

USC Marshall School of Business
MOR 499-16688

Case Analysis for Consultants: A Critical Thinking Approach

Monday and Wednesday

12:30-1:50 pm

August 23 to October 11, 2022

Room: BRI 8

Instructor: Michael A. Mische, MBA, MS, CAI
Virtual Office: Zoom Meeting ID: 977 9082 4605
Physical Office: Hoffman Hall, 415
Office Hours: Posted on BB under “Syllabus” and announced in class.
Office Phone: 213.740.0728
Mobile Phone: Provided in class
Email: mische@marshall.usc.edu (USE THIS EMAIL!)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

MOR 499 is designed to elevate and advance your learning of and performance on case analysis. The course has been specifically developed to elevate your case analysis skills and to help you more effectively read, triage, diagnose, analyze and formulate solutions to various types of cases, including, written and verbal cases and cases assigned as homework, in-class and job interviews. MOR 499 is intended to position the student with advanced perspective, skills, knowledge and tools necessary to successfully navigate the complexities of written and verbal case assignments and the rigors and pressures of live, in-person, case interviews. Central to the course is the emphasis on critical thinking and reasoning as applied to case analysis and interviewing and the use of the *CasePro Case Analysis Process (CPCA)*, which provides a uniform construct for diagnosing, analyzing and developing solutions that are viable, plausible, Responsive, Supportable, Viable and Plausible (RSVP).

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

MOR 499 has been engineered to incorporate three distinct learning components: practitioner-driven methods, researched and established critical thinking and reasoning methods, and case analysis process, to provide the student with exceptional knowledge, insight and the cognitive and critical thinking skills necessary to perform case analysis and case interviews as a professional management consultant.

At the completion of the course students will be able to:

MOR 499 - COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES
1. Perform Problem Diagnosis Using the 16 Domains of Interest and Case Triaging Techniques.
2. Recognize, Diagnose and Define the Problem, Issues, Context and Type of Case and Case Problem(s).
3. Apply FITS Methods to Formulate and Articulate Critical Questions Related to the Case, its Context, Problems and Type.
4. Formulate and Articulate the Hypotheses Necessary to Address Case Critical Issues, Context, Issues and Assignment.
5. Identify, Define and Classify (Label) the Type and Quantity of Data Required to Respond to Critical Questions and Case Assignment Requirements.
6. Locate, Acquire, Compare, Test and Validate Required Data.
7. Evaluate, Discriminate & Relate Models and Frameworks to Perform Formal Analysis
8. Perform, Test, Compare and Validate Analytical Results.
9. Create, Organize and Formulate Viable, Responsive, Plausible and Supportable.
10. Communicate, Explain & Demonstrate Verbally or Narratively the Case Analysis, Findings, Conclusions and Solutions.

REQUIRED TEXT & COURSE READER

The following materials are required for this class:

- **Primary Textbook:** Mische, Michael A. *CasePro: The Consultant's Critical Thinking Approach to Case Analysis*. Cognella Publishing. San Diego. (2021).
Available for purchase at URL: <https://store.cognella.com/83137-1A-013>
 - (Note, when ordering disregard course number...just use this url)
- **Posted on BB or available via video:**
 1. CR- How to Write an Executive Summary (Mische) (This is on BB under "Contents.")
 2. McKinsey MECE Method (Video available at- <https://www.caseinterview.com/mece>)

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Grading

Grading for this course is Pass or No Pass. A "Pass" grade is reflective of your individual in the various grading components for this class. Below are the grading components for the class.

Grading Components

This course has **three** grading components:

- (1) Attendance,
- (2) Engagement, and
- (3) Case Project Assignments and ELC Exercises.

All course grading components are required of each enrolled student in order to receive a "Pass" grade.

Please see the Course Calendar provided herein, which is also posted on BB under "Syllabus," for all weekly assignments, readings, and the planned due dates for ELC exercises.

ELC SESSIONS- PERSONAL COACHING SESSIONS WITH An MBA

A unique and exciting aspect of this course is its intensive use of USC's ELC. The course provides for 3-5 ELC sessions in which you will be provided a case, time to analyze the case and the opportunity to present the case as a case interview. The sessions can be videotaped for your use and analysis. The ELC sessions are presided over by your professor, but the actual case interviews are performed by second-year MBA students. Each student is paired with an MBA. The MBA students function as your personal coach and mentor and provide feedback and coaching tips intended to help enhance your case analysis and case interviewing performance.

MISCHE'S COACHING TIPS- PREPARING FOR CLASS & PERFORMING IN CLASS

Preparing for class is essential to performing in class. Below are some coaching tips to help you prepare for class and performing in class:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Est. Time Commitment</u>
(1) Pre- Class:	Before class preparation	As needed, per assignment.
(2) During Class:	In-class participation	As incurred.
(3) In-class Breakouts:	Reading or Case Discussion Questions	8 to 10 minutes per breakout.
(4) In-class Discussion:	Summarize & present your discussions	5-7 min discussion by each team.

a. Pre-Class Preparation

Pre-class preparation requires your commitment and dedication to learning before class. Pre-class activities include:

1. Reviewing the course syllabus and topic for the week/class session.
2. Reviewing the assigned class discussion questions or "Class Pack" posted on BB under "Assignments > Discussion Questions."
3. Reading the assigned case and articles.
4. Creating personal notes to capture your thoughts, at a level appropriate, about the reading/case as related to the discussion questions for your use in class discussions.
5. Developing 3 questions for each reading/case and bring those to class.

b. During Class

1. Come to class, relaxed and ready to participate and contribute.
2. Quickly review the assigned class discussion questions posted on BB under "Assignments > Discussion Questions."

c. In-class Breakout

1. Upon in-class team discussion assignment, organize your team. Your discussion team number corresponds to the question that your team is assigned to discuss.
2. Discuss your assigned question. In your discussion, incorporate elements of the lecture, any related videos and readings, and apply key course concepts.
3. Generate notes sufficient to lead a discussion of your question with the full class.
4. Designate a person to lead a discussion of your question with the full class. All members may contribute.
5. Wrap-up your team meeting by developing two additional discussion questions.

d. In-class Discussion

1. Review your notes.
2. Lead discussion of your question.
3. Generate questions for follow-up classes or office hours, if necessary.
4. Have fun leading the discussion.

CLASS CONTRIBUTION & PARTICIPATION

Class engagement, contribution and participation are extremely important parts of the learning experience in this course as the richness of the learning experience will be largely dependent upon the degree of preparation by *all* students prior to each class session. My expectation and those of your classmates are that you are prepared for *all* classes and will actively participate in and meaningfully contribute to class discussions.

In-class contribution and participation are also a critical part of this course's learning experience. Cold calling may take place to encourage active participation and to gain multiple perspectives and points of view, thus lending itself to the richness of the learning experience. In-class participation grading will be based on students' demonstrated willingness to participate, and the quality of the comments expressed, rather than quantity. While some students are far more comfortable than others with class participation, *all* students should make the effort to contribute meaningfully...and I'm open to various methods.

Students will offer their opinions in group settings many times in their careers; thus, class participation serves to prepare students for this business experience.

The evaluating of in-class participation is based on the following:

- *Preparation* – Are you prepared for the class.
- *Relevance* – Does the comment or question meaningfully bear on the subject at hand? Irrelevant or inappropriate comments can detract from the learning experience.
- *Responsiveness* – Does the comment or question connect to what someone else has said?
- *Analysis* – Is the reasoning employed consistent and logical? Has data from course materials, personal experience, or general knowledge been employed to support the assertions/findings?
- *Value* – Does the contribution further the understanding of the issues at hand?
- *Clarity* – Is the comment concise and understandable?
- *Mindfulness* – Are you efficient and mindful of time that you are using with respect to other students and are not monopolizing or diverting class discussions.

During class sessions, I frequently assume the role of a facilitator to encourage a discussion that includes perspectives from a variety of viewpoints and, secondly, to help pull together prevailing analyses and recommendations. The direction and quality of a discussion is the *collective responsibility of the class*. The below Class Participation “Behavioral Anchor Rating Scale” is provided for guidance and example purposes:

Excellent Performance

- Initiates information relative to topics discussed
- Is prepared
- Accurately exhibits knowledge of assignment content
- Clarifies points that others may not understand
- Shares personal experiences or opinions related to topic
- Offers relevant / succinct input to class
- Actively participates in class exercises
- Demonstrates ability to apply, analyze, evaluate & synthesize course material.
- Demonstrates willingness to attempt to answer unpopular questions
- Builds on other students' contributions

Average Performance

- Participates in group discussions, when asked
- Demonstrates knowledge of course material
- Offers clear, concise, “good” insights on class assignments

- Offers input, but tends to reiterate the intuitive
- Attends class regularly

Unacceptable Performance

- Fails to participate even when directly asked
- Is unprepared
- Provides no input to discussions
- Does not demonstrate knowledge of the readings
- Shows up to class: does nothing
- Distracts group/class
- Monopolizes class discussions
- Asks superfluous and non-relevant questions or makes comments not relevant to topic
- Engages in or provides irrelevant discussion, comments or insights

COMMENTS & GUIDANCE ON GRADING

General Tips & Comments on Grading Standards for Case Analysis & Written Exercises

Impress me...simple. Your formal written work will be evaluated based on the course objectives and requirements, as provided for each individual assignment. As a general guideline for your use, when assessing and grading your written work and contributions, I generally use multiple criteria and dimensions including, but not limited to:

1. **Hypothesis Driven Problem Solving & Critical Thinking** – Solving complex client problems requires hypothesis driven problem-solving skills using abductive, deductive and inductive reasoning methods, as well as critical thinking:
 - a. **Diagnostics & Definition-** Have you properly and accurately diagnosed the case and its dilemmas and problems, and have you adequately and clearly described/defined the results of the diagnostic?
 - b. **Causality** – Have you demonstrated a correlation between the data, analysis and conclusion/comments and have you established causality?
 - c. **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)?
 - d. **Application** – Have you applied the appropriate course materials and concepts correctly and have you demonstrated linkage to the course materials?
 - e. **Relevance** -- Does your work or comment bear on the subject at hand? That is, are you staying within the scope of the assignment or exercise? (Comments that do not link up with what the discussion is focusing on can detract from the learning experience.)
2. **Associative Thinking/Linkage** – To what extent are your work and comments logical to or with the issue or problem at hand, or scope and objectives of the assignment or project? To what extent are you successfully linking other concepts, readings, events, and precedent and reflect the “Medici Effect” in your thinking? Are you effectively applying and/or integrating the course concepts in your problem-solving methods?
3. **Responsiveness** – To what extent is work responsive to the needs of the assignment? Does your

work align with and satisfy requirements of the issue or problem at hand, or scope and objectives of the assignment or project? Is your work responsive and compliant to the requirements, scope and objectives of the assignment? Did you follow the instructions and does your work satisfy the directions for the assignment?

4. **Analysis** – Have you employed the proper set of frameworks and analytical methods? Why did you elect to use a certain framework? To what extent have you properly used and applied key course concepts, method and frameworks and those of other disciplines in responding to the assignment or exam? Have you appropriately used or integrated concepts and methods from other courses?
5. **Data** - Have you effectively identified the data required to address your assignment? Have you used data from the case, from personal experience, from citable third-parties, from general knowledge to support the assertions made and or conclusions?
6. **Interrogative** – Have you thoroughly investigated/interrogated the issues, situations, problems and dilemmas? Have you used critical thinking and hypothesis-driven problem-solving methods in your analysis? Are your solutions supportable and responsive?

CLASSROOM POLICIES

1. **In General.** 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, Fox Business and other business news services. All students are expected to:
 - a. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and cases.
 - b. Feel free to participate and constructively always contribute to all classes.
 - c. Bring your energy.
 - d. Bring your curiosity and questions.
 - e. Participate and contribute when called upon.
2. **In the Classroom.** Class attendance and participation is important in developing a coherent view of the materials covered in the course. In-person attendance involves:
 - a. Being socially responsible and respectful.
 - b. Being present and engaged in the class and not texting or emailing during lectures.
 - c. Not using your cell phones or listening to other material or content using your ear plugs.
 - d. Avoid eating food in class.
 - e. Coming to class on time.
 - f. Acting like a responsible adult and Trojan.
 - g. Be Happy!
3. **Copyrights & Permission.** “Notes or recordings made by students based on a university class or lecture may only be made for purposes of individual or group study, or for other usual non-commercial purposes that reasonably arise from the student’s membership in the class or attendance at the university. This restriction also applies to any information distributed, disseminated or in any way displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email or otherwise on the internet, or via any other medium. Actions in violation of this policy constitute a violation of the Student Conduct Code, and may subject an individual or entity to university discipline and/or legal proceedings.”¹

COURSE NOTES, PPTs & POSTINGS

My teaching style is direct and therefore, lectures are *critical*. Announcements, key dates, shared information,

¹ <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>. See also, USC Faculty Announcement, Charles F. Zukoski, Provost & Senior Vice President Academic Affairs, August 2, 2020.

general feedback, commentary, lecture documents, notes, articles, supplemental course documents are posted on Blackboard (BB).

- a. It is your responsibility and *SOLELY* your responsibility to frequently check Blackboard (BB) for announcements, updates and materials and to also check your email for communications from me and to verify the date, time and location of assignments, exercise, ELC sessions, exams and the final exam.
- b. DO NOT rely on posting of notes or Power Point slides. Do the readings! I do not post a lot of lecture on BB as they are contained in the text book.
- c. DO NOT video tape me, record me or transmit, post or stream my likeness, lectures, exams, exercises assignments, etc., on any media, to anyone else or entity, in any way, using any technology, including but not limited to electronic or otherwise, unless you have my specific written permission. Lecture material and likeness are proprietary to me and are my intellectual and personal property.
- d. Either USC or I will post video content of the lectures for you on BB.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION, EXAMS & MAKE-UP POLICIES

General Policies

- a. **Assignment Submission Policy.** Assignments must be turned in at the posted due date/time. Any assignment turned in late may be subject to an automatic full grade deduction (for example, if your work is a B+ grade, you will be given a C+ grade).
- b. **Contribution & Participation.** For class session engagement and participation, students may submit make-up work as per the instructions in Section 9.0 herein.
- c. **ELC Sessions.** ELC sessions are scheduled far in advance and require the coordination and oversight of USC's ELC's experts and specialists. ELC sessions are unique and therefore, sessions cannot be re-scheduled and there are no make-up sessions or make-up assignments. Attendance at scheduled ELC sessions is mandatory and missing a session may adversely affect your final grade.
- d. **Retention of Graded Coursework.** Final exams and all other graded work, which affected your 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 or exam to you, it is your responsibility to retain it...no exceptions).

ACADEMIC CONDUCT & SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct

Students are expected to make themselves aware of and abide by the University community's standards of behavior as articulated in the Student Conduct Code. 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" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct at <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086

eeotix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776

osas.usc.edu

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-3340 or otfp@med.usc.edu
chan.usc.edu/otfp

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

COURSE CALENDAR & ASSIGNMENTS BY CLASS SESSION & WEEK

Note: A more user-friendly version, in Excel, is available for your use on Blackboard > “Syllabus > Course Calendar & Assignments.”

MOR 499-16688						
Case Analysis for Consultants: A Critical Thinking Approach						
TTH 12:30 to 1:50 PM						
BRI 8						
PROFESSOR MICHAEL A. MISCHE						
FALL 2022- WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS & READINGS						
UPDATED 8/29/22						
REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS & ZOOM INFO						
	Textbook:	Mische, Michael A. <i>"The Consultant's Critical Thinking Approach to Case Analysis"</i>				
	URL:	https://store.cognella.com/83137-1A-013				
	Supplemental Mat's.	See BB for supplemental materials				
AUGUST						
Class Session	DATE	DAY	TOPIC/SUBJECT	READING ASSIGNMENTS		
			MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO CASES	Textbook	Additional Info.	
1	23-Aug	T	UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS CASES			
			▪ So, What is a Business Case?			
			▪ History of Cases			
			Why Use Cases & How to Learn from Cases			
2	25-Aug	TH	▪ Understanding the Four Types of Conditions	Chps. 1 & 2		
			▪ Problem Identification & 7 Problem Variations in Cases			
			▪ Key Points to Remember!			
			MODULE 2: CRITICAL THINKING & CASE ANALYSIS			
3	30-Aug	T	CASE ANALYSIS PROCESS (CPAP)	Chapter 5		
			▪ The <i>CasePro Analysis Process (CPAC)</i>			
			▪ Time Allocation Guidelines			
			▪ The <i>CasePro Analysis Process: Complete Work Plan</i>			

SEPTEMBER					
4	1-Sep	TH	USING CRITICAL THINKING METHODS IN CASE ANALYSIS	Chapter 3	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding The Need For Critical Thinking ▪ Defining Critical Thinking in Case Analysis ▪ Thinking Critically With Discernment ▪ How to Think Critically Like A <i>CasePro</i> Summary ▪ Key Points to Remember! 		
5	6-Sep	T	HYPOTHESIS DRIVEN CASE ANALYSIS	Chapter 4	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding Problems: Diagnosis & Definition ▪ Developing a Hypothesis & Using the <i>FTTS</i> Question Formulation Process ▪ Generating a Hypothesis Statement: The <i>CasePro</i> Approach ▪ Testing the Hypothesis Statement: The <i>CasePro</i> Approach 		
6	8-Sep	TH	Resume & Cover Letter Workshop		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Bring your resume to class</i> ▪ <i>Bring your resume to cover letter to class</i> 		
7	13-Sep	T	CASE ANALYSIS CANVAS	Chapter 6	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>CasePro Analysis Canvas</i>- Components ▪ <i>CasePro Analysis Canvas</i>- Example Formats and Description 		
			MODULE 3: CASE INTERVIEWING		
8	15-Sep	TH	ELC SESSION # 1- JKP 301		See BB for info.
9	20-Sep	T	MASTERING LIVE CASE INTERVIEWS	Chapter 9	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Objectives of the Live Case Interview ▪ Understanding Different Types of Live Case Interviews ▪ The Three Essential Qualities for Live Case Interviewing ▪ Understanding the Five Performance Stress Factors of Live Case Interviewing ▪ Approach to Live Case Interviews ▪ Mastering Live Written Case Interviews ▪ Mastering Live Verbal Case Interviews ▪ Typical Questions in Management Consulting Case Interviews 		
10	22-Sep	TH	ELC SESSION # 2- JKP 301		See BB for info.
11	27-Sep	T	CASE INTERVIEW STRATEGIES & TACTICS	Chapter 8	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Objectives of the Interview ▪ Understanding the Three Types of Interview Questions ▪ Coaching Tips ▪ 150 Example Consulting Interview Questions by Type ▪ Understanding the Interview Process ▪ Three Phases of All Interviews ▪ Understanding the Five Performance Stress Factors of Live Case Interviewing ▪ Approach to Live Case Interviews ▪ Mastering Live Written Case Interviews ▪ Mastering Live Verbal Case Interviews ▪ Typical Questions in Management Consulting Case Interviews 		
12	29-Sep	TH	ELC SESSION # 3 JKP 301		See BB for info.

OCTOBER					
13	4-Oct	T	CASE PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES	Chapter 7	Exec. Sum. Mische
			▪ Overview of Presentation Techniques		
			▪ Example Presentations Templates		
			a. Using <i>CasePro Presentation Canvas</i>		
			b. Traditional Table of Contents/Outline		
			▪ Coaching Tips!		
14	6-Oct		ELC SESSION # 4- JKP 301		See BB for info.
15	11-Oct	M	Course Wrap-up & Individual Feedback		