

Spring 2014 Kellogg International Business Strategy Lab (INTL-916)

Syllabus



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Spring 2014, Fridays: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Evanston Campus

Course Overview:

The International Business Strategy Lab (IBS-Lab) provides students a unique opportunity to work with international companies on a one-to-one basis to solve a pressing strategic challenge in the global context. This ten-week experiential learning course blends traditional classroom learning with real-world problem solving and client service through a formal consulting engagement. Working closely with the professor, teams of four (or 5 max) students work directly with the client in their home country, using virtual technologies such as Skype and online tools, to cultivate a client relationship and agree upon consulting deliverables they develop with their client. Students will work independently to conduct research, analysis, and interviews in line with the client approved work plan. After a mid-term progress review and sharing preliminary findings with the professor, the teams will spend the final two weeks completing their research, presenting final recommendations, and working with client management to transfer plans. Final projects will be presented at the CEO Showcase, during which our clients are invited to Evanston to attend with the leadership of all participating companies. In all cases, the students and faculty maintain strict confidentiality with proprietary client information and are prepared to sign a non-disclosure agreement if requested.

Course Objective:

The course has three primary educational objectives. First, it allows students to apply their business skills and experience to a practical, real-world problem facing an international organization. Students will be encouraged to bring their industry and functional knowledge to meet the specific challenges of their clients. Second, the course is intended to deepen students' understanding and appreciation of international markets, business practices and cultural norms through a combination of on-campus work and international collaboration. Finally, the IBS-Lab offers students the chance to continue developing their teamwork and client relationship skills outside the classroom. This course goes beyond a traditional group research project, which only a faculty member will read. IBS Lab clients have high expectations for the value that Kellogg students can deliver to their clients' companies. IBS-Lab projects are carefully selected by the professor on the basis of being rigorous, multidisciplinary efforts which require teams to tackle issues of international business strategy such as corporate strategy, internationalization strategy, country selection, non-market strategy, strategic alliances, M&A, and/or entry mode strategy.

Student assignments to client projects will be based on individual preferences, requested skill sets and industry experience, local language requirements, and team member diversity. Every attempt will be made to grant students their first or second choice of projects. Students will provide the faculty advisor their resumes and project preference in advance through an application process. The final team assignments will be announced prior to the first class in March. Students who wish to form their own teams are free to request they work together; however, there's no guarantee that every team request can be accommodated.

Please note that enrollment in this course is limited to 15 students which means that only 3 projects will be undertaken this Spring. One team is allocated to the PTMBA program, meaning that 10 slots or 2 teams are available for the full-time MBA program. The Dean's Office and the Professor in conjunction with the client have identified one project for the PTMBA program.

Evaluation/Assessment

The requirements for the course and the contribution of each toward the final grade are as follows:

1. Individual Case Write-up (April 18) 10%
2. Group Research Midterm Evaluation (May 2) 10%
3. Group Research Final Client Recommendations (June 13) Report 35%
4. Group Research CEO Panel Presentation* (June 6) 20%
5. Team Meetings with Professor and Class Participation (Weekly)25%

*Note: This presentation grade will be weighted by the professor (50%), the client (40%), and peers (10%).

These requirements are described in detail below:

Group Research Project:

The grade in this course is heavily weighted on the quality of the final team report and recommendations delivered to the client. The team's finished work product will be evaluated based on the depth of research and analysis, application of business tools and concepts, actionability of the findings and recommendations, apparent level of effort, and the overall quality of deliverables. The direction of the project will be evaluated at the mid-term and specific feedback will be given to strengthen the strategic focus and value to the client.

Case Write-ups:

The case write-ups should be brief, no more than 3 double-spaced pages. The case write-up is due at the start of class before the case is discussed. The intended outcome is to engage in analytic discussion of the issue central to choosing global strategies across all client projects. The write-ups can also usefully serve as your talking points during the class discussion. Please do not write a summary of the case or repeat case facts except to bolster your argument. Based on the information provided in the case materials, please be analytically judgmental and evaluative.

There will be a set of case write-up questions provided to help structure your write-up, or you can take a different angle. In either case, you should propose alternate views and action plans whenever appropriate. Discuss the relevance and applicability of the frameworks proposed in the readings and lectures. In short, you should write what you think of the situation in the case and not merely what the author of the case says. Be original. These case write-ups are individual assignments.

Weekly meetings and class participation:

Students will equally balance their time between in-class lectures and guest speakers, key meetings with the client, working with their in teams and meeting with the professor once a week to review progress, share new ideas and insights, and review deliverables. Each team will schedule a convenient one-hour weekly meeting time with the professor on Thursday or Friday. Students are expected to show up on-time for the weekly meetings and all client interactions. It is the student's responsibility to let their teammates and professor know in advance if they cannot make one of the meetings. Unprofessionalism will negatively affect the participation grade.

Your active participation in the discussion during class is integral to the design of this course. Prior preparation of the cases and assigned readings are essential as this background is presumed in the lectures and case discussions. You are welcome to draw on your own experiences and perspectives as much as

possible, however, you need to do the reading in order to contribute effectively to the flow of the discussion and integrate the global strategy frameworks into your thinking.

Preparation is particularly important when we have guest speakers. This is an opportunity to show off and try on your esteemed level of professionalism, preparedness and thoughtful inquiry to these distinguished people.

Reading Materials:

A small packet of required readings will be available at the bookstore before the start of the spring quarter. To help minimize expense, some of the readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Students should check the course Blackboard site frequently throughout the term for course announcements, work planning templates, current international events, and other readings of interest.

Class Schedule

Friday, April 4: Course Introduction: Global Strategy and the Consulting Experience
Teams make initial contact with clients

Readings:

1. Introduction to Global Strategy, Harvard Business School Note, 9-706-448, January 2006, 1-11
2. HBS Case: McKinsey & Co.: Managing Knowledge and Learning

Friday, April 11: Global Strategy Frameworks: The AAA Triangle

Readings:

1. HBR article Managing Differences: The Central Challenge of Global Strategy
2. Playing the Differences: The AAA Triangle: Integrated Strategies for Global Value Creation

Deliverable: Students create and submit agreed-upon work plan and schedule of deliverables to professor

Friday, April 18: *Choosing Global Strategy*

Case: Grolsch: Growing Globally

Deliverable: Students will turn in case write up on choosing global strategy

Friday, April 25: *Adaptation Strategies: Leveraging Innovation Abroad*

Case: Acer Group's R&D Strategy: The China Decision

Friday, May 2: **Guest Speaker** – Corey Lewis, Vice President of International Audit, LaSalle

Deliverable: Students will provide a mid-term review of their client report

Friday, May 9: *Aggregation Strategies:*

Reading:

1. Book Chapter - Aggregation: Overcoming Differences

Friday, May 16: **Deliverable:** Students deliver formal progress review to client

Friday, May 23: *Arbitrage Strategies:*

Reading:

1. HBS Book Chapter - Arbitrage: Exploiting Differences

Friday, May 30: **Guest Speaker** – U.S Trade Representative, Washington, DC

Friday, June 6: **CEO Panel**

Teams present projects to clients

Friday, June 13: Final project reports due to professor, clients complete project evaluation survey

Client Confidentiality

The information you will receive from client companies is considered proprietary and strictly confidential. Students are expected to make all reasonable efforts to protect non-public client information and to destroy or return all information at the conclusion of the course if the client so requests. In order to share confidential documents among team members, it is recommended that students use a shared workspace on Blackboard which is password protected. The professor will provide a sample confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement if requested by the client.

Honor Code

All students are expected to adhere to the Kellogg honor code which can be found at

http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/stu_aff/policies/honorcode.htm.