics: Situation Analysis | Read the background note, “Marketing Analysis Toolkit: Situation Analysis”  Perform a situation analysis of the industry and the market |
| 4b |  | Industry and Market Dynamics: Market Analysis, part 1 of 2  Guest speaker | Read the background note, “Marketing Analysis Toolkit:  Market Size and Market Share”  Perform a market analysis by measuring the market, estimating market demand, estimating product demand, calculating market share, and calculating market penetration |
| 5a |  | Industry and Market Dynamics: Market Analysis, part 2 of 2 | Read the background note, “Perceptual Mapping: A Manager's Guide”  Read the article, “A Better Way to Map Brand Strategy”  Develop maps of the most important markets, brands, products, services, and customers |
| 5b |  | Discussion of the 1st submission | Submit your work to date |

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| 6a |  | Business-Level Strategy | Read Strategic Management, chapter 6  Perform a business-level strategic analysis of your project company |
| 6b |  | Technology Analysis and Innovation Strategy  Guest speaker | Read Strategic Management, chapter 7  Perform a strategic technology analysis of your project company |
| 7a |  | Corporate-Level Strategy | Read Strategic Management, chapters 8 and 9  Perform a corporate-level strategic analysis of your project company |
| 7b |  | Global Strategy  Guest speaker | Read Strategic Management, chapter 10  Perform an analysis of the global strategy of your project company |
| 8a |  | Organization Analysis, part 1 of 2 | Read Strategic Management, chapter 11  Read the background note, “A Leader’s Guide to Understanding Complex Organizations: An Expanded ‘7 S’ Perspective”  Read the article, “Do You Have a Well-Designed Organization?” |
| 8b |  | Organization Analysis, part 1 of 2  Guest speaker | Review and improve your analysis from week 2 of your project company’s vision, mission, and culture (values and norms). Also review and improve your analysis from week 3 of your resource-based view analysis of your project company’s core competence, resources, capabilities, networks, and VRIO framework. Perform these analyses by (1) businesses (or, business units), (2) regions, and (3) functions |
| 9a |  | Conclusions | Further develop the conclusions based on your research findings |
| 9b |  | Recommendations  Guest speaker | Further develop the recommendations based on your conclusions |
| 10a |  | Review | Review and complete all research assignments to date |
| 10b |  | Discussion of the 2nd submission | Submit your work to date |
| 11a |  | Action Plans, part 1 of 6 | Read the article, “Simple Rules for a Complex World”  Read, “Strategy: Create and Implement the Best Strategy for Your Business,” and focus on chapters 4 through 9  Prepare to present and discuss your work to date on your action plans in class  Throughout your action plan, give special attention to to options (which should be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive), their relative advantages and disadvantages, risks, and tradeoffs. Clearly underscore your assumptions. |
| 11b |  | Action Plans, part 2 of 6  Guest speaker | Reread chapter 4 and 5 in “Strategy: Create and Implement the Best Strategy for Your Business”  Prepare to present and discuss your work to date on your action plans in class |

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| 12a |  | Action Plans, part 3 of 6 | Reread chapter 6 in “Strategy: Create and Implement the Best Strategy for Your Business”  Prepare to present and discuss your work to date on your action plans in class |
| 12b |  | Action Plans, part 4 of 6  Guest speaker | Reread chapter 7 in “Strategy: Create and Implement the Best Strategy for Your Business”  Prepare to present and discuss your work to date on your action plans in class |
| 13a |  | Action Plans, part 5 of 6 | Reread chapter 8 in “Strategy: Create and Implement the Best Strategy for Your Business”  Prepare to present and discuss your work to date on your action plans in class |
| 13b |  | Action Plans, part 6 of 6  Guest speaker | Reread chapter 9 in “Strategy: Create and Implement the Best Strategy for Your Business”  Prepare to present and discuss your work to date on your action plans in class |
| 14a |  | Review | Review and improve all work to date |
| 14b |  | Review | Review and improve all work to date |
| 15a |  | 3rd and final submission  Presentations by teams 1 through 4 | Submit your document and your slides  Prepare for the presentations on this date |
| 15b |  | Presentations by teams 5 through 8 | Prepare for the presentations on this date |
| 16a |  | Presentations by teams 9 through 12 | Prepare for the presentations on this date |
| 16b |  | Presentations by teams 13 and 14  Review of the course | Prepare for the presentations on this date |