**Sustainable Business Practicum (MGT 6369)**

**Location**: Scheller COB, Room 221

**Time**: M/W, 4:30-5:45pm

**Professor**: Michael Oxman / Bob Lax

**Office**: Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business – COB 4426

**E-Mail**: [michael.oxman@scheller.gatech.edu](file:///\\cob.nas.gatech.edu\groups\groups\Academic_Shares\ACSB\1.%20STUDENTS\CURRICULUM%20DEVELOPMENT\Courses\2017%20Fall\michael.oxman@scheller.gatech.edu) / [bob.lax@scheller.gatech.edu](mailto:bob.lax@scheller.gatech.edu)

**Phone**: Michael: (404) 385-4884 / Bob: (770) 402-6973

**Availability**: By Appointment

**Course Site**: [MGT 4803](https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/34836)

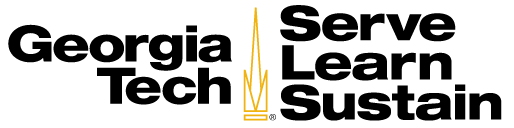
**Course Pack:** <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/597259>

**Learning Outcomes**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

* Apply management (strategy) consulting skills to execute and deliver an end-to-end consulting engagement that involves a sustainability-related issue, challenge, or opportunity
* Explore how to incorporate sustainability perspectives and dimensions in business functions such as operations, strategy, and marketing through consulting projects
* Communicate clearly and professionally in a real-world business setting (with primary focus on client interactions and consulting project deliverables)

Class Affiliated with the Center for Serve Learn Sustain (CSLS).



Note: **Accommodations for Learning Needs**: If you have learning needs that require some adaptations for you to succeed in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services on campus (<http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu>). We are happy to arrange to accommodate your learning needs based on their recommendations.

This Course is also subject to Georgia Tech’s Honor Code and Code of Student Conduct, particularly with respect to sourcing materials from the internet for inclusion in client deliverables (<http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/academic-honor-code>). In addition, and as noted below, students should be aware they may be receiving information from client companies that might be confidential or sensitive and should only use that information for purposes of this course. All information should be returned, deleted, etc. at the end of the course as directed by the client.

**Course Overview**

A valuable skill that companies seek is the ability to solve problems. The purpose of this course is to present students with a set of management / strategy consulting tools and approaches for doing just that. Students will work in teams on a real-world consulting project focused on a sustainability related challenge, which for purposes of this course, refers broadly to the intersection of environment, social and economic aspects of a business. At the completion of the course, students will have successfully scoped, planned and delivered a consulting engagement. On occasion, the class will examine the broader trends and market dynamics at work that led to these projects and explore other relevant business and sustainability topics. Through this class, students will develop a working knowledge of problem solving tools and techniques that they can leverage for a variety of career path.

In-class time will focus on a combination of lectures, guest speakers, and course work with a significant portion reserved for teams to work on their projects. In addition to readings and assignments, outside of class time will be spent on project meetings, research, analysis, work planning, possibly visits to the project site or to conduct interviews.

Students should plan to spend a considerable amount of time working with their teams outside the classroom on the consulting projects.

**Course Outline**

The initial weeks of the course will focus on readings, lecture, class activities, project “pitches” from the sponsor companies, and the consulting deliverables students will encounter at the beginning of their projects (i.e. letter of engagement, work plans, team contract, etc.). The next several classes will cover the full problem-solving lifecycle using a hypothesis-driven strategy consulting approach that starts with framing the problem through to developing and presenting client recommendations and solutions. Additionally, the class will cover selected consulting meta-concepts and competencies for integration into client/project engagement.

As the course progresses into the second half of the semester, in-class time will primarily focus on project work. Subject to availability, we will schedule a few guest speakers relevant to the projects, sustainability, or consulting in general throughout the course.

Once projects are fully underway, students will begin five regular activities:

* **Team Meetings & Activities:** Each team will consist of 3-5 students although smaller or larger teams are possible depending on project needs and class size. In addition to class time and client meetings, successful projects will require extensive independent or client-guided research and engagement outside of class (surveys, review of literature, trade publications interviews, etc.).

Teams should be mindful of their client’s time and goals (e.g. be prepared, clarity of team roles and responsibilities, take notes, follow-up with next steps, coordinate and communicate clearly). Teams should engage clients regularly and ensure that they remain aligned with project/deliverable progress. Over-communicating is always better than under-communicating.

Internally, team-based engagement and strong contributions by individual team members are critical to overall project success and to achievement of course learning objectives. To facilitate this, peer reviews (see assignments) are required and intended to support candid feedback as well as to provide input into individual course grades.

* **Status Reports:** Beginning the week of client signature of the LOEs, students will submit **a weekly project status report** to their client and Canvas, with a copy to the course graduate research assistant (GRA) – **TBD**.

Weekly status reports summarize the work completed that week, work planned, questions needing answers, insights sought, and any issues, scope changes, concerns, or information requests. Students should imagine that this is the only document that the client may share with their boss each week during the project. The goal is not to report “everything is fine”; the goal is clear understanding and “eyes wide open” across the project team and stakeholders. **Ideally, students should time the submission of status reports to their clients such that the reports serve as the agenda for, and/or summary of, client meetings.** Given this, the submission schedule is flexible based on timing of weekly client meetings but the course expectation (mirroring actual consulting practice) is weekly.

* **Client Meetings:** Students will schedule meetings (in-person or by phone) with their client weekly (recommended for 1 hour) to review key deliverables, discuss the direction and progress of the project, and identify issues, gaps, and insights. Meetings should cover questions, project direction, introduction requests for interviews, deliverable feedback, analysis and research, key insights, and plans for the next several weeks. It is the role of the team, not the client, to schedule these meetings at a time that is convenient for the entire group.
* **Project Coach Meetings:** Students will schedule meetings (recommended weekly but subject to how the team/coach determines they can use their time most effectively) with their assigned Coach, to receive feedback on application of consulting tools, key deliverables, and to discuss next steps. The objective of the Coach is to expose students to the expertise of a practicing consultant as they work on a real-world consulting engagement. The Coach will:

1. Serve as a “consulting advisor” to help students bridge the gap between learning the theory in class and applying it during their engagement.
2. Help to hold teams accountable for progress against set milestones and provide feedback on key deliverables.
3. NOT create content, do analysis, or serve as the representative to the client during the project

It is estimated that each Coach will spend 1 hour per week (on average) advising their assigned team. This time can be virtual or in-person and will be scheduled to accommodate the Coach and student’s other work commitments. It is the role of the team, not the Coach, to schedule these meetings at a time that is convenient for the entire group.

* **Professor Meetings:** These meetings should reflect the Professor’s assumed role as “Managing Director”. Teams will meet with the Professor a minimum of once every 2-3 weeks to discuss current efforts, clarify issues or questions, and – if appropriate – work on a particular element of the project. We will hold these meetings during class time wherever possible though students can schedule additional time by appointment.

**Note: Writing & communications** – In all the above activities, strong communication skills are essential for client, team, and individual success. Writing that is articulate and concise delivers the most value with the least effort to your audience. It is also a critical and sometimes invisible factor in persuading people to your cause and enlisting their support. As such, students will receive feedback on structure, style, grammar and clarity of their written and verbal communication. Managers, project leaders and most successful partners in consulting firms are adamant about professional communications and students should strive for excellence in all writing and communications (email, LOEs, project plans, periodic status updates, deliverables).

**Note: Client information** – Students should be aware they may be receiving information from client companies that might be confidential or sensitive and should only use that information for purposes of this course. All information should be returned, deleted, etc. at the end of the course as directed by the client. Students are bound by the Georgia Tech Honor Code and Code of Student Conduct.

**Course Materials and Texts**

* Required
* The McKinsey Mind, by Ethan Rasiel & Paul N. Friga
* See Course Pack for HBR readings ([Course Pack](https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/597259))
* Additional assigned readings include will be publicly available or uploaded to Canvas
* Recommended readings for students wanting more on Sustainability
  + - * Business Lessons from Radical Industrialist (Ray Anderson)
      * The Big Pivot (Winston)
      * The Upcycle (McDonough)
      * Winning the Story Wars (Sachs)
      * Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution (Hawken & Lovins)

**Note** – Stop by anytime at The Center for Sustainable Business (COB 4426) to check out a book from the growing collection – see Arianna Robinson for information. In addition, the Managing Director for the center, and the associated staff, should be used by students as “in-house” sustainability experts and can support the project, general learning, or provide career advice. Our Center also has periodic speakers and events, which we encourage you to attend.

**All students have access to the ACSB Center – conference room should be requested in advance with Kjersti Lukens (**[**kjersti.lukens@scheller.gatech.edu**](mailto:kjersti.lukens@scheller.gatech.edu)**) for use during normal business hours. Please be sure to clean up after yourself.**

**Course Grading**

Final grades are determined based on the following table. We will provide guidance regarding what constitutes excellent, good, fair and poor in rubrics and/or discussed in class.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignments** | **UG Percent** | **MBA Percent** | **Grading Considerations** |
| **Project Management\***   * Status Reports (Weekly) * Team Submissions * Project Bid Sheets * Team Contracts * Letter of Engagement (LOE) – Drafts and Final * Day 1 Hypothesis & Issue Tree – Draft and Final | 30% | 20% | * Demonstrated good faith effort and consistency (e.g. weekly status reports beginning the week of final LOW signatures) * These assignments are not graded but points are earned/lost based on consistency/timeliness of submissions |
| **Draft Ghost Decks\*\*** | 5% | 5% | Assessment of headlines in terms of clarity, structure, logic flow (rubric provided on Canvas). |
| **Midpoint Review\*\*** | 5% | 5% | Assessment of Updated Ghost Decks and Work Plans in terms of Ghost Deck progress over draft, and comprehensiveness and completeness of Work Plan (rubric provided on Canvas) |
| **Informal Peer Review\*** | 5% | 5% | Use Peer Review rubric only to facilitate informal feedback discussion with other team members on performance. To complete the assignment, each team member submits to Canvas no more than ½ to 1-page Word document reflection on individual learnings from these discussions. |
| **Final Client Presentation\*\*** | 5% | 10% | Rubric to be provided to Client, with feedback reviewed by Professors for determining grade. Rubric is available on Canvas for student review. |
| **Final Deliverables\*\***  (Final Deliverables Deck per LOE and Presentation to Client) | 30% | 35% | Rubric to be provided to Client for input to Professors who will determine grade. Rubric is available on Canvas for student review. |
| **Peer Review\*\***  (Your teammates assessments of your contributions and engagement) | 10% | 10% | Rubric provided on Canvas, teammates to grade as directed. |
| **Class Attendance** | 10% | 10% | * If you will miss class due to participation in *approved Institute activities* (such as field trips and athletic events; see http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/# for the institute absence policy), you must contact the instructor *beforehand* in order to be excused from attending. * In addition to approved Institute activities, you are allowed up to 2 excused absences by notifying GRA or Professor in advance. Unexcused absences and/or more than 2 excused absences will result in fewer attendance points. |
| **Total** | 100% | 100% |  |

**\*** For Project Management assignments and Informal Peer review, these are graded at 100% assuming on-time submission and reasonable attempts to complete. Late submission for these assignments will result in 50% reduction in credit.

**\*\*** For Graded Assignments, late submission will result in 5% reduction of assigned grade credit.

**Course Schedule & Assignments**

| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Discussion / Activity** | **Assignments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week 1** | **Mon, Jan 7** | **Course Introduction** | * Introductions * Course trajectory, activities, deliverables, syllabus, and grading | **Read:**   * “Using Hypothesis Driven Thinking in Strategy Consulting” for a concise overview of overall class methodology |
| **Wed, Jan 9** | **Confirming Team & Client** | * Brief Sustainability Overview * Creating high performing teams * Establishing and managing projects and clients | **Read:**   * MM Ch. 6 “Teams” for considerations in team formation and management * MM Ch. 7 “Managing the Client” for considerations in selecting and engaging clients * Client RFPs and prepare for client pitches   **Due:**   * Divide into teams and submit list of names to Canvas by 1/11 |
| **Week 2** | **Mon, Jan 14** | **Client Pitches**  **Scheller COB, Room 312 (M)**  **Scheller COB, Room 311 (W)** | * Clients present to student teams an overview of their organization and the problem they are trying to solve | **Read:**   * After client selections are communicated, conduct background research on client and industry to prepare for LOE and Day 1 Hypothesis & Issue Tree   **Due:**   * Project Bid Sheet due to Canvas on 1/17 * Clients selection to be communicated on 1/18 * Team Contracts due to Canvas on 1/22 |
| **Wed, Jan 16** |
| **Week 3** | **Mon, Jan 21** | **NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY** | | |
| **Wed, Jan 23** | **Establishing the Engagement** | * Overview Problem Statements and Logic Trees * Outline letter of engagement * Attributes of successful consulting projects | **Read:**   * MM Ch. 1 “Framing Problem” (pages 1-14) for principles to help with client engagement and LOE   **Due:**   * First Draft LOE due to Canvas, Coaches, and in class on 1/28 (to Canvas and Coaches by **Noon**) |
| **Week 4** | **Mon, Jan 28** | **Project Work – LOEs** | * Review First Draft LOE in class | **Due:**   * Revised Draft LOE due to Client & Canvas on 2/1 with Coach input prior to sending to client |
| **Wed, Jan 30** | **Framing the Problem** | * Understand consulting tools and techniques to quickly build structured and logical arguments – MECE Logic, Hypothesis, Issue Trees | **Read:**   * MM Ch. 1 “Framing the Problem” (pages 15-29) on developing initial hypothesis * MM Ch. 2 “Designing the Analysis” to help organize team activities around hypothesis testing   **Due:**   * Draft Day 1 Hypothesis & Issue Tree due to Canvas, Coaches, and in class on 2/4 (to Canvas and Coaches by **Noon**) |
| **Week 5** | **Mon, Feb 4** | **Project Work – Day 1 Hypothesis & Issue Tree** | * Review Draft Day 1 Hypothesis & Issue Trees in class | **Due:**   * Final LOE due to Client & Canvas on 2/8 * Final Day 1 Hypothesis & Issue Tree due to Canvas on 2/15 |
| **Wed, Feb 6** | **Ghost Decks** | * Introduce Ghost Decks & Gathering Data * Review Work Plan fundamentals | **Read:**   * MM Ch. 3 “Gathering the Data” for data collection & interviewing considerations * MM Ch. 4 “Interpreting the Results”   **Due:**   * Initial Weekly Status Report due to Client & Canvas by Friday 2/8, weekly thereafter * Draft Ghost Decks due to Canvas on 2/22, feedback to be returned by 2/25 |
| **Week 6** | **Mon, Feb 11** | **Effective Decks** | * Interpreting Data & Effective Decks | **Read:**   * MM Ch. 5 “Presenting Your Ideas” * <http://www.consultantsmind.com/2016/02/28/mckinsey-presentation/>   **Due:**   * Draft Ghost Decks due to Canvas on 2/22, feedback to be returned by 2/25 |
| **Wed, Feb 13** | **Project Work – Ghost Decks** | * Work on Ghost Decks & Work Plans | **Due:**   * Draft Ghost Decks due to Canvas on 2/22, feedback to be returned by 2/25 |
| **Week 7** | **Mon, Feb 18** | **Project Work – Ghost Decks** | * Work on Ghost Decks & Work Plans | **Read:**   * What Do We Mean by "Strategy for Sustainability--And Why is It Essential to the Survival of Your Business?”   **Due:**   * Draft Ghost Decks due to Canvas on 2/22, feedback to be returned by 2/25 |
| **Wed, Feb 20** | **Sustainability Discussion** | * Sustainability Discussion | **Due:**   * Draft Ghost Decks due to Canvas on 2/22, feedback to be returned by 2/25 |
| **Week 8** | **Mon, Feb 25** | **Ghost Deck Feedback** | * Ghost Deck Feedback * Project Work | **Read:**   * Sustainability a CFO Can Love   **Due:**   * Updated Ghost Decks (reflecting client feedback) and Work Plan due to Canvas on 3/8 (for Midpoint Review in class on 3/11) |
| **Wed, Feb 27** | **Sustainability Discussion** | * Sustainability Discussion * Project Work | **Due:**   * Updated Ghost Decks (reflecting client feedback) and Work Plan due to Canvas on 3/8 (for Midpoint Review in class on 3/11) |
| **Week 9** | **Mon, Mar 4** | **Project Work** | * Project Work | **Read:**   * Sustainability’s Next Frontier   **Due:**   * Updated Ghost Decks (reflecting client feedback) and Work Plan due to Canvas on 3/8 (for Midpoint Review in class on 3/11) |
| **Wed, Mar 6** | **Sustainability Discussion** | * Sustainability Discussion * Project Work | **Due:**   * Updated Ghost Decks (reflecting client feedback) and Work Plan due to Canvas on 3/8 (for Midpoint Review in class on 3/11) |
| **Week 10** | **Mon, Mar 11** | **Midpoint Review** | * Midpoint Review with Professors * Project Work | **Read:**   * Innovating for Sustainability |
| **Wed, Mar 13** | **Sustainability Discussion** | * Sustainability Discussion * Project Work | **Due:**   * Review Peer Evaluation Rubric and provide informal feedback to team members, each team member submits individual learnings in a Microsoft Word document to Canvas by 3/15 |
| **Week 11** | **Mon, Mar 18** | **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK** | | |
| **Wed, Mar 20** |
| **Week 12** | **Mon, Mar 25** | **Project Work** | * Project Work | **Read:**   * <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucTiaS7kh2k> * <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alliance-for-research-on-corporate-sustainability-/4-obstacles-on-the-way-to_b_11019722.html> |
| **Wed, Mar 27** | **Sustainability Discussion** | * Sustainability Discussion * Project Work |  |
| **Week 13** | **Mon, Apr 1** | **Project Work** | * Project Work |  |
| **Wed, Apr 3** |
| **Week 14** | **Mon, Apr 8** | **Project Work** | * Project Work | **Due:**   * Dress Rehearsals to be held in class on 4/15 & 4/17 |
| **Wed, Apr 10** |
| **Week 15** | **Mon, Apr 15** | **Dress Rehearsals,**  **Project Work** | * Dress rehearsal of Final Presentation to Professors, Coaches and fellow students * Project Work | **Due:**   * Final Client Presentations due to Client on 4/22 |
| **Wed, Apr 17** |
| **Week 16** | **Mon, Apr 22** | **Project Work & Close Out** | * Project Work * Close out | **Due:**   * Final Deliverables due to Client & Canvas on 4/29 * Peer Reviews due to Canvas on 5/1 * Grades Submission Deadline 5/6 Noon ET * Grades Available to Students 5/7 6pm ET |

**Key / Notes:**

* Unless otherwise noted with a specific time (in Syllabus or Canvas), assignments are due at **6pm ET** on the date noted below.
* Abbreviations – MM = McKinsey Mind, HBR = Harvard Business Review

**Project Deliverables**

**\*Note –** All deliverables are due by **6pm ET** in Canvas unless otherwise stated

| **Assignment** | **Submitted To:** | **Purpose** | **Due\*** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Status Reports | Clients, Coaches, & Professors | Maintain alignment with Client, Team Members, and Professors | Weekly, beginning w/o Feb 8 |
| Team Submission | Professors | Divide into teams of 3-5 | Jan 11 |
| Project Bid Sheet | Professors | Bid on desired projects  Project assignments confirmed by 1/18 | Jan 17 |
| Team Contract | Professors | Each team will develop a document outlining the team’s agreed preferences, needs, and expectations regarding how, when and where project work will be completed as well as how conflicts or escalations will be handled. | Jan 22 |
| Draft Letter of Engagement (LOE) | Coaches, Clients, & Professors | As soon as clients are assigned, teams will draft a document that articulates the goals and deliverables of the engagement. Teams will share an initial skeleton draft with the Coach to obtain feedback (First Draft, 1/28), and then share strong drafts with the client (Revised Draft, 2/1), discuss with them, and have him/her actively comment/make revisions. This document should include the problem statement and the following:   * What the team will accomplish * Methods to be used including anticipated levels of interaction with client * Resources required and high-level approach for completing engagement (e.g. budget, interview schedule) * Overall project timeline * The deliverables and output of the project (presentation, report, briefing, analysis, data) * The roles & responsibilities for the client as well as the team | Jan 28  Feb 1 |
| Draft Day 1 Hypothesis  And Issue Tree | Coaches & Professors | The success of strategy consulting engagements is largely depending on framing the problem, structuring the work, and executing efficiently. The Day 1 Hypothesis and Issue Tree are important tools to incorporating these success factors. | Feb 4 |
| Final Letter of Engagement (LOE) | Clients, Coaches & Professors | Finalize Project Expectations incorporating client, Coach, and Professor feedback. | Feb 8 |
| Final Day 1 Hypothesis  And Issue Tree | Coaches & Professors | Finalize Day 1 Hypotheses and Issue Tree incorporating Coach and Professor feedback. | Feb 15 |
| Draft Ghost Deck | Clients, Coaches & Professors | The Ghost Deck – also referred to as a shell, skeleton or storyboard – is an early draft of the Final Deliverable Deck. A Ghost Deck will include the title and headline (one or two lines of text that encapsulate the main point of the slide). The majority of the deck pages may contain outlines or rough sketch of the exhibits – tablet, graph, etc. – that the team intends to eventually complete. Consultants use ghost decks to align on the approach and direction for a deliverable and the work plans to get to the final version while minimizing wasted work. Solicit Coach feedback prior to submission. | Feb 22 |
| Midpoint Review | Coaches & Professors | The Midpoint Review ensures the project is on track, any changes from the original LOE are clear, the insights and anticipated deliverables will meet expectations, and the team, client, and other stakeholders are aligned on remaining activities (i.e. the Work Plan). Client preferences regarding content, tone, and location should be honored as much as possible. Ideally, enough insights will have been developed at this point to discuss what the final results and output may look like with the client (i.e. the Updated Ghost Deck). The written deliverable will be the post-meeting summary notes (Word or PowerPoint) with client and version of deliverables (updated Ghost Deck and work plan in their current state). In addition, there will be an in-class report out to Professors. | Mar 8 |
| Informal Peer Review | Professors | Informal Peer Reviews allow each participant the opportunity to share informal feedback with their team members based on Peer Review rubric. Each team member should submit their individual learnings or takeaways in the form of a Microsoft Word document. | Mar 15 |
| Final Client Presentation | Clients | The Final Client Presentation to the client will use highlights of final deliverable deck but enough substance to effectively transition deliverables to client. Teams will augment it with any slides needed to deliver a complete yet concise executive presentation to the client, and possibly other stakeholders. Feedback from client should be used to integrate into Final Deliverables. | Apr 22 |
| Final Deliverable | Clients, Coaches & Professors | Deliverables as specified in LOE - The Final Deliverable deck is an extended PowerPoint file containing the entirety of the project from team formation through final recommendation and all the analysis in between. It is not a presentation but rather a reference document used by those that will validate, implement and revisit the teams work after you have left. Teams should assume this deliverable will be used by someone who was never engaged directly as part of the project. The class will discuss presentation structure and format a great deal during the class. The Final Deliverables should include feedback offered by clients in the presentations. | Apr 27 |
| Peer Review | Professors | The Peer Review provides final, confidential feedback to each participant from other team members based on the provided rubric. | Apr 29 |

Updated 04/02/2019