

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
COURSE OUTLINE

1987-88

BA 200A3 - SEMINAR IN BUSINESS POLICY

- TEXT: Getting Started, A Practical Guide to Your Small Business Success in Canada, Richard D. Smith, Self-Counsel Series, Vancouver, 1980
In Search of Excellence, Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., Fitzhenry and Whiteside Ltd., Toronto, 1982, paperback
Megatrends, John Naisbitt, Warner Books, New York, 1984, paperback
- PREREQUISITE: It is assumed that students in this course will have completed approximately fifteen courses towards a Diploma. Any student who is not at this stage in the program requires the permission of the instructor.
- COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course attempts to integrate the many facets of business by exposing students to a business game, feasibility study, strategic planning models and case studies. In-class time will be offered to these projects and to lectures/seminars in management processes.
- COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course has many diverse objectives:
- 1) To serve as a capstone experience i.e. to integrate methods and insights from other disciplines.
 - 2) To acquaint students with management roles and in particular with strategy formulation and implementation. The necessity of taking a global perspective will become obvious as the course progresses.
 - 3) To involve students in two major projects designed to actively engage them in real life risks and opportunities. These projects themselves must be managed and as such provide a laboratory to test and use class developed concepts.
 - 4) To be of service to the College and/or community via project work.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: 5) To hone group work skills and to appreciate the necessity of pooling and integrating a diversity of talents and skills.

6) To foster leadership skills.

GRADING	Feasibility Study	60%
	Business Game	10%
	Seminar Leadership	25%
	Seminar Contribution	5%
		100%

COURSE CONTENT: The structure I envisage is:

Feasibility Study	- 1 hour/week
Business Game	- .5 hour/week
Lecture/Seminar	- 1.5 hours/week

NOTES: 1) Guidelines for Feasibility Study attached. This is a major project demanding sustained and substantial effort. It is due the Friday before the second last week of classes. Ample in-class time will be provided for group meetings. Marks will be derived as follow:

Written Report: 90% (90% of 50% = 45 marks)
Oral Defence: 10% (5 marks)

N.B. Peer evaluations will be required and may impact marks of individuals.

2) Business Game: see attached handout

3) Seminar Leadership: Each student will be expected to lead 2 small group discussions based on text chapters. See attached handout.

Please note the following:

1) Late assignments will be docked 10% per school day late and will not be marked after the third day late. Exceptional circumstances may warrant exceptions to this rule so please keep me informed.

2) Under no circumstances will business game input forms be accepted late.

- 3) Owing to the size of the project and my desire for quick feedback to students, the feasibility study must be typed.
- 4) Attendance will not be taken. Owing to the high proportion of group work in this course, I anticipate that peer evaluations will remedy any attendance problems. Classes will start on time.
- 5) Please don't be a stranger. My office hours are only a guide to my availability - feel free to wander in as you see fit.

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SEMINAR LEADERSHIP
(Total 30%)

Bearing in mind the course's title: "Seminar in Business Policy" and the need to enhance students' skills in providing leadership to small groups, each student will be required to lead three group discussion on the content of specified text chapters, or assigned material or topic.

FORMAT

Group Size - Class

Time Allowed - approximately 30 minutes

Marks - 1 x 5 and 10 x 2 i.e. one session valued at 5% and two sessions valued at 10% each. Also, seminar contribution marks will be assessed by me to seminar participants over the course of the semester.

Texts - Chosen because they are relevant, widely read in the business community and illuminating on the business/environment interface. Readability and interest were additional factors.

Responsibilities

a) Seminar Leader

You will be required to give three speeches: two ten minutes and one thirty minutes.

The half hour assigned to you can be a worthwhile and enjoyable one for your audience or it can be boring, tedious and valueless. The only variables that govern this are the time, energy and thought that YOU put into preparation.

Let me suggest the following:

- 1) Know the material cold - underline, make notes in the margins, use numbering scheme etc.
- 2) Have the first minute memorized. After that, the terror subsides.
- 3) Have a plan but allow spontaneity if appropriate and valuable
- 4) Don't "wing it" - have questions, intro, conclusion in a package.
- 5) Use time - start and finish on time - if getting no response, be QUIET.

6) Suggest Format

- | | |
|--|------------|
| i) <u>Introduction</u> - why relevant | 2 minutes |
| ii) <u>Overview</u> - content and
"bottom line" of
chapter
- summation of author's
main points | 10 minutes |
| iii) <u>Discussion</u> - on implications
and applications
of text material
- on controversial
and confusing
text material | 15 minutes |
| iv) <u>Conclusion</u> - reiterate main
points | 1 minute |

7) Analyze Your Audience

- what are their information needs?
- what will be confusing, interesting to them?
- how bored will they be if I read this in a monotone? (VERY)
- will my enthusiasm be infectious? (YES)
- do they want me to "fall flat on my face and make a fool of myself?" (NO)

b) Seminar Participants

- 1) Read and think about the assigned chapters.
- 2) Be responsive to the requests and directions of the leader.
Remember you, too, will be "sweating it out" at some point.

FEASIBILITY STUDY (60%)

Attached please find guidelines pertaining to the feasibility study which is a major requirement for successful completion of the course. Its objectives are several:

- a) to provide students with an opportunity to "get their hands dirty" in a real life business,
- b) to foster an appreciation of the multi-faceted nature of business,
- c) to involve students in a project which in itself must be managed, and
- d) to provide a laboratory for students to test and evaluate issues and principles discussed in class.

Your "laboratory" can be one of the following:

- an existing business which is on the verge of significant growth or change,
- an embryonic business of another person (to this end, I have solicited ideas from the Faculty and a few proposals will be available. Otherwise students will be on their own.)
- an idea for a business developed by students. For this to be accepted it must not be of the "pipe dream" variety.
- any other project agreed to by instructor.

TIMETABLE

There are five deadlines:

- 1) Two weeks after classes start
Group formation and project approval - Those not in self-selected groups will be assigned to one on January 19.
- 2) Draft One Submissions
Your group will be required to submit a xerox copy of the work you have completed up to February 22. (worth 1%)
- 3) Draft Two Submissions
Your group will be required to submit a xerox copy of work up to March 11. (worth 1%)
- 4) Two weeks before classes end
Final report submission - Lateness penalty of 10% per school day apply. Date for this term is March 29.
- 5) Last week of classes
Oral Defense - A group of students, myself and another instructor, if available, will challenge your findings. All group members are expected to attend and contribute.

GROUPS

The study is to be done in groups of 3 - 4 people. This serves two purposes: spreading the workload and working effectively together. You will be asked to assess the contribution of other members of the group upon completion of the study. As a recommendation only, may I suggest that one member be assigned a lighter research load in order that s/he assume editor's duties.

To address the concern of difficulty in arranging mutually convenient meeting time, one class per week will be available for discussion. It is, therefore, imperative that all group members be in the same section of the course.

Note, however, that in-class time will almost certainly not be sufficient to satisfy your needs to meet.

MARKS

As per the course outline, the study is valued at 50 marks. This is broken down as follows:

- A) Drafts 1 and 2: 2 marks
- B) Written Report: 48 marks
 - Based on: comprehensiveness (the number and seriousness of "holes" in your report is what. i.e. what is not there) (10%)
 - quality of analysis - use of analytical tools (50%)
 - quality of research - credibility of sources, back-up for statements, validity of assumptions (20%)
 - quality of recommendations (5%)
 - quality of business English - readability, organization, grammar, spelling, "crispness" (15%)
- C) Oral Defense: 10 marks
 - Your methods, findings, and conclusions will be probed and challenged by a panel of two faculty members. This is intended to resemble an oral debriefing by consultants to discerning clients. A short presentation by students, while not required, will assist in this.

In general, marks awarded will be identical for all group members. However individual contributions will be noted and acted upon if warranted.