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MGMT 335 and 435, Microenterprise Consulting
Spring 2018 Semester and Quarter, Wednesdays, 6p-9p
Schreiber Center 816

Catalog Description

In the Jesuit tradition of using knowledge to serve humanity, students utilize and improve their business knowledge and skills by meeting the real-life business consulting needs of individual entrepreneurial and not-for-profit clients starting up or operating businesses in economically distressed communities in Chicago.

Outcome: Students improve skills in service-oriented communication, project management, teamwork, and cross-functional business analysis, and learn how locally-owned business can foster community economic development. Consulting clients receive a feasibility analysis or business plan to help guide business operations and obtain financing for a new or struggling business.

Undergraduate Prerequisites: Senior Standing, Instructor permission.

Graduate Prerequisite: Instructor permission.

Required Materials

1. Class materials posted via Sakai.
2. Banker to the Poor, http://www.bankertothepoor.com/, hard copy or audio book
3. Homer Johnson and Linda Stroh, The Basic Principles of Effective Consulting, 2007 (available via

Sakai).
4. Hal Shelton, The Secrets to Writing a Successful Business Plan, 2014 (at the Bookstore).

Course Overview and Description:

Microenterprise Consulting is a service-learning course for graduate students and senior undergraduate business majors that provides a hands-on experience in their education. Students work in teams, each of which provides consulting services to a client from an economically disadvantaged neighborhood in Chicago who desires to start a business or who has an ongoing business that is in need of assistance.

Consulting with the particular clients in this class is in some respects different from interacting with other business people that the students may have come into contact with in school or in organizations for which they have previously worked. **This is a relationship in which the needs and goals of the client are paramount, and therefore the focus of the students must at all times be on the client.** In order to properly prepare for the work that needs to be accomplished, the course begins with an overview of microenterprise and entrepreneurship, an orientation to process consulting, training in communication and listening skills, and an introduction to small business's role in the development of economically-distressed neighborhoods. This is followed by the formation of teams. Each team then meets with its client in order to gain an in-depth knowledge of the client's concept for his/her business. This is followed by the team engaging in detailed research and analysis of a client's business concept, which results in a business plan that the client can use as a roadmap in the future to guide his/her operations and/or seek financing. The team members consult closely with their client as well as with each other during the consulting process; in addition, the students in the class act as a resource to the other teams during updates and discussions of the projects during class.

Course Objective:

In the Jesuit tradition of using knowledge to serve humanity, the objective of the Microenterprise Consulting course is to provide an opportunity for business students to utilize and improve their business knowledge and skills by meeting the real-life business consulting needs of individual entrepreneur and not-for-profit clients who are starting up or are operating businesses in economically-distressed communities in Chicago.

Learning Outcomes:

1. To acquire skills in working and consulting with outside third parties, and to function well in a team environment.

2. To apply materials and concepts in this course to clarify thinking regarding the challenges of starting up a business, particularly one in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood, and how to solve problems in that regard.

3. To analyze and critically evaluate ideas, concepts and points of view relating to the full range of consulting client-based services: building a relationship of trust; conducting an

assessment of the client's needs; defining the scope of the project; conducting formal and informal research and analysis of the client's business concept and the environment in which the client will operate the business; brainstorming different options; making informed choices with respect to best strategic direction to take; preparing a business plan which will provide direction and guidance to the client as s/he moves forward with the business; preparing a formal presentation of the team's findings recommendations as to the business's future course of action; and providing the client with a comprehensive financial analysis of the business.

4. To strengthen students' written and oral communication skills.

Course Requirements and Organization:

1. **Attendance at all class sessions is required unless otherwise communicated to the instructor.** Since the final output for the clients in the course will reflect the effort of the team members during the progress of the course, attendance at all classes is mandatory in order to insure the best possible deliverable for each client. Any absence must be discussed with the instructor in advance of the class, and absences will be excused when circumstances warrant such.

2. **Active, useful and regular contribution to discussions in class.** This requires that students be well-prepared by having read and analyzed the assigned readings, and that they participate constructively in class discussions. Students can be expected to be called on for original and meaningful contributions to class discussions. Quality of class participation in terms of relevant and original analysis is more important than its quantity.

3. A list of potential clients who are aspiring or struggling entrepreneurs in inner-city Chicago neighborhoods or not-for-profit organizations will be provided by the instructor. During the fifth week of class (approximately), after the initial training and orientation sessions, business consulting teams consisting of approximately two graduate students and two undergraduates will be formed. Once the teams are formed, team members will agree upon a Team Charter which will be used to guide their behavior throughout the course. The team must also work with the client to set up mutually agreeable times in which to meet. Given the comprehensive nature of the course and the fact that all students have very busy schedules, **each group must agree upon a time when everyone can regularly meet face-to-face.** One of the biggest obstacles to group effectiveness is insufficient time for all the team members to come together and work in a face-to-face manner. It is also helpful when teams have students with varied interests. Therefore, the team should explore its members' diversity with respect to personal backgrounds, demographics, work history, skills and concentrations of study, so that the group can take advantage of the widest range of experience as they move through the consulting process. It is important that the members of the group divide the work in an equitable and fair manner, and treat each other in an appropriate way. In order to assure this, members of each team will complete a Peer Evaluation of themselves and the other members twice: once approximately half-way through the course and once near the end of the course.

4. Weekly class time is for teams to learn how to do their work; to report progress and seek help with the problems they encounter; to exchange information with other teams; and to share personal reflections about their experience. Should a client suggest it, team members will sign a non-disclosure form to assure the confidentiality of shared information. Even in the absence of a signed form, however, **client information is confidential and cannot be communicated to anyone not associated with the course.** The student team and the client will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding describing the scope of the project.

5. Analysis of a client's business concept or situation may include market research and competitor analysis to define and refine a market opportunity; identification and definition of the target audience for the business's products or services; basic supply chain analysis; preparation of a sales and marketing plan; identification of staffing and human resources needs; and a detailed financial analysis that will result in a written business plan that the client can use to guide future operations and/or to seek financing for a new business or to revive an existing struggling firm. Each team will deliver its final written document to the client and his/her sponsor at the conclusion of the course. Any other materials used by the team in connection with its presentation, such as PowerPoint slides, sample materials and records prepared in connection with the research, will also be provided to the client.

6. Regular opportunities to report progress and challenges, the submission of working drafts of the document, and the final presentations themselves will provide opportunities for constructive feedback and dialogue. In addition, in order to enrich the learning experience, each individual team member will be required to keep a reflective journal describing and analyzing his/her experiences as a microenterprise consultant. Guidelines for journaling will be provided at the first class, and reflection questions are contained in the Schedule of Activities in the Syllabus. **The journal entries uploaded to Sakai on the dates set forth in the Syllabus.** Unless otherwise noted, the journal entries are **confidential**; no one but the Professor will see them. The final class will be devoted to both reflections on the past and plans for the future.

<u>Undergraduates – Service Learning Course</u>

This is a Service Learning course for all of the undergraduate students in the class. All undergraduate Service Learning (SL) courses are catalogued with the Center for Experiential Learning (EL). We will discuss the mechanics of receiving credit for the service learning aspect of this course in class, including your participation in the University-wide Engaged Learning Reflection assessment.

<u>Computation of Grade</u>

One portion of the grade will be based on the individual student's engagement during the course, while the other portion of the grade will be based on the engagement of the team. Team project grades will be based on the quality and thoroughness of the team's consulting work, as reflected by the business plan (and the preliminary deliverables thereof) and the final presentation to the client. Individual team member's project grades may be adjusted up or down depending upon the relative contribution made by each of the individual team members based on the results of the

Peer Evaluations. The client's overall satisfaction with the team's effort will also be a portion of the team project grade. The grade components and the relative weights are:

Regular and constructive class engagement	10%
Regularity and quality of the entries in the reflective journal	10%
Team Charter and Memorandum of Understanding (4% each)	10%
On-time submission and quality of the preliminary written business plan deliverables (four deliverables at 5% each)	20%
Final oral presentation of project	15%
Final written business plan	25%
Client satisfaction with the consulting services received	10%
TOTAL	100%

Course Grading Scale

A	100-93%
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-60
F	59 and below

Loyola University Grading Scale

A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00
F	0

Quinlan School of Business Policy on Academic Integrity

All members of the Quinlan School shall refrain from academic dishonesty and misconduct in all forms, including plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation, fabrication, and falsehood. Plagiarism or cheating on the part of the student in individual or group academic work or in examination behavior will result minimally in the instructor assigning the grade of “F” for the assignment or examination. In addition, all instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the chairperson of the department involved. For further information about expectations for academic integrity and sanctions for violations, consult the complete Quinlan School of Business Honor Code and Statement of Academic Integrity on the Quinlan website: http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/quinlanschoolofbusiness/pdfs/Honor-Code-Quinlan-July2012.pdf.