MGT 60200
Business Problem Solving

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Course Description:
Businesses constantly face problems – how to increase revenues, decrease costs, if and where to expand, finding the right product portfolio balance, identifying the optimal markets, etc. Oftentimes these decisions are required to be made quickly, complicated by a fast changing environment and dispersed teams. As stated by Bartkus and Conlon in the course text Getting It Right, “In times of great uncertainty, ever more rigorous habits of mind are required to solve problems.”

Using hands-on techniques and tools practiced by leading consulting firms, you will increase proficiency in how to identify problems, generate ideas, gather data, transform it into useful information, and implement solutions. This course will be hands on, applying the problem solving tools and frameworks to businesses in the press today, case studies, and in-class activities. This class will help you determine the right approach to understanding business problems by teaching you to ask the right questions, improving your judgment, and optimizing your decision making.

Course Objectives:
Students will…
1. Distinguish between symptoms and problems
2. Analyze and then breakdown complex problems into well-defined sub issues, analyses and tasks
3. Identify the best option from among feasible alternatives
4. Prioritize data collection efforts to balance effectiveness with efficiency
5. Practice presenting recommendations in a clear, persuasive and concise manner
6. Increase corporate “street smarts” to aid in solving cases and business interview problems

Required Material:
2. Subscription to the Wall Street Journal.
3. Articles and cases will be made available through Sakai or handed out in class.
Performance Measurements:

**Individual**

1. **Class contribution: 20%**. Please be sure to read and study the cases and chapters that are assigned. Students are expected to come to class prepared (for both cases and readings) and ready to contribute. The class contribution grade is based on the cogency, not the frequency, of contributions. Additionally it is expected that each student will subscribe to the Wall Street Journal as part of the required course readings and be prepared to discuss current news events during class. The attached rubric details how this will be measured.

2. **Midterm Exam: 40%**. The midterm will be an in class exam that will assess your capabilities in utilizing the problem solving tools and frameworks.

**Team**

3. **Case Assignments: 40%**. The assigned cases will be completed in teams, unless otherwise noted. You are required to complete the assignment associated with each case and present well analyzed recommendations. Teams will be randomly selected to present any given case on the day the case is due. I will choose which team presents and you can choose who on your team will present – but all teammates must be prepared to answer questions. *The bottom line is that each team needs to be prepared to present each of the cases.* The attached rubric details how this will be measured.

*Final note on performance:*
Students are expected to attend each class and participate in the classroom discussions. Periodic unexcused absences will result in grade reduction. For the most part, the lecture format will not be used in this class; rather we will use a participative and experiential learning model. It is therefore most important that the students have read the cases, researched the topics and be ready to discuss and contribute to other students’ learning in the class. A student can ONLY receive an ‘A’ in the class by participating in classroom discussions and contributing to the learning process in class.

**Grading:**
Grading criteria for assignment of final course grade is based on:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Course Points Earned</th>
<th>Grade Earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93.0 % and above</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 90.0 % but less than 93.0 %</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>from 87.0 % but less than 90.0 %</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 83.0 % but less than 87.0%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>from 80.0 % but less than 83.0%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>from 77.0 % but less than 80.0 %</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>from 73.0 % but less than 77.0 %</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>from 70.0 % but less than 73.0 %</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>from 60.0 % but less than 70.0 %</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 60.0%</td>
<td>F</td>
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The students are expected to adhere to the University Honor Code. Any violations of the Honor Code will be referred to the appropriate committee.