



Department of Marketing and Consumer Studies

MCS*4910 Special Topics in Marketing - Practicum Winter 2012



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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00-2:00pm, or by appointment

Class Times and Location:

Course Description and Objectives:

This special topics course is a practicum in marketing management and consulting. As a senior marketing student, you will undertake “real-world” marketing challenges encountered by small business and not-for-profit organizations that have partnered with CBASE and the Department of Marketing and Consumer Studies as clients for this course. The course is designed to achieve a number of objectives relating to academic and professional development, including:

- Synthesize student knowledge of marketing and business concepts learned throughout the degree to apply to small businesses with a limited marketing budget and the not-for-profit sector,
- Integrate theory and analysis to create and present a comprehensive marketing plan to a professional client,
- Augment and extend high-level academic research capacity to a professional level,
- Develop aptitude and experience within a professional consulting and team environment.

The project will be completed in groups of 4-5 students, and span the entire term. It will require presentations to the client, substantial primary research, strategic analysis, recommendations for action and implementation, contingency plans and resources. In essence, your deliverable is a full consulting project in marketing management that will be of importance to and potentially used by management of the client organization. The outline of the final report and client profiles will be distributed in the first week.

Course Materials and Resources:

There are no required readings or textbook for this practicum course. You will be integrating knowledge learned throughout your degree for the final project, and are expected to consult past textbooks, notes and related resources for review. Core degree courses are a recommended starting point for review.

In the consulting world, each team member has the potential to bring a valuable perspective and set of ideas to a project. In line with this, it is important to use your peers as resources for this course, in addition to the instructor and your own knowledge.

Another primary resource will be the course website (<http://courselink.uoguelph.ca>). All announcements, required and recommended readings, assignments, outlines/handouts and updates will be posted here. It is your responsibility to check this site often.

On-Line Communication:

- As indicated, the course website (<http://courselink.uoguelph.ca/>) will be regularly used for communications in this course. Additionally, you are encouraged to make use of the discussion board on this site – however please be advised that I will not be monitoring the discussion board to answer questions; students may come to my office hours or make an appointment for discussion with me.
- I will be communicating with you via your central email account <uoguelph.ca> from time to time. You are required to check this account on a regular basis. Please note that I will not edit my mailing list to your hotmail/yahoo etc. account.
- While I endeavour to check my email daily, students can reasonably expect a response from me within 48/72 hours.

Course Philosophy and Approach:

As a practicum course, MCS4910 is in and of itself an opportunity to reflect and share in learning and development. This is not a lecture based course, rather, it is a highly interactive project course that allows students to focus on a single project throughout the term. Interaction with the instructor is through a mentoring approach: student teams will work with the instructor for brainstorming, guidance and coaching to stay on track and in evaluation of work from a highly professional standard.

As the high level of interaction indicates, this course relies heavily on attendance, participation, commitment and dedication from all students. Indeed, class will be structured as a business environment for close interaction with teammates, the instructor and clients, and you will be expected to treat the course accordingly. You should consider each class like a business meeting, and recall that it is not acceptable to come unprepared or miss meetings in a real business environment.

Peer evaluations will be used in this course to individualize grades and to provide team members with a means of communicating significant problems to the instructor. *Be aware that the group grade you will receive – 75% of your total grade – will directly reflect your group members' evaluations of you.* You are expected to address any issues in a timely and professional fashion, and I am available to assist in mediating group conflict

Students will meet the clients in Week 2, where the clients will present their case and interact with you in a Q&A session. In order to maximize initial information gathering and the clients' time, you are expected to have questions prepared *before* meeting the clients.

Student teams must recognize that they are acting as consultants to the clients, not simply doing their bidding. Teams will present to their clients in Weeks 8 and 12 in order to get client agreement and feedback on their progress to date. You will also be responsible for giving feedback on other presentations in order to help skill development and improve the final reports.

Workload Expectations:

Once student teams have been formed in Week 3, you should expect to devote at least 10 hours a week to this course. Individual student workloads and tasks will be determined by mutual agreement of the members of your team. Every individual in the class should expect that this project will require a substantial amount of effort. A minimal effort by any one person will reduce the team's effectiveness and will undoubtedly impact its final end-product, hence the importance placed on the peer evaluations.

All presentations and reports the teams develop must be professional, i.e. they must be well-worded, grammatically correct, and accurate with regard to any information included. Indeed, the final written

document must be “letter perfect” because these materials will likely be kept and referred to by the client for the purposes of plan implementation and assessment. Therefore, poorly written work is unacceptable, as are obvious “cut and paste” efforts.

Use of Human Subjects in Primary Research:

You must receive university approval for any primary research that you conduct. The [Tri-council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (TCPS) was adopted by the University of Guelph in 2002. All research done at the University of Guelph, regardless of funding source, must follow the guidelines described in the TCPS.

In order to comply with the TCPS, a researcher who proposes to use human participants in a research project must [apply for clearance](#) from the [University of Guelph Research Ethics Board](#) (REB). I will apply to act on behalf of REB for in-course project research for this course, accordingly applications will be submitted to me. Further details on this process will be posted on D2L, and general information can be found here: [THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESEARCHER AND THE RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD \(REB\)](#). To contact the REB or for more information about involving human participants in research, please contact [Sandy Auld](#), Research Ethics Coordinator, Office of Research, ext. 56606.

Late Policy:

As is the case with the business world – deadlines in this course are final. This extends beyond your responsibility as a student to the commitment you have made to your group members and your client. As the learning objectives in this course include developing the capacity to identify and mediate conflict early in a professional team setting, slack from a member of your team does not constitute an appropriate excuse for lateness. Extenuating circumstances must have appropriate documentation.

Method and Timing of Evaluation:

Your performance will be evaluated based on the following:

Assignment/Examination	Due	Marks allocated
Individual Grades		
Presenter Feedback	Weeks 8, 12	5%
Discussant Report	Week 9	10%
Debrief Participation/Reflection	Final exam week	10%
Group Grades		
First in-class presentation	Week 8	12%
Second in-class presentation	Week 12	23%
Written Plan	Final exam week	40%

- Details for all assignments will be posted on D2L.
- Keep a copy of all of your graded work until final marks have been recorded. You may be asked to resubmit your work at any time.
- If you are registered with the Centre for Students with Disabilities and will require some form of accommodation in the completion of the required learning activities for this course, please meet with me during the first week of classes.

Course Schedule / Key Dates (*note – assignments/deadlines in bold):

	Class 1 (Monday)	Class 2 (Wednesday)	Work Outside Class
Week 1 (Jan 9, 11)	Review course outline & project outline; course resources. Discuss consulting and the not-for-profit sector	Discussion – commercial vs. non-commercial marketing Brainstorm questions for clients	Students prepare questions to ask the clients.
Week 2 (Jan 16, 18)	Meet / Q&A with clients	Meet / Q&A with clients	Students determine which client they would like to work for.
Week 3 (Jan 23, 25)	Determine projects & set up teams; brainstorm secondary research sources	Brainstorm primary research plans & research instruments	Students gather secondary info, develop primary research instrument & start fielding primary research.
Week 4 (Jan 30, Feb 1)	Research/situation analysis coaching; additional coaching by guest professional.	Research/situation analysis coaching	Students continue gathering secondary and primary info and start data analysis.
Week 5 (Feb 6, 8)	Research/situation analysis coaching	Research/situation analysis coaching	Students continue gathering secondary and primary info and continue data analysis.
Week 6 (Feb 13, 15)	Research/situation analysis coaching	Research/situation analysis coaching	Students start developing first client presentations, which consist of situation analysis, objectives & key strategies.
READING WEEK (Feb 20-24)	<i>No classes</i>	<i>No classes</i>	Students complete data gathering and analyses.
Week 7 (Feb 27, 29)	Presentation/Objectives & Key Strategies coaching	Presentation/Objectives & Key Strategies coaching	Students complete developing first client presentations and written overview for discussant report.
Week 8 (Mar 5, 7)	First presentations to clients: Situation Analysis & Key Strategies	First presentations to clients: Situation Analysis & Key Strategies	After presentations, students clean up situation analysis, objectives & key strategies based on client and other feedback. Students start developing detailed plans.
Week 9 (Mar 12, 14)	Product, pricing & distribution objectives & strategies coaching	Product, pricing & distribution objectives & strategies coaching	Discussant reports due. Students continue developing detailed plans.
Week 10 (Mar 19, 21)	Communication objectives, strategy & tactics coaching	Communication objectives, strategy & tactics coaching	Students finalize detailed plans, including tactics mock-ups.
Week 11 (Mar 26, 28)	Full plan write-up & presentation coaching	Full plan write-up & presentation coaching	Students develop client presentations of entire plans, including tactics mock-ups.
Week 12 (April 2, 4)	Second presentations to clients: Full plan	Second presentations to clients: Full plan	After presentations, students complete plan write-ups incorporating client and other feedback.
EXAM WEEK (starting April 9)			Students submit written plans, reflective write-up and peer evaluations at the debrief session (timing TBD).

Note: class schedule may be subject to change. In addition, there will be guest coaches from time to time in addition to the instructor for a robust mentoring experience.

Policies and Regulations

All students are expected to abide by the University's academic regulations in the completion of their academic work, as set out in the undergraduate calendar (see <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/index.shtml>). Some regulations are highlighted below:

Academic Misconduct:

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and directs all members of the University community – faculty, staff and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The University of Guelph takes a serious view of academic misconduct and it is your responsibility as a student to be aware of and to abide by the University's policy. Included in the definition of academic misconduct are such activities as cheating on examinations, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and submitting the same material in two different courses without written permission.

To better understand your responsibilities, read the Undergraduate Calendar at: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml> You are also advised to make use of the resources available through the Learning Commons (<http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/>) and to discuss any questions you may have with your course instructor, teaching assistant, Academic Advisor or Academic Counselor.

Students should be aware that faculty have the right to use software to aid in the detection of plagiarism or copying and to examine students orally on submitted work. For students found guilty of academic misconduct, serious penalties, up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University can be imposed.

Academic Consideration:

Students who find themselves unable to meet course requirements by the deadline or criteria expected because of medical, psychological or compassionate circumstances beyond their control, should review the regulations on Academic Consideration in the Undergraduate Calendar (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/c08/c08-ac.shtml) and discuss their situation with the instructor, Program Counsellor or Academic Advisor as appropriate.

Religious Holidays:

Should a student need to miss scheduled tests, mid-term examinations, final examinations, or requirements to attend classes and participate in laboratories for religious reasons, please advise the instructor within two weeks of the distribution of this course outline so that alternate arrangements can be made. For further information see

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-accomrelig.shtml>

