

National Research University - Higher School of Economics

Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs

Course Syllabus and Description

International Business Consulting

Master of International Business Program

38.04.02 Management

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International Business Consulting

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course syllabus sets minimal requirements for student's knowledge and skills and determines the content and forms of study and performance evaluation.

The course syllabus is designed and suitable for faculty teaching this course, teaching assistants and students studying in the Master of International Business program.

The syllabus is developed according to:

- the standard educational requirements of «National Research University «Higher School of Economics» (HSE) for the Management degree 38.04.02
- the Master of International Business program curriculum

The course was developed in cooperation with Christopher Tunnard, Professor of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, USA. Dr. Tunnard kindly provided teaching materials and instructions for the course.

Pre-requisites: THIS COURSE IS AVAILABLE TO MIB STUDENTS ONLY

The following prerequisites are also required for this course:

- World Economy
- International Relations
- International Business Research

Course type: elective

Abstract: International Business Consulting is the program's key consulting seminar. This is an ideal opportunity for students to submerge in the real business world as consulting interns and to carry out real-life client-oriented consulting projects for participating international companies. For the purpose of this field study a project portfolio of the existing and potential business partners – sponsoring international companies – is formed. While working on this project students apply the knowledge and skills they acquired during their studies in the master program. This innovative course has no analogues and is not available at any other Russian university examined by the author.

The international companies participating in the “International Business Consulting” project also represent the base for student practical training and internships and the potential employers for the master program graduates.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the course is to introduce students to consulting process, raise their interest in this area of business activities and provide the necessary expertise and consulting skills.

Students gain additional practical experience through the business consulting project.

As a result of the course, the student should have the following knowledge and skills:

- ability to develop projects for working with clients and organize their execution, including:
- ability to collect and process data necessary for completing a specific task;

- ability to select and use instruments and technologies for data processing, analyze the calculation results and provide recommendations;
- knowledge of methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis and modeling, and of theoretical and experimental research;
- ability to form and manage teams for consulting projects;
- ability to form and manage consulting projects;
- ability to present research result reports for the consulting projects.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of the course, the student should possess the following competences:

General (Common) Competences

Competence	Descriptors – main features of learning (achievement criteria)	Forms and methods of study. Evaluation methodology
Ability to analyze statistical data and other information.	Able to critically evaluate the client's proposal and provide recommendations.	Focus groups Discussions Test
Ability to generate new ideas and products, creativity and leadership	Able to speak in public on professional topics. Clearly and with reason formulates ideas and articulates thoughts.	Group discussions

Special (Subject-oriented) Competences

Competence	Descriptors – main features of learning (achievement criteria)	Forms and methods of study. Evaluation methodology
Ability to polish up and develop an intellectual and cultural level and build a carrier path.	Usage of theoretical knowledge and its applications in consulting.	Thorough study of compulsory and additionally recommended books and articles Presentations Group discussions

COURSE PLAN

The course consists of two parts. The first part gives instructions to consulting activities. The Seminar instructor teaches skills during the first part of the course; he then switches to a coaching role, meeting weekly with each team to review progress and discuss the next steps.

The second part represents the consulting project itself. As the focus of this course is to give students real-world, practical experience, the student teams are given full responsibility for client contact, including the negotiation of the project scope and deliverables.

1. Introduction to business consulting

The first part of the course includes an introduction to and practice in the essential business skills that form the core of professional development for consultants:

- Creating and managing teams
- Understanding, structuring, and solving problems
- Data gathering and analysis
- Interviewing skills
- Structuring presentations and effective communications

2. Team consulting project implementation

On this stage students employ their skills by completing a team consulting project for a sponsoring organization. In these projects, students will be expected to manage both the substance of the project and work plan, as well as the team's relationship with the project sponsor, specifically the designated decision-maker and champion. Client sponsor decision makers can be Presidents/CEOs, EVPs, SVPs, VPs, Directors, Managing Directors. The overall satisfaction of the sponsoring client and the project's ability to be put into action will be of equal importance to the material that the students deliver.

The course concludes with a final presentation describing the results of students' consulting project.

Breakdown of topics and hours

№	Topic	Hours total	Contact Hours			Homework
			Lectures	Semi-nars	Total	
1	Introduction to business consulting	40	20			20
2	Team consulting project implementation	150		60		90
Overall total:		190	20	60	80	110

READING LIST

We will use:

- 1) Research articles of foreign authors.
- 2) Books and textbooks of foreign authors.
- 3) Materials provided by the lector.

Recommended readings (compulsory):

1. Minto, Barbara. *The Pyramid Principle: Logic in Writing and Thinking*. Third ed. London: Pitman Publishing, 1995.
2. Rasiel, Ethan (1999). *The McKinsey Way* (1 ed.). McGraw-Hill.

3. Rasiel, Ethan; Friga, Paul (2001). *The McKinsey Mind: Understanding and Implementing the Problem-Solving Tools and Management Techniques of the World's Top Strategic Consulting Firm* (1 ed.). McGraw-Hill.
4. Friga, Paul (2008). *The McKinsey Engagement: A Powerful Toolkit For More Efficient and Effective Team Problem Solving* (1 ed.). McGraw-Hill.
5. Other publications of McKinsey and Company, Inc. consultants.
6. Instructor's materials

GRADING SYSTEM

- Class attendance & participation, both instructions and group discussions – 50%;
- Project presentation – 50%:
 - client – 80%
 - individual assessment by fellow team members – 20%

The seminar requires extensive and intensive classroom participation. Students will lead class discussions, and take an active role in skill-building exercises building up to the group project; early sessions will have frequent in-class exercises in order to assure that participants have a good grasp on the skills and processes being presented and practiced.

The emphasis during the initial sessions will be on in-class performance, supplemented by a selection of readings about the main processes being learned and actual consulting cases. Once the group projects are assigned, the emphasis will shift from individual to team effort, with the class format becoming tutorials with teams to work on their consulting projects.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

The class will meet once a week for 4 hours. Typically, there will be instructions during the first part of the course and discussions of the consulting projects during the second part. Attendance and participation in the classes are required.

Each team will receive a grade for their project, input for which will come primarily from the client. The team grade will count for 80% of an individual's grade; 20% will come from individual assessment by fellow team members. In addition, individual grades may be raised (or lowered) for exceptional performance at the instructor's discretion.

This is a new initiative where students from this course work with sponsoring organizations develop solutions for international corporations and organizations seeking to make strategic decisions. Sponsors get the benefit of actionable and insightful, multi-disciplinary consulting and exposure to a representative sample of HSE talent pool for consideration as interns or employees, while students gain valuable experience working on real-life issues.

This seminar helps students to learn the analytical, project management, and interpersonal skills used in consulting to further their managerial potential. Students in this seminar learn in two ways—through classroom instruction and discussion, and through hands-on work with sponsoring firms. The projects are the focus of the seminar: your assessment of their work represents the majority of their course grade, with professorial input and team self-evaluations counting for the rest.

Projects are meant to provide students with relevant exposure to the consulting activity, including:

- negotiating the scope of the project;
- creating and refining the work plan;

- distributing the roles among the team members;
- planning and executing the required research and analysis;
- reporting the findings on a regular basis;
- producing a final deliverable, typically a presentation setting forth the main recommendations and supporting arguments, and an appendix.

At the end of four months, each team makes a final presentation to the seminar instructor, program liaison, and the sponsoring company. Sponsor representatives have the opportunity to give their feedback at this meeting, which accounts for eighty percent of students' final grades.

Student consulting teams are grouped into teams of five and are self-chosen; they work under the supervision of the instructor. We provide sponsor companies with résumés of the consulting team members.

GUIDELINES FOR KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

Projects Description

SAMPLE PROJECT PROPOSAL (FOR THE CLIENT)

Projects typically follow this outline:

- Background information on sponsor
- Current situation
- Key questions to be answered by project
- Implications/decision outcomes of the project/key decision-maker(s)
- Key deliverables and timeframe
- Logistics and collaboration (including identification & contact information of client champion, senior decision- maker)

SAMPLE LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE PROJECT SPONSORS/CLIENTS

National Research University "Higher School of Economics" (HSE)
 School of World Economy and International Affairs
 Master of International Business Program (MIB)

International Business Consulting Seminar Spring 2018

To prospective project sponsors:

We invite you to participate in the HSE MIB International Business Consulting Seminar. This is a new initiative where students work on real-life projects provided by sponsoring companies and aimed at developing solutions for international corporations and organizations seeking to make strategic decisions. Sponsors get the benefit of actionable and insightful, multi-disciplinary consulting and exposure to a representative sample of HSE talent pool for further consideration as interns or employees, while students gain valuable experience working on practical issues. Challenging international consulting projects that require a multi-disciplinary approach, cross-cultural and foreign

language skills can be successfully addressed. In a typical project, MIB student consultants provide a fresh, first look at a new international market, assess the competitive environment, and make recommendations on strategy and tactics.

About HSE MIB

Preparing Leaders With a Global Perspective. Since its inception in 2002 as the premier institution in Russia the School of World Economy and International Affairs at HSE has produced business leaders with a global view who can steer their firms through the maze of a constantly changing international marketplace. The School has built a solid reputation thanks to innovative international business education, including the September 2012 launch of the **Master of International Business (MIB)**, a unique hybrid degree that marries core business, managerial and quantitative skills alongside critical contextual knowledge of geopolitics, economics, law and cultural issues. MIB combines cutting-edge international business education with an interdisciplinary grasp of the socio-cultural and political forces that are continuously reshaping the global marketplace. The MIB curriculum prepares the twenty first century manager for the intricacies of project financing, foreign market-entry strategies, or a global product launch.

What is the International Business Consulting Seminar?

This seminar helps students to learn the analytical, project management, and interpersonal skills used in consulting to further their managerial potential. Students in this seminar learn in two ways—through classroom instruction and discussion, and through hands-on work with sponsoring firms.

Projects are meant to provide students with relevant exposure to the consulting activity, including: negotiating the scope of the project; creating and refining the work plan; distributing the roles among the team members; planning and executing the required research and analysis; reporting the findings on a regular basis; and producing a final deliverable, typically a presentation setting forth the main recommendations and supporting arguments, and an appendix. Any specific requirements can be discussed and agreed with the team. At the end of four months, each team makes a final presentation to the seminar instructor, program liaison, and the sponsoring company. Sponsor representatives have the opportunity to give their feedback at this meeting, which accounts for eighty percent of students' final grades.

How does it work?

Student consulting teams are grouped into teams of five and are self-chosen; we provide sponsor companies with résumés of the consulting team members. As the focus of this course is to give students real-world, practical experience, the student teams are given full responsibility for client contact, including the negotiation of the project scope and deliverables. Project sponsors will have a conversation with the Seminar instructor before the projects are selected by students, at which any specific questions can and will be addressed. Typically, the rest of the contact will be only with the student team members until the final presentation. The Seminar instructor teaches skills during the first part of the course; he then switches to a coaching role, meeting weekly with each team to review progress and discuss the next steps.

MIB students possess sufficient research and analytical skills coupled with experience in international business, trade, policy, economics, and finance. To meet the needs of sponsor companies, students make these projects a priority for their entire term, but the time is also shared with other academic commitments. It is therefore important that sponsors develop realistic expectations, and we ask that this be reflected in the initial project proposals you send us, as elaborated on later in this document.

What's required of the sponsor?

1. Staffing

The projects begin in mid January and finish in late May-mid June, on the day of the final presentation. There is one important client team member that needs to be identified before the project starts. This role is important in ensuring the overall success of the project for clients and students, so they should be carefully considered:

Project Champion—the main point of contact for the MIB consulting team. Sponsor companies are required to dedicate a champion who will work with the student team on a regular basis, typically at the onset of the project, weekly for conference call updates, and of course, at the final presentation, along with other client decision-makers. This champion is crucial to the success of the project, by providing guidance and access to internal and already collected resources. This ensures no duplication of effort and productive communication between student consultants and client. Projects will not be accepted without a designated and committed champion.

2. Project Description/Proposal

By January 17, 2018, sponsor companies should submit a 1-2 page project description (or proposal). The proposal will be used by students to evaluate the project, their interest in working on the assignment, and serve as a platform from which project definition discussions will begin. We find that results are always better when project proposals are well defined, including clear statements about the desired outcome, the scope, the work process and how you expect to collaborate, progress reporting and final deliverables. A sample proposal can be found on Page 4.

3. Fees & Costs

HSE does NOT encourage the sponsor company to pay the student consultants for their consulting as it is considered academic work.

4. Confidentiality

The nature of many of these consulting projects requires sharing of proprietary and non-public information regarding the sponsor's current and potential operations, customers, markets and strategies, third party relationships and other financial or business information. To protect this information, confidentiality agreements between the sponsor, student consulting team and HSE faculty and staff are standard operating procedure. In return, we have permission to share the sponsor's participation and generic project description in the course with current and future students, as well as the sponsor's identity and project type with prospective sponsors in our marketing materials.

Who's involved from HSE?

Seminar Instructor

Irina G. Kratko, Ph.D. is Head of the Master of International Business Program and Associate Professor of the Department of World Economy at HSE. She has had over 20 years of teaching, academic, executive, entrepreneurial and consulting experience in international business.

More information on Irina Kratko can be found at: <http://www.hse.ru/en/org/persons/24835330>

SAMPLE PROPOSAL OUTLINE (FOR STUDENT GROUPS)

1. **Introduction** “We are pleased to respond...” “We have the knowledge, team, etc....”
2. **Our Understanding of Your Situation** (For you, its: S + C → Q; for the client, it's a 1-2 paragraph story)

3. Team and Resources (Can put before or after Approach) “We can help you because...” (Only relevant skills and interests. Speaking Swahili isn’t helpful if the project’s in Siberia...)

4. Approach: “We have created (or ‘agreed’ if they already know what you’re going to do and deliver) a 3-step work plan.” (For you, it’s a closed-question Issue Analysis; for the client, title each step/phase with *the result* of what you’ll do (not how you’ll do it,) in words.) A brief mention of the ‘how’ in the text is fine, especially if the client has specifically requested it (e.g. a survey.) You can put details in work plan chart.

Step/Phase 1

OK: Overview/Snapshot of the Australian Widget market.

Better: Emerging opportunities in the Australian Widget market

(**Not** ‘Market research’)

Step/Phase 2

OK: An assessment of your capabilities;

Better: What it will take for you to produce/market/distribute Widgets in Australia

(**Not:** “Internal/external interviews and industry benchmarking”)

Step/Phase 3

OK: A profitability analysis;

Better: Will you make enough money to justify the effort?

(**Not:** “ROI/ROA/IRR/NPV analysis”)

5. Work Plan (Charts)

Timeline

Milestones

Deliverables

Who does what?