



## OM 386.4 MBA OPERATIONS PRACTICUM— # 04040

SPRING SEMESTER 2011

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|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
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| <b>Course Web Page</b> | via Blackboard                        |

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### **Overview**

This graduate course focuses on performance excellence, whether it is in an entrepreneurial startup firm, emerging company, or Fortune 500 organization. Students gain knowledge, confidence, and ability to identify, develop, and implement performance excellence practices leading to success in a highly competitive environment. Typical class sessions address contemporary industry practices in leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resources, process management, business results, and related areas. Equally important, semester long projects provide practical implementation of these performance excellence skills in actual business, industry, or non-profit applications.

### **Course Text**

There is no specific text for the course, although there may be some readings and handouts made available in class or on Blackboard.

*Password-protected class sites will be available for all accredited courses taught at The University. Syllabi, handouts, assignments and other resources are types of information that may be available within these sites. Site activities could include exchanging e-mail, engaging in class discussions and chats, and exchanging files. In addition, class e-mail rosters will be a component of the sites. Students who do not want their names included in these electronic class rosters must restrict their directory information in the Office of the Registrar, Main Building, Room 1. For information on restricting directory information see: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi02-03/app/appc09.html>.*

### **General Information**

- The Practicum is a semi-structured project course with an independent study format. Significant personal planning, self-management, and discipline are required for successful course completion.

- Class details may differ from what is described in the course catalog. Changes will be announced in class.
- It is your responsibility to keep informed on class schedules, dates, times, and changes. Practicum information is found on the UT Blackboard Learning System.
- Many Practicum communications are via e-mail - you should check yours frequently. Students are responsible to assure that their electronic communications are virus free.
- You should arrive in sufficient time to sign in, pick up handouts or other course materials, and receive your nametag prior to the start of class.
- While we do have an official class meeting time, many, if not most, of our interactions will be professor/team meetings arranged at mutually agreeable times for project review. It is your responsibility to be informed when and where we will be meeting by staying current with class communications.

### ***Course Objectives***

- Provide the student with an understanding of the operational challenges faced by managers in the industry through a hands-on project.
- Enhance the student's skills in solving problems in collaborative environments.
- Prepare the student for managing projects with demanding deadlines in a complex organization.

### ***Leadership and this Course***

The Texas MBA program is designed to develop influential business leaders. The MBA Program has identified four fundamental and broad pillars of leadership: knowledge and understanding, communication and collaboration, responsibility and integrity, and a worldview of business and society. This practicum course will allow you to: exercise your knowledge and apply it in a "real world" situation; collaborate extensively with your team mates and practice effective communication within your team and between your team and the client; and recognize the responsibility to your client for real performance results beyond the achievement of a grade in class.

### ***You should take this class if you want to:***

- Learn more about operations after taking the core class.
- Solve practical problems in process analysis or supply-chain management.
- Integrate your operations and information management toolkits.
- Differentiate yourself for the job market with real-world experience in the application of cutting-edge techniques.
- Take a closer look at some promising prospective employers.

## **Course Projects**

You will typically work in a team of four to six students on an applied research project during the semester, focusing on implementing performance excellence principles in the workplace, applying your academic learning in an actual work environment, and delivering value-added results.

- The project plan for each team's approved project is to be provided to the instructor by the date specified.
- A weekly status report summarizes each team's activities, time devoted, and results obtained for the Practicum project.
- An end of semester project summary captures the results of each team's project work and value-added results to the sponsoring organization, and facilitates a seamless project hand-off where applicable. The report is due on the last class day of the semester.

## **Grading Criteria**

The final grade in this class will be based on your demonstrated performance as determined jointly by the collaborating firms and myself. Because each project will be performed as a team, all members of a team will receive the same score for all criteria except for the peer review, the evaluation of which is described below.

- Project Statement of Work and Gantt Chart (see description below) 20%
- Project progress reports (weekly) 20%
- Mid-term project review 10%
- Final project presentation 10%
- Final project final deliverable 10%
- Peer review 30%\*

\*A poor peer review can either decrease or elevate your grade relative to that of the team's.

## **Academic Dishonesty:**

*The McCombs School of Business has no tolerance for acts of scholastic dishonesty. The responsibilities of both students and faculty with regard to scholastic dishonesty are described in detail in the Policy Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty for the McCombs School of Business:*

*By teaching this course, I have agreed to observe all of the faculty responsibilities described in that document. By enrolling in this class, you have agreed to observe all of the student responsibilities described in that document. If the application of that Policy Statement to this class and its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your responsibility to ask me for clarification. Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on*

*scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course an/or dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. You should refer to the Student Judicial Services website at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/> or the General Information Catalog to access the official University policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty as well as further elaboration on what constitutes scholastic dishonesty.*

Additionally, as part of the project you will likely be given access to company information from your project sponsor that the company considers to be confidential. It is critical for your own professional reputation, as well as that of the University, that you take that responsibility seriously and respect company requests to maintain the confidentiality of their information.

**Notes:** Adherence to the information provided in this syllabus is the responsibility of the student.

### **McCombs Classroom Professionalism Policy**

The highest professional standards are expected of all members of the McCombs community. The collective class reputation and the value of the Texas MBA experience hinges on this.

Faculty are expected to be professional and prepared to deliver value for each and every class session. Students are expected to be professional in all respects.

The Texas MBA classroom experience is enhanced when:

- **Students arrive on time.** On time arrival ensures that classes are able to start and finish at the scheduled time. On time arrival shows respect for both fellow students and faculty and it enhances learning by reducing avoidable distractions.
- **Students display their name cards.** This permits fellow students and faculty to learn names, enhancing opportunities for community building and evaluation of in-class contributions.
- **Students minimize unscheduled personal breaks.** The learning environment improves when disruptions are limited.
- **Students are fully prepared for each class.** Much of the learning in the Texas MBA program takes place during classroom discussions. When students are not prepared they cannot contribute to the overall learning process. This affects not only the individual, but their peers who count on them, as well.
- **Students attend the class section to which they are registered.** Learning is enhanced when class sizes are optimized. Limits are set to ensure a quality experience. When section hopping takes place some classes become too large and it becomes difficult to contribute. When they are too small, the breadth of experience and opinion suffers.
- **Students respect the views and opinions of their colleagues.** Disagreement and debate are encouraged. Intolerance for the views of others is unacceptable.
- **Laptops are closed and put away.** When students are surfing the web, responding to e-mail, instant messaging each other, and otherwise not devoting their full attention to the topic at hand they are doing themselves and their peers a major disservice. Those around them face additional distraction. Fellow students cannot benefit from the insights of the

students who are not engaged. Faculty office hours are spent going over class material with students who chose not to pay attention, rather than truly adding value by helping students who want a better understanding of the material or want to explore the issues in more depth. Students with real needs may not be able to obtain adequate help if faculty time is spent repeating what was said in class. There are often cases where learning is enhanced by the use of laptops in class. Faculty will let you know when it is appropriate to use them. In such cases, professional behavior is exhibited when misuse does not take place.

- **Phones and wireless devices are turned off.** We've all heard the annoying ringing in the middle of a meeting. Not only is it not professional, it cuts off the flow of discussion when the search for the offender begins. When a true need to communicate with someone outside of class exists (e.g., for some medical need) please inform the professor prior to class.

Remember, you are competing for the best faculty McCombs has to offer. Your professionalism and activity in class contributes to your success in attracting the best faculty to this program.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

Upon request, the University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is housed in the Office of the Dean of Students, located on the fourth floor of the Student Services Building. Information on how to register, downloadable forms, including guidelines for documentation, accommodation request letters, and releases of information are available online at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/index.php>. Please do not hesitate to contact SSD at (512) 471-6259, VP: (512) 232-2937 or via e-mail if you have any questions.