USC Iovine and Young Academy

Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation

ACAD-360: Design Consulting: Problem Solving for Organizations

Units: 4
Day-Time: Tu/Th 10-11:50am
Location: SKS 404
Instructor: Steve Barth

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Catalogue Description

This course takes a professional, collaborative and multidisciplinary consulting approach to diagnosing problems and applying design-based solutions on behalf of organizations.

Course Description

This course takes a professional, collaborative and multidisciplinary consulting approach to diagnosing problems and applying design-based solutions on behalf of organizations. The course draws on student knowledge and skills garnered from previous Academy coursework in design, technology and business, and references additional perspectives from psychology, anthropology, sociology, public policy, complexity science, and other areas. For this experience, Academy methods and frameworks are synthesized toward preparing students to analyze multiple facets of an organization (for-profit and not-for-profit), and designing solutions for maximum positive impact.

Learning Objectives

Students will demonstrate, through a series of assignments and projects, requisite knowledge to:

- Establish and maintain productive working relationships with real-world clients, partners or other stakeholders
- Write proposals, agreements and statements of work for any kind of engagement and deliverables
- Lead or collaborate in high-performance teams and organizations
- Use primary and secondary research and analysis methods in UX, marketing, etc.
- Bring multiple diagnostic and creative problem-solving tools to bear in ambiguous situations
- Develop comprehensive business and implementation plans to execute the chose strategy or solution.
- Articulate insights, conclusions and recommendations with compelling rational and emotional arguments.

In addition, you will exercise the following skills:

- Critical thinking: Develop the awareness to identify problems and opportunities, create hypotheses, gather data through primary and secondary research sources, and draw conclusions in environments of high uncertainty

- Collaboration: Share ideas and form group work products in impromptu and organized team environments without formal structure
- Effective Communication: Create and deliver concise, compelling oral, written and visual presentations; convey the essence of the critical thinking process and defend conclusions rationally
- Quantitative business analysis: Leverage metrics and models to understand markets, choose among potential outcomes and make better decisions.

Prerequisite(s)

ACAD 181 and 182 or permission from instructor. Please notify Amber Bradley (aebradle@usc.edu) if you are interested in enrolling in the course.

Course Notes

Almost any problem worth solving (whether a problem or opportunity) involved multiple perspectives and stakeholders. Such problems are often so complex they are referred to as "wicked." This is not a course about working for a consulting firm, but the approach works because these problems involve more stakeholders that anyone has direct authority over. In the words of Peter Block, "a consultant [has] influence over an individual, a group, or an organization, but no direct power to make changes or implement programs."

Every aspect of this course is designed to teach students to bring their talents, education and experience to bear in the service of others. As such, the primarily focus of ACAD-360 is on hands-on collaboration within cross-functional teams and in professional interactions with clients and stakeholders.

In our exercises and projects, this course uses books, cases, articles and online material, plus videos and other media content to develop broadly defined consulting skills and problem-solving methodologies. We will often use current new journalistic, academic or professional publications as they appear. I will occasionally assign you to research your own sources of information. Our reading material is subject to change as class discussions evolve. Please suggest additional resources for discussion whenever you find something valuable. Since using the work of others *with* attribution is encouraged, there is no justification for using the work of others without credit. Plagiarism will have serious consequences (see below). Be discriminating, too, about which sources are *credible* for the ideas or information you use.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

NA

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All students will read the following books (purchase digitally or in paperback)
- Peter Block. *Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used*. 3rd Edition. Pfeiffer 2011
- Ethan M. Rasiel. *The McKinsey Way*. McGraw-Hill Education. 1999

Short readings as assigned (see reading list) will be available on Blackboard, through the USC library system or purchased through an online course pack.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Most assignments in class are delivered (or uploaded to BB) in workplace formats (slides, memos) and linked together to support each project. As such, professionalism and attribution count in my feedback and grading. The basis for most evaluations is ultimately whether a student meets, misses or exceeds the expectations set when the assignment is given. As much as possible, deliverables will be shared and discussed in class and can be revised pending feedback. Every student owes constructive feedback to her or his colleagues.

Grading Breakdown

Earning an A or A- in this class means that you went well beyond the minimum requirements for assignments, participation, etc. To exceed my expectations is, by definition, *to surprise me*. That's what successful innovators and entrepreneurs do when they delight customers and disrupt market. There is no hard curve for this course.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Self-Awareness Essay	10	10%
Project 1	5	5%
Project 2	15	15%
Project 3	15	15%
Project 4 (final)	20	20%
Reflection Essay	10	10%
Peer Evaluations (4)	10	10%
Participation	15	15%
TOTAL	100	100%

Grading Scale (Example)
Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A 95-100
A- 90-94
B+ 87-89
B 83-86
B- 80-82
C+ 77-79
C 73-76
C- 70-72
D+ 67-69
D 63-66
D- 60-62
F 59 or below

Assignment Rubrics
Assignment rubrics will prioritize the quality of your research and analysis, the uniqueness of your solutions, the credibility of your recommendations, the thoroughness of your plans, and the depth of your engagement with teammates and clients.

Assignment Submission Policy
Details about how/when assignments are to be submitted are specific to each assignmen.s

Grading Timeline
Feedback and grades will be given in a timely manner depending on type of assignment or exam.

Additional Policies
This course builds value through conversation, collaboration and iterative projects. However, the secret of team efforts is that they require *more* individual responsibility—not less. Both the university and your colleagues will expect you to dedicate considerable time outside of class on individual assignments and shared deliverables. For each unit of in-class contact time, the university expects two hours of out-of-class student work per week over a semester.
The science is clear that connected devices diminish personal learning and distract others in the learning environment. Leave laptops, tablets or phones alone unless we are actively accessing information as part of class activities.

Attendance and Class Participation
You need to be in class, on time, and ready to participate every day. Because of the importance of talking about and applying the concepts, attendance and participation in each class is the only method of fully understanding these specialized topics. Attendance will be noted and count toward your final participation grade. After two unexcused absences, your final class grade may be lowered by 5% for each additional unexcused absence.

Communication and Online Materials

It is your responsibility to check our Blackboard site and your USC email account. Any emails I send to the class will use the USC email account attached to your registration. All course materials, including slides, additional reading, handouts and assignments, as well as class grades will be available in Blackboard (https://blackboard.usc.edu). Be sure to check Blackboard if you must miss a class. You are responsible for any materials presented and assignments made even if you are not in class that day.

File formats

Unless I specify otherwise, all assignments are to be submitted via Blackboard in PDF or Microsoft Office formats. It's your responsibility to make sure assignments open as intended on my computers. I often leave style and formatting up to you (fonts, layout, etc.), but make sure you work is labeled and professional. Documents exceeding 1 page or slide in length must have footers containing page numbers and the file name on all pages. Files should be labeled as follows: Yourlastname_assignmentname (i.e. Adams_Self-assessment). Team submissions should be labeled by the team number – i.e., Team5_Assignment.

Course Schedule: Weekly Breakdown (Subject to Change)

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Preparation	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1	Course Unboxing: The Consulting Mindset Our Wicked World (Intro to Complexity/VUCA)	Why Management Consultants; Hypothesis-Driven Thinking; Flawless chapters 1-3	Complete personality instrument;
Week 2	Building strong teams and stakeholder relationships	Making Star Teams from Star Players; Speeding Up Team Learning; Flawless 4-6	Form Teams
Week 3	Project 1 Launch; Coming to terms with a client; Defining a problem and the project scope	Wicked Problem Solvers; Teaching Smart People How to Learn; 3-D Chess; Flawless 7-9	Project 1 SOW; Self-Evaluation Essays
Week 4	Brainstorming, data-gathering and analysis methods	Living in the Futures; Flawless 10-12	Project 1 Research/Analysis
Week 5	Brainstorming, data-gathering and analysis methods	Deming to DevOps; Flawless 13-15	Project 1 Recommendations/Presentations
Week 6	Building from methods to methodologies Project 2 Launch;	Leader's Framework for Decision-Making; Flawless 16-19	Project 2 SOW; Peer Evals 1
Week 7	Design thinking frameworks for problem solving and business approaches to consulting	Flawless 20; Concepts in Complexity from a Study of Architecture; Attractive Things Work Better; Clumsy Solutions for Wicked Problems	Project 2 Research/Analysis
Week 8	Business frameworks for problem solving and business approaches to consulting	Deming to DevOps; McKinsey 1-3	Project 2 Recommendations/Presentations
Week 9	Project 3 Launch; Consulting Ethics	Ethics: A Basic Framework; McKinsey 4-5	Project 3 SOW; Peer Evals 2
Week 10	Working in context: organizational cultures	Manager as Anthropologist; Anthropology of Knowledge; McKinsey 6-8	Project 3 Research/Analysis
Week 11	Working in context: organization designs	Social Brain Hypothesis; How Institutions Think; Cult of Three Cultures; Dismantling the Divide;	Project 3 Recommendations/Presentations
Week 12	Project 4 Launch; Presentation and persuasion	Think Your Way to Clear Writing; Visualizations That Really Work; Science of Persuasion	Project 4 SOW; Peer Evals 3
Week 13	Complexity, VUCA and Wicked Problems	New Dynamics of Strategy; Strength of Weak Ties;	Project 4 Research/Analysis
Week 14	Complexity, VUCA and Wicked Problems	Wicked Problems and Social Complexity; Mythical Man-Month;	Project 4 Recommendations/Draft Presentations
Week 15	Course review		Reflection Essays; Peer Evals #4
FINAL	Delivery and discussion of Project 4		Date: *For the date/time of the final, see USC Schedule of Classes at www.usc.edu/soc.*

Detailed Reading List

Books (numbers in weekly schedule indicate chapters)
- Block, Peter. *Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used*. Third Edition. Pfeiffer 2011
  - 1 A Consultant by Any Other Name
  - 2 Techniques Are Not Enough
  - 3 Flawless Consulting
  - 4 Contracting Overview
  - 5 The Contracting Meeting
  - 6 The Agonies of Contracting
  - 7 The Internal Consultant
  - 8 Understanding Resistance
  - 9 Dealing with Resistance
  - 10 From Diagnosis to Discovery
  - 11 Whole-System Discovery
  - 12 Discovering Gifts, Capacities, and Possibilities
  - 13 Get the Picture
  - 14 Preparing for Feedback
  - 15 Managing the Meeting for Action
  - 16 Implementation
  - 17 The Elements of Engagement
  - 18 Teacher as Consultant
  - 19 The Heart of the Matter

- Rasiel, Ethan M. and Friga, Paul N. *The McKinsey Mind.* McGraw-Hill. 2002
  1. Framing the Problem
  2. Designing the Analysis
  3. Gathering the Data
  4. Interpreting the Results
  5. Presenting Your Ideas
  6. Managing Your Team
  7. Managing Your Client
  8. Managing Yourself

Articles, Etc. (Required readings—shown in schedule—plus optional readings)
1. Agrawal, Arun. "Dismantling the Divide Between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge." *Development and Change* 26.3 (1995): 413–439. Web.
2. Argyris, Chris "Teaching Smart People How to Learn." *Harvard Business Review*. May-June 1991
3. Alexander, Christopher. "New Concepts in Complexity Theory Arising from the Study of Architecture." 2003. Web.
4. Antonacopoulou, E., and R. Chiva. "The Social Complexity of Organizational Learning: The Dynamics of Learning and Organizing." *Management Learning* 38.3 (2007): 277–295. Web.
5. Barth, Fredrik. "An Anthropology of Knowledge." *Current Anthropology* 43.1 (2002): 1–18. Web.
6. Barth, Steve. "3-D Chess: Boosting Team Productivity through Emotional Intelligence." *"3-D chess: Boosting Team Productivity Through Emotional Intelligence" in Teams that Click (Results-Driven Manager Series). Harvard Business School Press. 2004*
7. Barth, Steve. "Digital Designs: A Look at the Role of Real Typographic Design in Effective Content Delivery." *eContent* 2008. Web.
8. Barth, Steve. "The Legacy of W. Edwards Deming." *Asia Pacific Economic Review* (1994): Print.
9. Berger, Warren. "Peter Drucker: The Consultant as 'Master Questioner.'" *A More Beautiful Question*. N.p., 2005. Web. 12 Nov. 2016.
10. Berinato, Scott. "Visualizations That Really Work." *Harvard Business Review* 94.6 (2016): 92–100. Web.

11. Bhatt, Ganesh D. "Management Strategies for Individual Knowledge and Organizational Knowledge." *Journal of Knowledge Management* 6.1 (2002): Web.

12. Boisot, Max, and Bill McKelvey. "Integrating Modernist and Postmodernist Perspectives on Organizations: A Complexity Science Bridge." *Academy of Management Review* 35.3 (2010): 415–433. Web. 16 Aug. 2010.

13. Boisot, Max. "Moving to the Edge of Chaos: Bureaucracy, IT and the Challenge of Complexity." *Journal of Information Technology* 21.4 (2006): 239–248. Web.

14. Boisot, Max. *Information and Organizations: The Manager as Anthropologist*. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd, 1987. Web.

15. Brooks, Frederick. "The Mythical Man-Month." Addison-Wesley (1975/1995): 17-29.

16. Buchanan, Leigh, and Andrew O'Connell. "A Brief History of Decision Making." *Harvard business review* 84.1 (2006): 32–41, 132. Web.

17. Cialdini, Robert B. "Harnessing the Science of Persuasion. (Cover Story)." *Harvard Business Review* 79.9 (2001): 72–79. Web.

18. Clayton M., Dina Wang, and Derek van Bever. "Consulting on the Cusp of Disruption." *Harvard Business Review.* 91.10 (2013): 106–114. Print.

19. Cohen, William A. *Peter Drucker on Consulting: Drucker's Principles for Business Success*. LID Publishing, 2016. Print.

20. Conklin, Jeff. "Wicked Problems and Social Complexity." *Dialogue Mapping: Defragmenting Projects through Shared Understanding*. Wiley, 2005. Web.

21. De Geus, A.P. "Planning as Learning." *Harvard Business Review* 66.2 (1988): 70–74. Web.

22. Douglas, Mary. *How Institutions Think*. Syracuse University Press. 1986.

23. Drucker, Peter F. "Why Management Consultants." *The Science of Evolving Management* (1979): 1–4. Web.

24. Dunbar, Robin I. M. "The Social Brain Hypothesis." *Evolutionary Anthropology: Issues, News, and Reviews* 6.5 (1998): 178–190. Web.

25. Edmondson, Amy C. "Wicked Problem Solvers: Lessons from Successful Cross-Industry Teams." *Harvard Business Review* 94.6 (2016): 52–59. Web.

26. Edmondson, Amy C., Richard M. Bohmer, and Gary Pisano. "Speeding Up Team Learning." *Harvard Business Review* 79.9 (2001): 125–132. Web.

27. Granovetter, Mark. "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited." *Sociological Theory* 1 (1983): 201. Web.

28. Juarrero, Alicia. "Complex System Identity: The Challenge to Resilience." *Identity* 1–5. Print.

29. Klein, Gary. *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. MIT Press, 1998. Web.

30. Kleiner, Art. "The Cult of Three Cultures: The sum of operational, executive, and engineering cultures is greater than the corporate whole." strategy+business. July 1, 2001.

31. Kotter, John P. "Accelerate." *Harvard business review* November (2012): Print.

32. Kurtz, C.F., and D.J. Snowden. "The New Dynamics of Strategy: Sense-Making in a Complex and Complicated World." *IEEE Engineering Management Review* 31.4 (2003): 110–110. Web.

33. Liedka, Jeanne. "Using Hypothesis-Driven Thinking in Strategy Consulting." *Darden Business Publishing, University of Virginia* 2006: 1–9. Web.

34. Luecke, Richard. "Virtual Team-A Collaborative Challenge" in *Creating Teams with an Edge*. Harvard Business School Press, 2006. Print.

35. Macaulay, Catriona, David Benyon, and Alison Crerar. "Ethnography, Theory and Systems Design: From Intuition to Insight." *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* 53.1 (2000): 35–60. Web.

36. Majchrzak, Ann, and Arvind Malhotra. "Can Absence Make a Team Grow Stronger?" *Harvard Business Review* (2004): Print.

37. Mankins, Michael, Alan Bird, and James Root. "Making Star Teams out of Star Players." *Harvard business review* 91.1–2 (2013): Print.

38. Minto, Barbara. "Think Your Way to Clear Writing." *Journal of Management Consulting* 10.1 (1998): 33–40. Print.

39. Nardi, Bonnie, Steve Whittaker, and Heinrich Schwarz. "It's Not What You Know, It's Who You Know: Work in the Information Age." *First Monday* 5.5 (2000): Web.

40. Ney, Steven, and Marco Verweij. "The Upside of Messiness: Clumsy Solutions for a Wicked Problems." *Rotman Magazine* June (2015): 32–38. Print.

41. Norman, Donald A. "Emotion and Design: Attractive Things Work Better." *Interactions* 9.4 (2002): 36–42. Web.

42. Paine, Lynn Sharp. "Ethics: A Basic Framework (Background Note)." Harvard Business School Press. 2006.

43. Phelan, Steven. "A Note on the Correspondence between Complexity and Systems Theory." *Systemic Practice and Action Research* 12.3 (1999): Web.

44. Phelan, Steven. "What Is Complexity Science, Really?" *Emergence* 3.1 (2001): 120–136. Web.

45. Putnam, R. "Unlocking Organizational Routines That Prevent Learning." *The Systems Thinker* 4.6 (1993): 7–10. Web.

46. Rock, David. "Managing with the Brain in Mind." *strategy + business* 2009. Web.

47. Snowden, David J, and Mary E Boone. "A Leader's Framework for Decision Making." *Harvard Business Review* (2007): Web.

48. Turner, Arthur N. "Consulting Is More than Giving Advice." *Harvard Business Review* (1982): Print.

49. Von Ghyczy, Tihamer. "The Fruitful Flaws of Strategy Metaphors." *Harvard Business Review* 81.9 (2003): 86. Print.

50. Wilkinson, A., & Kupers, R. "Living in the Futures." Harvard Business Review, 91(5) (2013): 119-127

51. Willis, John. "Deming to DevOps" 2013. Web http://itrevolution.com/deming-to-devops-part-1/

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b. 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.

Discrimination, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office* http://equity.usc.edu and/or to the *Department of Public Safety* http://dps.usc.edu. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage http://sarc.usc.edu fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp provides 24/7 confidential support.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* http://ali.usc.edu, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://dsp.usc.edu 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.