

SCM 7397 Corporate Projects (aka Consulting Practicum)

The MBA/MS Corporate Projects (Consulting Practicum) is a 3-credit course for all graduate students - MBA (elective), MS (elective) and MS-SCM (required).

At the core, corporate projects (consulting) is about problem-solving for clients. Whether you intend to work as a consultant for outside clients or to provide the best services within your own company as an internal consultant, the frameworks, tools, and techniques you learn in this class will set you up for success. This course is led by Gordon D. Smith, PhD, a Professor of Practice in the Decision and Information Sciences (DISC) department at Bauer College. Dr. Smith has been on the Bauer faculty since 2009 teaching supply chain courses in the undergraduate, MBA/MS and Executive MBA programs. He has over 25 years of industry and consulting experience with engineering, manufacturing and service companies and is experienced in operations management, strategy development and execution.

Students who join this class will become a member of a project/consultant team. Dr. Smith will engage a client and brief the student teams on methods of consulting, background on the client, and problem-solving. The class will start with a consulting boot camp, where students will learn about consulting frameworks; problem solving methods; research and analysis methods; and presentation and storytelling methods. Throughout, the emphasis will be on teaching student consultants how to deliver value for the client.

After the initial boot camp in consulting practices, student consultants will work in teams of four on a project designed and scoped by Dr. Smith and the client. Student teams will deliver minimally four updates to their clients (and Dr. Smith), culminating in a final deliverable to the client. The deliverables will consist of a project presentation and final report; initial research findings, initial recommendations, and final recommendations inclusive.

The topic of the projects will be determined by Dr. Smith based on initial interviews with potential client sponsors. Students will be assigned to teams based on the initial interviews with Dr. Smith, experience and goals. Dr. Smith looks for the 'best fit' of student team members to client project in order to achieve the best student experience and project success.

Upon completion of the MBA Consulting Practicum course, students will gain a wide range of skills in a "living case" environment by:

1. Understand the project/consulting process and the application of project/consulting skills in all business settings
2. Explain how a structured project/consulting process can be used to analyze business problems, define approaches, design solutions and present understanding
3. Listen to, interpret, iterate, and define a client's challenge within a project/consulting process
4. Understand how to gather and analyze research, both primary and secondary, that furthers understanding of a client's challenge
5. Formulate a hypothesis for solving a client's challenge based on prior knowledge, information gathering, and research
6. Create and evaluate possible solutions to a client's problem, defined by specific criteria
7. Communicate ideas effectively in diverse professional settings
8. Synthesize the lessons of a client project and evaluate the performance of the team and the individual on delivering the results

Questions please contact me GSmith@Bauer.UH.edu or my mobile 1.832.477.4393