Ray C. Anderson
Center for Sustainable Business

Georgia Tech | Scheller College of Business

Sustainable Business Consulting Projects (MGT6369)

Location: COB Room #102
Time: M: 6:00-8:45
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Availability: By Appointment
Course Site: MGMT6369
Course Pack: http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/66165896

Learning Objectives
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)

Georgia Tech Serve Learn Sustain

This course is part of Georgia Tech's Serve-Learn-Sustain (SLS) initiative, which provides students with opportunities to combine their academic and career interests with their desire to make worthwhile contributions to the world and build sustainable communities where people and nature thrive, in Georgia, the United States, and around the globe. More information about SLS can be found at www.serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu. Visit the website to sign up for the SLS Email List, view the full list of affiliated courses and projects, and find links to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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/). I am happy to arrange to accommodate your learning needs based on their recommendations.

This Course is also subject to Georgia Tech's honor code, particularly with respect to sourcing materials from the internet for inclusion in client deliverables. (http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/academic-honor-code)

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 the purpose 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.

In-class time will be focused 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 and may require visits to the project site.

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

Through this class, students will develop a working knowledge of problem solving tools and techniques which can be leveraged no matter what career path they take.

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 from framing the problem through presenting the solutions. Additionally, the class will cover selected consulting meta-concepts for context and to help students manage the client and team effectively.

As the course progresses into the second half of the semester, in-class time will be primarily used by teams to work on their projects and practice their final presentations. The class will metaphorically transform into a boutique strategy consulting firm -- with the students acting as consultants and the Professors as Managing Directors.

Guest speakers relevant to the projects, sustainability, or consulting in general will be inserted throughout the course. Additionally, each project team will work closely with a Project Coach from Accenture or Jabian. The Project Coach will serve as a "consulting advisor" to help students bridge the gap between learning the theory in class and applying it during their engagement. Project teams are encouraged to leverage their coach to provide guidance in their project direction and review project deliverables.

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

- **Status Reports**: Students will submit **a weekly project status report** to their client with a copy to T-Square. Weekly status reports summarize the work completed that week, work planned, questions needing answers, insights sought, and any issues, concerns or requests. These should be written so that the collection of weekly status reports, on their own, clearly and concisely summarizes the major project work, changes and activities. 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.

- **Client Meetings**: Students will schedule meetings (in-person or by phone) with their Client at least every other week (once weekly is recommended for 1 hour) to review key deliverables, discuss the direction the project is going, and identify issues and insights. Meetings should cover questions, project direction, connections for interviews, deliverables, analysis, 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. At a minimum, teams should plan to visit the client site at least 2 times during the course (for clients that are local). For remote clients, video conferences (Skype, etc.) are recommended.

- **Project Coach Meetings**: Students will schedule weekly or bi-weekly meetings with their assigned Project Coach, to receive feedback on application of consulting tools, key deliverables, and to discuss next steps. The objective of the Project Coach is to expose students to the expertise of a practicing consultant as they work on a real-world consulting engagement. The Project Coach will serve as a "consulting advisor" to help students bridge the gap between learning the theory in class and applying it during their engagement. The Project Coach will help to hold teams accountable for progress against set milestones and provide feedback on key deliverables. 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 Project Coach, to schedule these meetings at a time that is convenient for the entire group.

- **Professor Meetings**: Students will schedule executive update meetings with the Professor every 2 weeks or as otherwise required. 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. These meetings will be scheduled during class time wherever possible. Additional time can be scheduled with the Professor as required on an appointment basis.

Role of Project Coach & Professor

The Project Coach for this course should be used for counseling, advice, and brainstorming. The Project Coach will <u>NOT</u> create content, do analysis, or serve as the Client or representative to the client during the project. In addition, students will have access to the Professor for the course, but the Professors will be managing a portfolio projects, and will therefore have a limited understanding of each individual project. Students will meet with the Professor every few weeks during the project in class and/or in office hours to ensure things are moving forward and the course objectives are being met.

Role of Team

Each team will consist of 3-5 students, although more or less can be possible depending on project needs, class size, and student interest. In addition to class time and client meetings, successful projects will require extensive independent or client-guided research and engagement outside of class. 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 manage their client's expectations and ensure they are engaged, informed and aligned. Over-communicating is better than under-communicating.

Course Materials and Texts

- Required
    - The McKinsey Mind, by Ethan Rasiel & Paul N. Friga

  - See Course Pack for HBR readings
  - Additional assigned readings include will be publicly available or uploaded to T-square
- Recommended readings for students wanting more on Sustainability
  - The Big Pivot (Winston)
  - Business Lessons from Radical Industrialist (Ray Anderson)
  - 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.

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

Grading:
Final grades will be based on the following. Guidance regarding what constitutes excellent, good, fair and poor versions of each of these will be provided and/or discussed in class.

Area	Percent	Grading Considerations
Project management • LOE • Status Reports (Weekly) • Team Contracts • Project Bid Sheets • Day 1 Hypothesis & Issue Tree	30%	Demonstrated good faith effort and consistency (e.g. weekly status reports)
Ghost Decks	5%	Assessment of headlines in terms of clarity, structure, logic flow
Mid-Point Check-In	5%	Rubric to be provided
Final Deliverables (Final Deliverables Deck per LOE and Presentation to Client)	25%	Rubric to be provided to Client with feedback reviewed by Professor
Final Presentation to Client	10%	Rubric to be provided to Client with feedback reviewed by Professor
Your teammates assessments of your contributions and engagement	15%	Teammates to grade
Class participation & attendance*	10%	Present & engaged
Total	100%	

***Up to 2 excused absences by notifying GRA or professor in advance**

Writing & Communications
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. Many great managers, project leaders and most successful partners in consulting firms are adamant about professional communications. Students should strive for excellence in their writing and communications (email, LOEs, project plans, periodic status updates, deliverables).

Course Schedule

Key / Notes:

- The schedule is subject to change based on in-class and project progress
- Readings may be added or substituted – any updates will be provided in class (and on PPT presentations posted at end of class)
- Guest speakers will be included, subject to availability, throughout the course. Students will be expected to prepare (with minimal advance warning) for their involvement in the class (may include the creation of questions, reading bios, reviewing website or watching short videos).
- Unless otherwise noted with a specific time, assignments are due at 5pm ET on the date noted below.
- Abbreviations – MM = McKinsey Mind, HBR = Harvard Business Review

Class Schedule & Readings

Week	Topic	Activity / Lecture	Assignments
Week 1 8/21	**Course Intro & Team / Project Management**	• Introductions, course trajectory, material to be covered, arc of the class, syllabus, and grading efforts • Overview of Consulting Process / Assets & Problem Statement • Brief Sustainability Introduction	• Read "Using Hypothesis Driven Thinking in Strategy Consulting" for a concise overview of overall class methodology • Read MM Ch. 1 "Framing Problem" (pages 1-14 only) for principles to help with client engagement and LOE • Read Ch. 6 "Teams" for considerations in team formation and management • Read client RFPs and prepare for client pitches Due: • Divide into teams and submit list of names to T-Square by 8/26

Week	Topic	Activity / Lecture	Assignments
Week 2 8/28	**Project Pitch Day (Tentative)**	• Clients will present their organization and the problem they are trying to solve to student teams.	• Read MM Ch. 1 (pp. 15-29) on developing initial hypothesis • Read – What Do We Mean by "Strategy for Sustainability--And Why is It Essential to the Survival of Your Business?" Due: • Project Bid Form due 8/30 to T-Square • Team Contracts due 9/9 to T-Square • Draft LOE to T-Square & Client – due 9/11 with coach and professor input prior to sending to client
Week 3	**No Class 9/5 – Labor Day**		
Week 4 9/11	**Framing the Problem**	• Understand theory of consulting tools and techniques to quickly build structured and logical arguments Hypothesis, MECE Logic, Issue Trees • Sustainability Discussion • Project Time Work on LOE, Hypothesis, Issue Trees	• Refresh previous read - MM Ch.1 (pp. 15-29) on initial hypotheses • Read MM Ch. 2 "Designing the Analysis" to help organize team activities around hypothesis testing Due: • Day 1 Hypothesis and Draft Issue Tree due 9/18 in class • Final LOE due 9/18 to T-Square & Client
Week 5 9/18	**Project Work & Ghost Decks**	• Review Day 1 Hypotheses and Draft Issue Trees • Introduce Ghost Decks & Gathering Data	• Read Ch. 3 "Gathering the Data" (pp. 49-74 only) for data collection & interviewing considerations • Read MM Ch. 4 "Interpreting the Results" • Read: Sustainability a CFO Can Love
Week 6 9/25	**Developing Deliverables & Sustainability Discussion**	• Interpreting Data & Effective Decks • Sustainability Discussion • Project Work	• Read MM Ch. 5 "Presenting Your Ideas" • Read: http://www.consultantsmind.com/2016/02/28/mckinsey-presentation/ Due: • Ghost Decks due 10/2 to T-Square

Week	Topic	Activity / Lecture	Assignments
Week 7 10/2	**Project Work**	• Project Work • Possible Guest Speaker	• Read Sustainability's Next Frontier • Read Innovating for Sustainability Due: • Midpoint Due 10/23
Week 8	**No Class 10/9 – Fall Break**		
Week 9 10/16	**Project Work & Sustainability Discussion**	• Sustainability Discussion • Project Work	• Midpoint Due 10/23
Week 10 10/23	**Project Work & Consulting Hacks**	• Project Work • Managing Partner Report Out – Mid-point • Possible Guest Speaker	• 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
Week 11 10/30	**Project Work & Sustainability Discussion**	• Sustainability Discussion • Project Work	
Week 12 11/6	**Project Work**	• Project Work • Possible Guest Speaker	
Week 13 11/13	**Project Work**	• Project Work	
Week 14 11/20	**Project Work**	• Project Work	
Week 15 11/27	**Dress Rehearsals & Project Work**	• Project Work • Dress rehearsal of final presentation to Professor, fellow students and project coaches	• Final Presentations due 12/4 to Client
Week 16 12/4	**Project Work & Close Out**	• Project Work • Close out	• Final Deliverables due 12/11 to T-Square & Client • Peer Reviews due 12/13 to T-Square

Project Deliverables

***Note –** All deliverables are due by 5:00pm EST in T-Square unless otherwise stated

Assignment	Submitted To:	Purpose	Due*
Status Reports	Clients, Coaches, & Professors	Maintain alignment with Client, Team Members, and Professors	Weekly by Friday at noon
Break Into Teams	Professors		26-Aug
Project Bidding Sheet	Professors	Bid on desired projects Project assignments distributed by 9/1	30-Aug
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.	9-Sep
Initial 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 Project Coach, get feedback, and then share strong drafts with the client, 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	11-Sep
Final Letter of Engagement (LOE)	Clients, Coaches & Professors	Finalize Project Expectations	By 18-Sep
Ghost Deck	Clients, Coaches & Professors	A 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 can be left blank or contain some 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	2-Oct

Assignment	Submitted To:	Purpose	Due*
		for a deliverable and the work plans to get to the final version while minimizing wasted work. Solicit coach feedback prior to submission.	
Midpoint	Professors & Coaches	The midpoint check-in ensures the project is on track, the team, Client, and other stakeholders are aligned on remaining activities, any changes from the original LOE or work plan are clear, and the insights and anticipated deliverables will meet expectations. 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. The written deliverable will be the post-meeting summary notes (Word or PowerPoint) with client and version of deliverable (its current state). In addition, there will be an in-class report out to Professors.	23-Oct
Final Client Presentation	Clients	The final 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.	By 4-Dec
Final Deliverables	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.	By 11-Dec