

COURSE SYLLABUS

MOR 462: MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

MOR 462: MANAGEMENT CONSULTING PROFESSOR MICHAEL MISCHE

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Date: August 20, 2017
(Updated & revised)
Section: 16669
Semester: FALL 2017
Class Meets: Monday & Wednesday
Class Dates: First Class: 08/21/17
Last Class: 11/29/17
Class Time: 2:00 to 3:50 PM
Class Room: JFF 240

Final Exam: 12/8/17; 2-4 PM
(per USC Schedule)

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Office Hours: As Posted on Black Board and:
Tuesday & Thursday
Coffee w Mische 7:30 – 8:00 AM
JKP/JFF Café/Courtyard
MBAs Only – 5:00 to 6:00 PM
HOH 415
Monday, Tues, Wed, & Thur.
10:30 to 12:30.
Friday:
By appointment only.
Any time after class & by appointment.
Please feel free to email or text me at any time with any questions, ideas, comments or needs (Text is better).

Email: mische@marshall.usc.edu

Mobile: Provided in the class

“Consulting is part art, part technical, part analytical, and always about the client.”

1.0 COURSE DESCRIPTION & INTRODUCTION

1.1 Course Description

WELCOME! MOR 462 is a *professional practice* class designed to prepare you for a career in the management consulting profession and is therefore designed for those who wish to enter the profession of management consulting, and/or for those who have or will have responsibility for engaging, using, and managing management consultants.

Management consulting is one of the most dynamic, challenging and rewarding professions in business. Competitive rivalry in the industry is intense, performance standards and expectations are extremely high, and clients and firms are more demanding in their pursuit of technical excellence, practical insights, and responsive client services. Competition among consulting peers is also fierce and partnerships in the premier firms are limited and earned. MOR 462 is designed to reflect the attributes of actual consulting...the course is demanding, challenging and rigorous.

1.2 Professor Introduction

There is nothing more satisfying to me than to see you highly successful in this class and in consulting. As a former consulting partner in KPMG, principal in AT Kearney, and CEO of a consulting firm, I teach MOR 462 as a *competency-based class*. Using a *Socratic* method, I teach the material necessary to function as a management consultant and to function at an exceptionally high-level of professionalism and competency. My teaching style is direct, fluid, and purposeful. I am open and welcome the rigorous interrogation of data and facts, constructive debate, challenging questions, lots of discussion, and collaborative learning. My primary professional objectives and personal obligations for this course including:

- (1) Transferring the knowledge and skills necessary for consulting,
- (2) Helping prepare you for a career in management consulting,
- (3) Helping position you for success as a management consultant,
- (4) Ensuring, through formal and informal assessment processes, that you demonstrate the competencies, knowledge and critical thinking of a management consultant.
- (5) Building USC Marshall's consulting program into the best in the nation.

The material in this course originates from my passion for consulting and integrates academic research/literature, my 30 plus years of management consulting experience, ELC-simulations, and actual consulting projects that are staffed, managed and performed by students in MOR 462. As USC's practicing consulting professor, I have an active portfolio of current consulting clients

MOR 462: MANAGEMENT CONSULTING PROFESSOR MICHAEL MISCHE

KEY TOPICS & SUBJECTS

History of Contemporary Consulting
Industry Structure & The Elite 8
Top 150 Consulting Competencies
Industry Competitive Dynamics
Client Motivations for Using Consultants
Client Expectations of Consultants
*Firm Structure, Management &
Organization: Partnerships v. LLC, v.
LLP, v. Company, v. Public*
*Service Delivery & Consulting Process
Models*
Staffing Issues in Consulting Firms
Client & Practice Development
*Economics & Profitability Drivers of
Consulting*
Attributes of a Successful Consultant
*Client Relations & Relationship
Management*
Fee Types & Rate Structures
*Performance Expectations of a
Consultant*
*Career Management & Advancement in
Consulting*
Managing Work & Life as a Consultant
*Ethics & Professional Responsibilities &
AICPA & IMC Ethical Standards*
Legal Responsibilities of Consultants
Standards of Professional Practice

which helps to ensure that the course design, pedagogy, materials, and subject matter are all relevant and up-to-date.

2.0 COURSE DESIGN, CONTENT & SUBJECT MATTER

MOR 462 provides you with a progressive immersion in the subject matter, content, issues, dynamics and process of contemporary consulting. By the completion of this course, you will know what it is like to be a management consultant, what is expected of you as a consultant, and how to think, act, and perform as a consultant. Frankly, I believe that if you are successful in this course, study and apply the materials and insights that you learn in this class, you will be ahead of your competition by two to three years!

MOR 462 is an exceptionally insightful, practical and in-depth course that addresses the overall profession of management consulting, how management consulting firms are organized and managed, how consulting firm manage their internal economics and set professional rates, how consulting firms compete, market, and secure clients, the types of services consulting firms provide, service delivery methods and practices, engagement management and progress reporting, deliverable development and content, value-added consulting services, managing client relations and expectations, and specialized consulting situations for strategy, operational improvement, acquisitions and turnarounds. The course also addresses ethics and professional responsibility in consulting and consulting as a career. In particular, we study the Code of Professional Conduct as per the AICPA, the CFA's Code of Ethics and the IMC's Code of Ethics and discuss the 5 major ethical dilemmas confronting all consultants.

In this course, you will learn many aspects of management consulting and what it is actually like to be a professional consultant, how consultants behave, why clients use consultants, and the many management challenges of operating a consulting firm. The course is not designed to position you for an internship. The course does not focus and is not designed to help you “do cases,” nor is it intended to teach you how to do case interviews. No doubt MOR 577 will be exceptionally beneficial in these areas, but the course is competency based and rigorous.

MOR 462 is organized into four modules...each module builds on prior work to form an integrated course design, and a progressive exposure and immersion in management consulting, the consulting process, consulting industry and firms, client dynamics, and the consulting profession:



Complementing the concepts of course is a practical consulting project. The project is usually one of significant profile with active and engaged clients. Past projects have involved companies such as Cisco, KPMG, Toyota and major governments.

Specific course content by module includes, but is not limited to:

- In **Module 1**, we begin with the basic question, “What is consulting?” With a fundamental understanding, we then move on to survey the profession, definition of a consulting firm, history of consulting, the attributes of a consultant and discuss the key dynamics of the profession, structural industry costs, professional ethics, industry

inhabitants, competitive rivalries and factors of differentiation, and the different roles of consultant v. contractor v. employee.

Additionally, because of recruiting calendar, we discuss a number of key concepts early in the course:

- (1) Consulting as a career,
 - (2) Why become a consultant,
 - (3) The essential attributes and qualities of a successful consultant,
 - (4) Issues and considerations in hiring,
 - (5) How to interview a firm,
 - (6) Typical interview questions,
 - (7) New hires v. experience hires,
 - (8) Case Interviews - MISCHE CASE ANALYSIS METHOD,
 - (9) What firms are seeking in consulting candidates,
 - (10) Professionalism,
 - (11) Why clients engage consultants,
 - (12) Client consultant selection processes & criteria.
- In **Module 2**, we learn a responsive and robust 3-stage, 9-part consulting services model. In this part of the course, we learn the consulting process life cycle from marketing (practice development) to delivering the final product to the client. We discuss and study engagement management processes, staffing and budgeting methods, entering and exiting the client and how to deliver extraordinary results to clients. We also learn the 7 C's of effective proposal writing, how to write a proposal, the 11 elements of all proposals, project management, the challenge of managing scope changes v. scope creep. Included in Module 2 are in-depth discussions of several key topics, including, but not limited to:
- (1) Elements of service delivery,
 - (2) Diagnosing the problem,
 - (3) Critical thinking, determining data requirements & sources,
 - (4) Building the Service Delivery Model (SDM),
 - (5) Forming the project team,
 - (6) Entering the client,
 - (7) Designing the work plan,
 - (8) Performing the work,
 - (9) Delivering results,
 - (10) Methodological framework & models for selection and adaptation to client projects.
- In **Module 3**, we learn the essentials of managing and working in a formal professional services firm (PSF) practice. In this module we discuss firm economics, ethics and professional responsibilities, marketing the firm and securing clients, how rates are determined and set, types of rates, various organizational structures and consulting business models and legal issues in consulting. In this series of classes, we explore the profitability drivers of consulting, learn how to set rates and understand utilization and cash flow measures. Chief among the topics that we address:
- (1) Legal responsibilities of the consultant,
 - (2) Professional ethics,
 - (3) The consultant as an expert,
 - (4) Understanding objectivity, independence & integrity,
 - (5) Professional oaths & regulatory authority,
 - (6) Codes of Conduct for AICPA and IMC,

- (7) Crafting the client value proposition,
- (8) Firm industry positioning,
- (9) The 4 prerequisites of a professional work,
- (10) The 3 prerequisites of professional behavior,
- (11) The 5 ethical dilemmas of consulting,
- (12) Ethical breaches & transgressions.

- In **Module 4**, we explore your career as a management consultant. In these class sessions we discuss career issues, what it means to be a “professional,” promotion paths, compensation, career strategies, and your “life as consultant.” We learn what it takes to become a partner and what the roles and responsibilities of the partner are. Some topics in this module include:
 - (1) Career levels & responsibilities,
 - (2) Career management & navigation tips & traps,
 - (3) “Making” partner & the partner selection & admissions process,
 - (4) Career exiting points,
 - (5) Career strategies,
 - (6) Work/Life balances & choices.
- **Consulting Project**, as this is a professional competency class, running concurrently through all four modules is a consulting project (or projects) with an actual client(s) that is staffed, managed, and performed by the class.

3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTCOMES

MOR 462 is oriented to contemporary consulting and the business topics and situations that professional consultants must confront daily. In MOR 462 students are **expected and required to participate in class**. Learning teams, videos, cases, client projects, individual assignments, formal cases, and a course reader may all be used in various forms to facilitate your development and transfer the appropriate knowledge.

Leave the theory behind...this is real world consulting as it is performed in major firms by professional management consultants. MOR 462 is not an “orientation” nor MOR 462 a “survey” course in consulting. My goal and passion is to teach management consulting and to prepare you for a successful for a career as a consultant. Chief among the many objectives of MOR 577 are 15 primary objectives learning objectives of MOR 462. At the completion of MOR 462, you should be positioned to effectively:

1. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the need and demand for management consultants.
2. Explain why clients use consultants and how clients select consultants.
3. Discuss, with confidence, the history and evolution of contemporary consulting as a profession and industry.
4. Describe the competitive rivalries and structure of the consulting industry.
5. Explain how to market and sell consulting services and knowing the 11 parts of a proposal.
6. Describe some of the ethical and legal issues associated with management consulting and learning the AICPA and IMC standards of ethics.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of how consultants work using “The MISCHE MODEL” (3 Phases, 9 Activities).
8. Demonstrate knowledge of the economics of management consulting and how rates are set and consultants are compensated and firm P&L management.

9. Demonstrate knowledge of how to develop work plans, identify scope issues, manage scope, how to staff consulting projects and how to interact with clients.
10. Explain how to manage consulting projects, measure progress and predict PM success or failure.
11. Demonstrate how to apply some of the key concepts and consulting tools to industries, companies and situations.
12. Explain and demonstrate how to develop consulting deliverables and outcomes.
13. Explain and demonstrate how to write and present consulting proposals and marketing to clients.
14. Describe how you will plan, manage and advance your career in consulting.
15. Have lots of fun learning cool stuff that you can use in your career!

4.0 COURSE COMPONENTS

4.1 Academic Components

MOR 462 is composed of 5 major academic components. Each component is designed to provide you with a specific learning experience that supports a particular set of objectives, needs, skills, tools, analytical framework and knowledge essential to your development as a Marshall student and MOR 462. Specifically:

1. Classroom Component

This is a highly interactive class that provides you with a great opportunity to learn, challenge yourself and others and develop your critical thinking, analytical skills, management *acumen* and communication talents. Come to class ready to work, participate, contribute, compete and have *fun*. Classes are similar to any business or boardroom, they are direct and facilitative and provide a forum to challenge the professor, your classmates and most importantly, yourself...***BE ENGAGED***.

Lectures are important...most of what you will learn is lecture based, collaborative *and* reading, case or project related. The readings either “set the stage,” reinforce concepts, or provide a different perspective to the lectures. Come to class prepared to contribute, challenge and be challenged and take every advantage to challenge me, learn, explore and extend your knowledge.

- **WARNING! DO NOT RELY** on PowerPoint posting and BB...I rarely use slides and I rarely post lecture notes. I do not need, nor do I rely on slides. I lecture and *teach* in the classroom and most of what you will learn will be from the lectures my 30+ years of experience, as well as our collective interactions in the classroom...not BB and PPTs.

2. Readings & Cases Component

The readings for this course have been carefully selected and represent a broad spectrum of ideas, concepts, research, and professional perspective. We will discuss assigned readings and or aspects of the individual projects during designated classes. The readings and discussions provide us the opportunity to learn, practice, hone our perceptions, advance our analytical abilities, and to learn directly and vicariously from others’ situations and each other. It is essential that you procure the proper course reader and do the readings.

3. Team Participation & Contribution

Teamwork in management consulting is *essential*. Learning how to function as an effective team member and leader are prerequisites to management level positions in any consulting firm. Your functioning and contributions to the efforts of your team are essential components of your development as a future leader of organizations. Participation on a team provides you with an opportunity to lead, be an individual contributor, and function as an effective team member. More importantly, learning how to create, manage, and sustain collaborative teams are important management and consulting skills. Your active participation and contribution to your team project is critical to the success of your consulting project and is included in your final grade,

4. Intellectual Component

This component focuses your cognitive and decision making abilities. The intellectual component includes reading, learning models of behavior, design, and leadership, discussing ideas from the readings and from other sources. As indicated, in this class we will focus on 4 dimensions of learning, knowledge transfer and skill development:

- a. **Factual Knowledge** is knowledge that is basic to specific disciplines. This dimension refers to essential facts, terminology, details or elements students must know or be familiar with in order to understand a discipline or solve a problem in it.
- b. **Conceptual Knowledge** is knowledge of classifications, principles, generalizations, theories, models, or structures pertinent to a particular disciplinary area.
- c. **Procedural Knowledge** refers to information or knowledge that helps students to do something specific to a discipline, subject and area of study. It also refers to methods of inquiry, very specific or finite skills, algorithms, techniques, and particular methodologies.
- d. **Metacognitive Knowledge** is the awareness of one's own cognition and particular cognitive processes. It is strategic or reflective knowledge about how to go about solving problems, cognitive tasks, to include contextual and conditional knowledge and knowledge of self.

5. Office Hours & Support Component

I love teaching and 'creating' management consultants...nothing is more rewarding than to see my students successful. I'm here to support your efforts, assist you in understanding course content, and facilitate your success in this class.

- My office is located in Hoffman Hall (HOH) Room 415.
- I am here to help make you successful and I take that responsibility and commitment seriously. Please feel free to come forward at any time with any questions, needs, suggestions, or ideas to make your learning experience more meaningful. I'll do my best to be responsive, communicative and facilitative and to help you succeed in this course and in securing employment or your career. Always feel free to text or call on my cell at any time.
- I'm here (on campus) over 40 hours a week. I've published both my office hours and teaching schedule on BB for you...always feel free to come to one of classes.
- **Reach out to me at any time.** I am also readily accessible via text messaging. I prefer texting to emails simply due to the volume of emails that I receive. I usually respond to texts in relatively short order.

5.0 REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is not a good textbook on management consulting. (I'm writing one for use next year.) MOR 462 *does not* use a textbook. MOR 462 uses a **Harvard Coursepack**. I have selected readings and organized the Coursepack to support the concepts and key themes of MOR 462.

The **Harvard Coursepack** contains the formal business cases, readings and articles that we will use throughout the semester. The Coursepack is MANDATORY. I update the coursepack each semester for new articles and readings that are more “on point” and or more appropriate for the evolving needs of the course. The Coursepack can be purchased and downloaded via the link below:

COURSEPACK URL:

<http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/66212974>

This is a new and updated coursepack. It contains additional readings and cases.

I will also post an occasional ad-hoc reading on BB. The intent of these ad-hoc materials is not to increase course loads, but to embellish and advance the learning process and improve your educational experience at Marshall...therefore...read them!

Other resources used or referred to in this course include, but are not limited to:

- **USC'S 5-Step Critical Thinking Initiative**
<http://info.marshall.usc.edu/faculty/critthink/Supplemental%20Material/5%20Step%20USC-CT%20Problem%20Solving%20Process.pdf>
- **USC's Statement of Ethics**
https://about.usc.edu/files/2011/07/USC_Code_of_Ethics_2004.pdf
- **AICPA Code of Professional Conduct**
<http://www.aicpa.org/InterestAreas/ForensicAndValuation/Resources/Standards/DownloadableDocuments/SSCS.pdf>
- **Institute of Management Consultants**
<http://www.imcusa.org/?page=ETHICSCODE>
- **USC's Final Examination Schedule**
<http://classes.usc.edu/term-20173/finals/>

6.0 COURSE EXPECTATIONS

6.1 Summary of My Expectations

Do the work! No excuses. Please let me be clear, *come to class prepared, stay focused in class, and engage in class discussions*. I expect Marshall students to stay current with business issues by accessing CNBC, Bloomberg and other business news services. Also, please take a few minutes to reflect on my **4 P's of success**:

PREPARE for class. Preparation is essential to client service & professionalism. Concentrate on learning and not your grade! *“Great grades follow great learning.”*

PARTICIPATE in class. Consulting is communication based and the most successful consultants are also exceptional communicators.

PUNCTUAL. USC costs lots of money...be on time & maximize your value.

PROFESSIONAL. Be a professional learner...your job is to learn.

6.2 Simple Rules to Help You Succeed in My Class!

Here's a few tips on how to be successful in this class:

1. **Texting & Emailing.** Please don't text or email in class. It's incredibly distracting to faculty and to others and frankly it's...rude. If you must text, kindly remove yourself from the classroom and do so outside. If I find that the texting or emailing is a distraction to our collective efforts, I will ask you to leave....no negotiation necessary. *Stay focused!*
2. **Preparation.** Preparation is essential to success. I expect you to be prepared for each class and come prepared to participate, contribute and learn. Furthermore, as Marshall degree candidates you are expected to meet and satisfy all due dates and deadlines. *Do the work...take the initiative.*
3. **Participation.** This is a highly interactive course, which is reflective of the realities and the demands of management consulting. Consultants must communicate with their clients. Given the nature of the course and my teaching style, it will be relatively easy to participate.
 - You are encouraged to explore various ways to express yourself, engage in discussions, and present and argue your ideas. Participate, debate, contribute, learn and be engaged...your grade is partially based on it! Inevitably, some students will not agree with you, and you may be asked to defend your argument. That's great! This is the place to learn and take some chances, However, let's all try to endeavor to direct criticism and comments to the substance of the topic and argument, and not at individuals.
 - The quality of your learning experience during our class discussions will be directly determined by three factors: (1) your degree of preparation, active listening, and participation, (2) your classmates' preparation, listening, and participation, and (3) my teaching effectiveness. Let's do our best to ensure that effective learning has been achieved and that the relevant knowledge has been transferred.
 - If, for some reason you are not inclined to engage in class discussions, then write your thoughts and contributions in the form of a memo to me. Your memo doesn't have to a novel or dissertation...just short, to the point and expressive of your participation and learning.
 - Each of us is different in how we express our participation, so a wide range of participation activities is acceptable, but performance must be demonstrated individually, within the teams, and in the class. Each person will be subjectively evaluated by the team and by me as to his or her preparation for the sessions in

addition to his or her contribution to the team performance. *This is world-class, elite university, so use and seek every opportunity to get better here, at Marshall, so you can perform better in the C-suite later!*

4. **Professionalism.** Being a professional is a lifelong commitment to excellence. Be on time. Be respectful and supportive of one another. Do your work, be prepared. Take pride in your work. Come to class ready to learn, contribute and have some fun. Make every second count for something meaningful. Make every second count for something meaningful. Get involved, debate, challenge, argue, take sides, be passionate and be resolute and always *COMPETE*...but remember that each of us is part of USC and therefore members of the Trojan Family and Trojans are *winners!!!*
5. **Focus.** During class time and during your team meetings and research, it is critical to be focused on the task, topic, case, etc., that is assigned. This would include not reading the DT, engaging in side conversations, working on another class, checking your texts, etc. Focusing requires energy, concentration, and your intention to carry your share of the responsibility to make your team and the class effective for everyone. *Stay in the moment!*
6. **Punctual.** Everyone at some time might be a little late or miss a class. As Marshall degree candidates, USC expects you to be responsible and let faculty know in advance when you will miss a class wherever possible, or to follow-up when it is not possible. As lectures are important, excessive absences (more than three) could adversely affect your final grade in the course. *You worked hard to get to USC...come to class on time and ready to work!*
7. **Attendance.** Be engaged in the class. Class attendance is absolutely essential. All missed classes will be noted. The policy on missed classes is to allow each student **three (3) absences**, no questions asked, no penalty. All further absences over this limit will reduce the student's course contribution grade and final course grade, no questions asked, no excuses of any kind accepted. **Students with an excessive number of absences are at risk of failing the course.** Only official university engagements, such as officially scheduled USC Marshall sponsored case competitions and sports events, will be accepted as exceptions to this policy. Job interviews, etc., are not excused, so choose your absences carefully. Habitual lateness and leaving class early, for whatever reason, will be noted as evidence of low course commitment and penalized. *You cannot learn from our class discussions, and your classmates cannot learn from you, if you are not present.*
8. **Relax.** You've worked hard to get here, so enjoy the learning experience that is unique to Marshall and USC. Put effort into your learning, take the class seriously, and do the work. If you achieve those objectives, then you should do well in the class. More importantly, the material that you learn in this class is valuable to your career and professional development.
9. **Hey Mische!** I want you to know that I take your commitment to USC, your degree and your professional and personal development very seriously. *I want you to succeed!* I want you to excel and just absolutely shred the class and the material. The results of my work are measured in years after you take the class. Please know that I am available to help you in any way that I can.

- If you need career advice, or would like me to review your resume, or help prep you for an interview...*come see me!*
- If need a recommendation and have done the work in the class...*come see me!*
- If you are having problems with the material or grades...*come see me!*
- If you are having issues with me, or my teaching style... *come see me!*
- *My door is always open.* I've been around, been through it and I am here to help.
- If I not available or around, or if you feel the need to discuss matters related to the course, your learning, or my teaching confidentially, then please feel free to contact either Professor Voigt (MOR), or Professor Fiss, Chair of the MOR Dept. We are team and we are here to teach and help you be successful.

7.0 COURSE NOTES & POSTINGS

Announcements, key dates, shared information, general feedback, commentary, lecture documents, notes, articles, supplemental course documents are posted on Blackboard (BB).

- It is your responsibility and **solely** your responsibility to frequently check Blackboard for updates and materials and to also check your email for communications from me.
- **WARNING!** Do not rely on BB or Power Points...the material and learning are in the live lectures! I rarely post PPTs and notes! Come to class and learn.

8.0 GRADING & PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

8.1 Grading Composition

Please be assured that I take grading very seriously and will work hard to grade you as thoroughly, fairly and as accurately as I possibly can.

I recognize that your work and grade are reflective of many factors. For this course, your grade will be based on a combination of **three** grading events: (1) Midterm, (2) Comprehensive Final, and (3) Project Team performance (presentation(s)). Your final grade will be reflective of your individual and team performance in the grading events **and** your relative ranking in terms of total grade points earned/scored in those events as compared to the other students. Thus, your final grade is a reflection of your work and where you work ranks in comparison to other students, and the grade splits (A to A- to B+ to B, etc.) from highest to lowest established for your class. Grading for exams and papers is done by USC Student ID only.

Your final grade is not based on a mandated GPA curve or target, but on your individual performance, the performance of the class as a whole, and your relative ranking as compared to the other students. Historically, the average grade for this class is about a "B+."

Below is the grading composition for this class.

MOR 462 - GRADING EVENT & COMPOSITION	
<u>Grade Event</u>	<u>Weighting/Composition</u>
1. Mid-Term Exam	35% (Individual based grade)
2. Team Performance- Project	25% (Team based grade)
3. Final Exam -Comprehensive	40% (Individual based grade)
Total:	<u>100%</u>

(Please note that I reserve the right to change the composition and/or weightings based on class performance **and** subject to our collective agreement and vote.)

As this is a professional competency course, grading will be competitive and rigorous. Not everyone will get an “A” and effort, although appreciated and encouraged, may not always be indicative of the final grade and or your effort. Do your best! Compete hard and fairly for the best grade that you can possibly earn. Don’t worry about the other students...concentrate on your own learning and contributions to the class.

8.2 General Grading Standards & Criteria

8.2.1 General

Do the work! You are here to learn and gain the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful in business...do the work to get better! Marshall degree candidates are expected to perform at the highest levels. I take grading and your grade seriously! Your work will be evaluated based on the objectives of MOR 462 and the criteria described herein. As a general guideline, when assessing and grading your work and contributions, I use a number of criteria and dimensions. As a guideline, below please some examples including, but not limited to:

1. **Causality** – Have you demonstrated a correlation between the data, analysis and conclusion/comments?
2. **Perspective** – Did you establish a context & did you provide perspective for your finding, thought or conclusion...does that context reflect contemplative thinking and does it ‘paint a picture’ (going above & beyond the obvious correct answer)?
3. **Application** – Have you applied the appropriate course materials and concepts correctly and have you demonstrated linkage to the course materials?
4. **Relevance** -- Does your work or comment bear on the subject at hand? (Comments that do not link up with what the discussion is focusing on can actually detract from the learning experience.)
5. **Associative Thinking/Linkage** – To what extent are your work and comments logical antecedents or consequences of a particular argument traced out? To what extent are you successfully linking other concepts, readings, events, and precedent and reflect the “*Medici Effect*” in your thinking.
6. **Responsiveness** – To what extent does your work or comment react in an important way to what someone else has said, the issue or problem at hand, or scope and objectives of the assignment or project?
7. **Analysis** – Have you employed the proper set of frameworks and analytical methods?
8. **Evidence** - Have you effectively used data from the case, from personal experience, from citable third-parties, from general knowledge to support the assertions made and or conclusions?
9. **Importance** - Does your work or comment contribute further to our understanding of the issues at hand? Is a connection made with other cases we have analyzed?

10. **Critical Thinking** – Are you thinking critically? Are you interrogating issues and facts? Does your thinking reflect the attributes of USC's 5-step USC-CT? Have you applied and demonstrated USC-CT in your analysis and formulations? (See posting on BB).
11. **Engaged** – Did you come to class ON TIME and did you CONTRIBUTE?
12. **Compliance** – Is your work responsive to the requirements and scope and objectives of the assignment?

I will do its best to make my expectations for the various assignments clear and to evaluate them as fairly and objectively as they can. Also, I usually publish grading criteria and expectations for exams, presentations and reports ahead of time to help you better prepare.

If you feel that an error has occurred in the grading of any assignment, you may, within one week of the date the assignment is returned to you, write a memo to me and request an explanation and re-evaluation of the assignment. Attach the original assignment to the memo and explain fully and carefully why you think the assignment should be re-graded. Be advised that as in business and life, the re-evaluation process can result in three types of grade adjustments: positive, none, or negative.

8.2.2 Team/Peer Evaluations

Each of you will have the opportunity to complete a peer evaluation of the members of your team with respect to the team final project. A copy of the peer evaluation form will be posted on BB. Please note:

- If you are experiencing any group-related problem (e.g. conflict, free-rider, known-it-all, confrontational or demeaning behavior, etc.), please let me know immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester. If you report this problem too late, there is not much I can do.
- If you experiencing any academic problems or personal issues (e.g. illness, injury, hardships, conflicts, etc.) that might influence your academic performance, please let me know immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester. If you report this problem too late, there is not much I can do.

8.2.3 Examination Design & Procedures

I view exams as positive experiences for both the student and professor. My exams are designed to allow you to express and demonstrate your mastery of the subject material. As with all of my exams, each exam is crafted by me, is intended to be pragmatic, and is designed to test the most important subject concepts and topics. The exams are intended to allow to showcase your knowledge, and provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate how you use, adapt, and apply important course concepts and topics to a series of questions, situations, and management decisions and choices. Generally, my exams are organized into three, or four sections:

- (1) Course Concepts & Theory,
- (2) Cases & Readings,
- (3) Applied Reasoning & Critical Thinking,
- (4) Essay or Short Answer.

Important! I do not grade by name. You are to use only the last four digits of your USC ID on your exam paper. This helps maintain the confidentiality and privacy of each student.

8.2.4 Final Examination: A Summation of Your Learning Experience

There will be a final exam for this class. The final examination for this course will be conducted on the date, at the time and in the location **as scheduled** by USC. I do not schedule final exams. No exceptions shall be granted unless previously approved, in writing, by the appropriate USC academic unit. You are completely responsible for attending the final examination on the date published by USC...please do not ask me for any special consideration unless you specifically satisfy the conditions described below for: scheduling conflicts, religious observance conflicts and documented emergencies. The following is USC's stated policy for final examinations.

"All undergraduate and graduate courses scheduled in the standard sessions of the fall and spring semesters have a published final examination schedule. In accordance with the policies of the United States Department of Education, the last scheduled day of class is required instructional time. Either a final examination or other final summative experience must take place during the published final examination period."

Final examinations or other final summative experiences may not be scheduled during the Study Days period.

No deviations from the published examination period are permitted for courses scheduled in a standard session during the fall and spring semesters, unless faculty have authorization in advance from the Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP). CAPP will not consider any faculty request for rescheduling a final examination without unanimous written consent of all students in the class. Contact the Registrar's Office (213-740-4623 or registrar@usc.edu) for the request form and procedures.

USC's final exam schedule and policy can be viewed at:

<http://classes.usc.edu/term-20173/finals/>

8.2.5 Student Scheduling Conflicts

No student is permitted to omit or anticipate a final examination and no instructor is authorized to permit a student to do so.

Students should plan in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts in their final examinations. If a student is scheduled for two final examinations at the same time, the student should request to take one of the examinations on a different day or time. If a student is scheduled for more than two final examinations in one day, the student may request to take one of the exams on a different day or time. In either situation, the student must contact the professors involved no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled examination date and request an accommodation. If an accommodation cannot be arranged, the student should contact the USC Testing Services (213-740-7166 or testing@usc.edu) for assistance.

Faculty are reminded that grades are due 96 hours after the University-scheduled final examination day and time. Therefore, it might not be possible to accommodate late student requests for an alternate, makeup final examination after the published examination period.

8.2.6 Religious Observance Conflicts

When a final examination is scheduled at a time that conflicts with a student's observance of a holy day, faculty members should accommodate a request for an alternate examination date and time. A

student must discuss a final examination conflict with the professor no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled examination date to arrange an acceptable alternate examination date and time. The student and/or professor may reach out to the Office of Religious Life (213-740-6110 or vasoni@usc.edu, Dean of Religious Life) for guidance.

8.2.7 Documented Emergency

In the case of a documented emergency that occurs after the withdrawal date and/or during the final exam period, students should consult the professor about receiving a grade of Incomplete (IN) for the semester. Faculty and students alike should refer to the rules regarding the mark of Incomplete at the time of the request. The **Registrar's recommended definition of emergency**: "An unforeseeable situation or event beyond the student's control that prevents her from taking the final examination or final summative experience." Based on this definition, a student may not request an IN before the withdrawal deadline. The rationale is that the student has the option to drop the course until the withdrawal date. The grade of IN exists so there is a remedy for illness or emergency which occurs after the deadline to withdraw.

9.0 CLIENT CONSULTING PROJECT

In this course, you will be performing a consulting project for an actual client. Below, for example purposes only, is the basic intent, design, and requirements of the exercise. Each project and client is different, but the design, grading, and difficulty of the projects will be consistent across the course.

Objective of Project

The objective of the project is to provide you with exposure and involvement in a real-time management consulting project with real clients and using real client data. The project is designed as a "Bullet Engagement" in that is purposefully organized to be short in duration with low to modest complexity. Fast, short and tightly scoped and managed.

Process: Apply Consulting Techniques

The emphasis of this approach stresses technique and the *application* of what we are learning in class, rather than just solving a problem for the client and burying you another project. However, I do expect the critical thinking, analysis, application of tools, and insights of a top MBA/MPA class.

Generally, clients will supply data as a jumping off point for your work. Feel free to use other data sources as well and, as is common in consulting, your best professional judgment in using the data and/or extrapolating data.

In this exercise, I would like you to use the 3-Part Consulting Model, demonstrate a basic understanding of proposal writing, apply basic project management techniques and measurement methods, demonstrate differentiating critical thinking, and craft and present a final report to the client.

You have significant discretion and latitude as to how to apply the course concepts and content to the project, but please be sure to demonstrate application of what we are learning and really strive to demonstrate the creativity and professionalism of an Elite 8 management consultant.

Set the Key Dates

Start:	TBD
End:	TBD
Checkpoint 1:	TBD
Final Deliverable:	TBD

All key dates are “in class” during regular class hours. The client will attend a final presentation (date to be determined).

Teams and Scope of Work

You will be working with multiple teams in multiple domains on one or more projects (each project and semester are different). The domains include: (1) Industry & Market Analysis, (2) Business Modeling, (3) Competitive Analysis, (4) Comparative Analysis, (5) Organizational Analysis, (6) Operational Analysis, (7) General Performance Analysis, and (8) Financial Modeling. Each team can select one project. Teams are NOT competing against one another; however, the project is 25% of your final grade.

What’s Required and What’s Graded

This assignment is designed to expose and move you and your team through the key concepts, and ultimately, the basic competencies of management consulting, as discussed in the class. Applying the course concepts and content will involve the performance, completion and production of the following activities/tasks/deliverables:

- | | | |
|------------|--|-----------------|
| 1.0 | Statement of Work (proposal)
Understanding the Project
Description of Project
Description of Scope of Work to be Performed
Work Plan in Excel showing Tasks
Critical Questions to be Addressed
Deliverable(s) | Due: TBD |
| 2.0 | Performance of Work
Initiating the Engagement
Working with the Client
Working as a Team
Meeting Time Commitments & Deadlines
Performing the Engagement
Managing the Engagement & Team
Periodic Project Status Reports
Project Team Self Evaluation/Assessment | Due: TBD |
| 3.0 | Developing Deliverables
Outline of Final Deliverable
Executive Summary
Final Deliverable in PPT form
Presentation of Final Deliverable to Client | Due: TBD |

10.0 ASSIGNMENTS

10.1 General

The assignments for this class may involve a combination of readings, cases, videos, ELC exercises, simulations and a team project.

- **For readings and cases:** please see **Section 3.0, “Course Calendar”** for a description of class session topics, reading assignments and other information (Excel spreadsheet).
- **Team Performance:** Please organize yourselves into teams of 5 - 7 students. This will be your “learning team” for the entire semester, so select wisely and carefully. The team performance component is **25%** of your final grade and will include peer reviews. You may regard your team performance and each of your submissions as an “exam” in which you apply what you’ve learned according to the assignment.

10.1 Assignment Submission Policy

Be professional. Assignments must be turned in on the due date/time. Specifically:

- All formal assignments are due as specified and must be submitted in **HARD COPY** form ONLY. Due to the number of students, I cannot accept electronic copies unless prior approved (way too much downloading and printing, so help me out!).
- For all assignments please make sure that you specify your course number and DAY and TIME of course...that’s really helpful to me!
- Any assignment turned in late *may* be subject to an automatic grade deduction (for example, if your work is a B+ grade, you will be given a C+ grade).
- If you are unable to attend class on that day, make arrangements for your assignment to be delivered to the classroom or to my mailbox in the MOR Dept. at **400 Hoffman Hall** by the start of class. You may also slide your work under my door at **415 Hoffman Hall** or fax your work to me at 213.740.3582 (To Professor Mische). Late or not, you must complete all required assignments or your grade will suffer.

11.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

11.1 Retention of Graded Coursework

Final exams and all other graded work, which affected the course grade, will be retained for one year after the end of the course *if* the graded work has not been returned to the student (i.e., if I returned a graded paper to you, it is your responsibility to retain it).

11.2 Technology Policy and In-class Use of Laptops and Other Devices

Laptops, cell phones, and iPads are **not** to be used during lectures.

11.3 Internet, Cell Phones, Tablets, Etc.

Internet usage is not permitted during academic or professional sessions unless otherwise stated. Use of other personal communication devices, such as cell phones, is considered unprofessional and is not permitted during academic or professional sessions. ANY e-devices (cell phones, PDAs, I-Phones, Blackberries, other texting devices, laptops, I-pods) must be completely turned off during class time.

- If you are texting I will politely ask you to stop; thereafter I will ask you to leave.

- During all quizzes, tests, and examinations, you must place your devices away and out of sight and in the 'off' mode. During the exam, any use of cell phones or other device without my express consent is subject to dismissal from the exam.
- Videotaping my lectures is not permitted due to copyright infringement regulations.
- Audiotaping my lectures is not permitted unless prior approved by me. Use of any recorded or distributed material is reserved exclusively for the USC students registered in this class.
- No student may record, tape, transmit, or video any lecture, class discussion, or meeting with me without my prior express written permission. The word "record" or the act of recording includes, but is not limited to, any and all means by which sound or visual images can be stored, duplicated or retransmitted whether by an electro-mechanical, analog, digital, wire, electronic or other device or any other means of signal encoding.
- I reserve all rights, including copyright, to my course syllabi, lectures, Power Points, exams, answer keys, and all supplementary course materials available to the students enrolled in my class whether posted on Blackboard or otherwise. They may not be reproduced, distributed, copied, or disseminated in any media or in any form, including but not limited to all course note-sharing websites.

11.4 Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to your TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. For more information visit www.usc.edu/disability.

11.5 Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment and the highest academic standards. **I will not tolerate cheating of any kind.** Any cheating will result in the automatic disqual from my class and a referral to USC's the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for immediate consideration. Any allegation of cheating will be referred to the USC's the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A of that document.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Failure to adhere to the academic conduct standards set forth by these guidelines and our programs will not be tolerated by the USC Marshall community and can lead to dismissal.

11.6 Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard (BB), teleconferencing, and other technologies. Please activate your course in Blackboard with access to the course syllabus. Whether or not you use Blackboard regularly, these preparations will be crucial in an emergency. USC's Blackboard learning management system and support information is available at blackboard.usc.edu.

11.7 Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

11.7.1 Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

11.7.2 Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by USC

Any form of discrimination, harassment, profiling, bullying, etc. will not be tolerated by me, or any other member of the USC community. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/departement-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>.

This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

11.7.3 Support Systems

Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs www.usc.edu/disability provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

11.7.4 Disruptive Classroom Behavior

I will not tolerate disruptive or abusive behavior in my classroom. Fortunately, I have never had any instance of disruptive or abusive behavior. Disruptive classroom behavior can take many forms. It can involve a student talking constantly while the professor is delivering a lecture or a student who loudly and regularly interrupts the flow of class with questions or interjections. Such

behavior is unacceptable to the University and will not be tolerated because it interferes with the learning process for other students and hinders the professor's ability to teach effectively. Further information can be found at

http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/pages/faculty/disruptive_behavior.html

12.0 COURSE CALENDAR & ASSIGNMENTS BY CLASS SESSION

MOR 462 COURSE CALENDAR, TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS & READINGS ARE POSTED SEPARATELY AS AN EXCEL FILE ON BLACKBOARD UNDER:

"SYLLABUS > WEEKLY READINGS"

THANK YOU!

FIGHT ON!