



Lerner College of Business and Economics

Dept. of Business Administration

SYLLABUS

BUAD 429—SELECTED TOPICS IN MANAGEMENT:

Systems, Processes, and Workflows

SECTION 50, Fall, 2009 (09F)

18 November, 2009

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Text: Downloads and electronic reserves as noted in syllabus

COURSE OVERVIEW

This section of BUAD 429 is designed to provide students with experience in describing, defining, and solving practical business problems. It is both a content course and a practicum course, and provides the opportunity for students to gain applied consulting project experience while providing a valuable service to the business community. Students work in teams of two to five people on significant business projects under the guidance of the course professor and in constant consultation with sponsors in client organizations. Business projects may originate from large corporations, non-profit and government agencies, small businesses, entrepreneurs, and may include projects derived from students' employers.

Appropriate course projects may come from any area of business and may support one or more of the majors or minors in the undergraduate program. Sponsor organizations have contributed several projects, but students with specific interests are encouraged to submit their own original proposals. Three attributes of an acceptable project are: (1) the problem is one that has been sufficiently articulated by the students and client to define an initial scope of work; (2) the organization will allow the student group to implement and test their solution, or accept their recommendations if action is not possible; and (3) the organization will cover any necessary expenses of the project; neither the University nor the students should need to cover any associated project costs.

Given that we will be involved with client companies, some changes to the syllabus and schedule will be necessary as the semester progresses. I will announce changes in class when they occur. Check the professor's website to be sure that you have the latest version of this syllabus.

Course Procedure

You are enrolled in a course that is probably unlike any you have experienced. Your responsibilities for the semester will be to master several related bodies of knowledge, while using these to satisfy the business needs of a client—after our initial classes much of your work will be with the client and driven by the client’s schedule and needs. You will be working for them, often at their location, on problems that are very real to them and for which they seek a real and useful solution. You are expected to actually help solve their problem, not tell your professors about a possible solution. Students take the lead in these projects—faculty mentors are responsible for providing tools for the course and organizing the teams and clients; after that, students are the primary client contact.

This course is deliberately scheduled for late-afternoon classes, so that meetings with clients may be set up for late business hours. Several class meetings have been set aside for this purpose, but students are free to meet with clients whenever their personal schedules allow. Several classes have been designated as days for students to meet with clients in the course schedule; however, if other times are more suitable and fit student team schedules, these may be considered as compensatory time for those meetings.

There will be one examination and several unannounced quizzes on tools and materials covered in the course. Student teams will do several presentations related to the project, as noted in the course schedule. A final presentation to the client and the professor will be a major part of the final grade for the course. Reading materials for the course will be taken from Internet resources (indicated as hyperlinks below).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are responsible for reading and understanding all requirements of this course. In the business world, requirements and specifications must be fully met if contracts are to be satisfied, and that expectation applies here.

General Course Policies

This course is designed around several important policies.

First, students are customers. As customers, students have paid for a seat in a course that gives them access to quality instruction and fair treatment, and an opportunity to *earn* a grade. They have purchased the right to attend University classes; demonstrate mastery of the course material; demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively; and to demonstrate their abilities to work with others in a team.

Second, in that context, students do not begin this course with an “A” and “work their way down”—they begin with an “F” and work their way up. Those who do the best work will receive the best grades; those who do work of lower quality will receive lower grades. Failure to comply with the course requirements may result in a failing grade for the entire course.

Third, this syllabus should be regarded as a job description. It specifies the work students must do, and if it is not done, it is not done. There is no makeup or compensation after the period of performance has ended, and there is no extra credit to make up for things undone.

Fourth, a significant proportion of the course grade (the project and client rating) will not be finally determined until the end of the course. In all areas, however, the course is designed to give the student a high degree of control over the quality of work done, and to provide progressive feedback on requirements throughout the semester. Much of the work will require thought, initiative, and problem-solving on the part of the student. Points will be assessed to provide standardized feedback to students as appropriate, but many of the grading assignments will require responses to original, unstructured client questions or assignments which will provide a chance to demonstrate mastery of the material and effective client relationships.

Fifth, students are expected to attend all classes, including those for presentations. Cell phones and pagers should be turned off during classes—telephone calls are not a justification to leave the classroom.

Sixth, any e-mail communication with students will be through UD e-mail. I do not make separate lists nor respond to student messages from non-UD sources, owing to the quantity of malware and phishing that now plagues the Internet.

Seventh, during quizzes and examinations, all electronic devices must be turned off and placed out of sight. Anyone observed using, handling, or responding to an electronic device in any way during a quiz or exam will be failed for the entire course. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Finally, being a graduating senior in no way changes or affects any of the preceding policies.

Course Grading Criteria

This course is designed so that 50 percent of the final grade is determined by mastery of assigned materials, and the other 50 percent through an applied project.

Grade components and weights consist of the following:

Take-home examination	20 %
Unannounced quizzes	20 %
Problem assignments	10 %
Project proposal and initial presentation	10 %
Final project presentation	10 %
Client project rating	10 %
Project report	<u>20 %</u>
Total	100 %

Given the nature of this course, ***attendance*** is important enough to warrant a ***cut policy: more than three absences will reduce your final grade***. As in the business world, coming late or leaving early (which I consider to be inexcusably rude, and will never be tolerated in the business world) count as a cut, unless there is a prearranged reason.

“Excused absences” are those which meet University criteria. For students needing to be excused for University activities, please provide *written* verification of the reason for your absence *in advance*. Absences for job interviews count against the three allowed cuts, so interview schedules should be planned accordingly.

A take-home **examination** will be given on assigned readings on date noted in the course schedule. This will account for 20 percent of the final grade.

Unannounced quizzes on readings assigned for that class will be given several times during the semester, and will account for 20 percent of the final grade. Assigned readings are considered to be in effect until the next reading is due, as noted on the syllabus schedule.

Problem assignments. Several in-class and take-home problem assignments will be given, and results on these will account for 10 percent of the final grade.

Course Projects

Project-related activities and requirements are detailed in this section of the syllabus. These projects are both opportunities to demonstrate mastery of course content and apply this information to the needs of clients. Combined, these make up 50 percent of the course grade.

All students will form small teams to work with a client organization to investigate a client-defined question or issue. The type of organization acceptable to be a client must be one which has clear productive objectives, whether profit or nonprofit; social, fraternal, religious, and similar organizations are therefore not acceptable as clients, unless a specific compelling project can be defined by both students and clients.

The focus of the project must be on describing, diagnosing, and improving *processes* in the organization. While these processes typically lead to outcomes, it is the process, not the outcome that is of interest. "Increasing market share for the Fuzzy Green Pizza Co." is not a process, for example, and a proposal focusing on such an outcome would not be acceptable for this course.

Students are encouraged to define projects from organizations they have worked with, or may currently be employers. As needed, confidentiality agreements may be signed to protect client information. Several predefined projects may also be available from sponsor companies.

Project Proposal. Each student team will prepare a project proposal in consultation with their client. ***This is a brief but extremely important document and must be approved by both the professor and the client for the project to move ahead.*** Because of the significance of this document, it will account for 10 percent of the final course grade and ***must follow the following format:***

Cover page. A proposed title; identification of team members; name of client organization; date.

Introduction. A brief overview—a paragraph or two indicating that this is a proposal to do certain things and deliver certain outcomes by a specified date.

Company or Organizational Setting. A brief summary of the organization, its business, and the current setting. This is simply a statement that you understand the situation.

Opportunity Statement, Objectives, and Expected Benefits. This section describes the opportunity to make a change or solve a problem; the specific objectives that will be undertaken to do this; and the expected benefits that will result.

Deliverables. A description of the deliverables to be given to the client. This normally is a report with specific content that addresses each of the objectives in the opportunity statement.

Project Plan. There are two parts to the plan. The first is a description of how the project will be accomplished. The second is an attachment printout of a Microsoft *Project* file, in which the specific tasks in the project, the duration for each, the predecessor relationships between them, the critical path for the project, and a planned date for completion which is a function of the information above. The verbal description should be entirely consistent with the MS *Project* plan.

Terms and Conditions. Any specific terms that must be met, including confidentiality and protection of client data, should be briefly discussed here.

Approvals. This area names the professor and client representative who will sign the approvals, and the date of the approval.

Non-disclosure agreements. All students will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) which bind them not to disclose information about their client organizations beyond that authorized by the client. Students, professors, and clients are bound by these agreements. Depending on the client, we may use a [university NDA](#) or the client's NDA.

Project Presentations. Each student team will make three presentations on the project. The first is an informal presentation of the project proposal; the second is preliminary findings and an overview of the final report for the client. Each of these will be very brief and all will be done within one class period.

The final presentation will be formal final presentation on the findings and conclusions from the term project, and answer any questions the client and class may have. The length of the presentation will depend on the number of students in the seminar, but the maximum possible time will be allotted during the last five sessions of the seminar. The final presentation accounts for 10 percent of the course grade.

Final Report. The final written project report is due on the last day of class. Papers must be word-processed, double spaced, and cover all content specified below. Bring a CD or USB copy of your presentation to class, or have it loaded on your computer, ready to run. *Do not use e-mail* as a way of sending your presentations to the classroom. Far too much time is taken to download and run such presentations, at the expense of student time. The final report will account for 30 percent of the course grade.

Client Evaluation. Clients will complete a rating and evaluation of the project and student team, which will account for the final 10 percent of the course grade.

Summary of Student Project Deliverables

To summarize, all students and teams must submit the following deliverables for their projects:

- The project proposal, which describes very precisely the research project that you plan to do and serves as a written contract between you and your client, and an accompanying [project plan](#) in MS *Project*.
- A non-disclosure agreement with the client.

- Two presentations to the professor on the dates shown in the syllabus (these may change).
- A presentation of your final report to the client and professor.
- A final report on the project that details the solution that you have developed for the client.
- An [evaluation of their teammates](#); these evaluations also influence the final determination of individual grades.

GUIDELINES AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Writing Guidelines

Content. The final written term project report should have the following structure:

Title page
 Executive summary
 Table of contents
 Full footnotes or endnotes as needed
 Complete bibliography or references, including interviews and personal communication with clients.

NOTE that footnotes or endnotes are not a substitute for a complete reference list, even though the same sources are cited. Pages should be numbered. Submit *two copies* if you wish to have your report returned.

Style. All written work must follow a consistent style; no particular one is required, but the absence of a consistent style will reduce the final grade for the paper. Many business reports use the American Psychological Association (APA) style for materials. You can find examples of text references and citations in APA style in my article on [business incubators](#).

Plagiarism. Unfortunately, many students have not been trained in proper citation of material (see *APA Style* above) and unintentionally commit plagiarism. Plagiarism is in fact the theft of intellectual property and a serious offense; it is also a major issue in international trade and business. Therefore, my policy is to treat all instances of plagiarism as deliberate. The best way to avoid committing plagiarism is to use the citation guidance provided by style manuals such as *APA* or *Turabian*. If you are in doubt about a citation or any other matter related to plagiarism, please contact me at any time during the semester.

Academic honesty is expected in this course. Any case of apparent academic dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs without warning, and will result in a grade of F for the entire course. You are encouraged to become familiar with the University's [policy on Academic Honesty](#) found in the online *Student Guide to Policies*. If you are in doubt regarding the requirements, please consult your instructor *before* you complete any requirement of the course.

Certification of academic honesty. All required written materials and your project paper must be submitted with a cover page attached, on which there will be the following sentence: "I (we) have prepared this (integrative question/project) personally and in compliance

with all academic honesty requirements of the University of Delaware.” Your signature must follow this sentence.

The Five-Error Rule. All written work and project papers are subject to the following *FIVE-ERROR RULE*: I will read your work only until I encounter the fifth error of spelling, grammar, syntax, or composition. If the fifth error occurs before the halfway point of the work, the grade is an F; if after the halfway point, the grade can be no higher than a C, and an F is not precluded. There is no prereading for compliance, nor rework of a document failed for this reason. If you are concerned about your ability to meet this requirement, help is available from the Writing Center in 015 Memorial Hall. *Note that the Writing Center does not proofread your work*—they help you to write your own materials correctly.

Presentation Guidelines

Presentations of term projects should be structured to stay within the time allocated, and to leave a few minutes at the end for general questions and discussion. Presenters are both allowed and encouraged to ask question of the class based on their work. Presentations should generally use some form of visual aids, but expensive or elaborate visual aids are not needed—content is far more important, and slides or Powerpoint will suffice. Presentations will be evaluated along the guidelines students learned in COMM 212, Oral Communication in Business. A [rating form](#) will be used to evaluate all presentations.

For those wanting pointers, advice, ideas, and practice with presentations from fellow students, I strongly recommend that you contact the *Oral Communications Fellows program* at http://www.udel.edu/communication/activities_oralcomm.html.

BUAD 429 is a hands-on, real-world, current-events course. It covers a lot of material we might not otherwise think about, and provides a skill set that will serve students well for many years to come. It’s work, and it’s fun, and it’s real.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
1 SEPT	Introduction	Course overview and syllabus review
PART I	TOOLS	
3 SEPT	Using management and business research	Presentation Management matters (download)
8 SEPT	Using management and business research	Presentation Kmetz, Consumer's guide Handbook, Ch. 1
10 SEPT	Information conditions	Presentation Kmetz, WFMA Chapter 1
15 SEP	Information conditions (cont'd)	Presentation Kmetz, WFMA Chapter 1
	Initial client organization review	
17 SEP	Workflow mapping and analysis (WFMA)	Presentation Kmetz, WFMA Chapter 2
	In-class exercises	
	Homework exercises: Set II, Chapter 2, page 2-33	
22 SEP	Workflow mapping and analysis (WFMA)	Presentation Kmetz, Chapter 3
	Initial project and team formation	
24 SEP	Client meetings (Students working with Wilmington Trust will sign company NDA and agreement forms, and be required to take a drug screening.)	
29 SEP	Workflow mapping and analysis (WFMA)	Presentation Kmetz, Chapter 3
	WFMA assignment (Chapter 2 Problem set II) due	
1 OCT	Project Management 1	Presentation
	MS Project practice problem	
	MS Project assignment problem	

6 OCT	Project Management 2	Demonstration
	Final team and project selection	
8 OCT	Organizational processes	Presentation
13 OCT	Client meetings	
15 OCT	Organizational processes	Chapple (Library reserve)
	Project proposal presentations	
	Project proposal due (see format and content above)	
	Project management assignment due	
PART II	ORGANIZATIONS AS SYSTEMS	
20 OCT	Business metrics	Raghunathan (Library reserve)
22 OCT	Business metrics	Smith (Library reserve)
27 OCT	General Systems Theory (GST)	Presentation
29 OCT	Systems and information	Presentation, review Kmetz Chapter 1
3 NOV	Cybernetic organized systems	Knight & McDaniel 4 (Library reserve)
	Take-home Examination distributed	
5 NOV	Client meetings	
10 NOV	Cybernetic organized systems	Wysocki (Library reserve)
12 NOV	Client meetings	
17 NOV	Decisions and organizations	Cyert & March Chapter 7 (Library reserve)
19 NOV	Client meetings	
PART III	CLIENT PRESENTATIONS	
24 NOV	Preliminary project results presentations	
	<i>Note:</i> Presentation material copy due at <i>beginning</i> of presentation	
	Take-home Examination due	
23 NOV	Project presentations begin. From 23-25 Nov., 30 Nov. - 4 Dec., and 16 - 18 Dec. if needed, students should schedule a final presentation to their client. If possible for the clients, they are welcome to come to the classroom and have	

their final presentation there. If schedules or confidentiality do not permit, I can come to the clients premises for the presentation.

A brief summary presentation to the class should also be made within the boundaries of confidentiality acceptable to the client. See page 5 for additional guidance.

16 DEC Final written project report due