

DRAFT

**ESM 296-1W
PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**Course Syllabus Winter 2019
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 – 10:45 AM, Bren 1424
February 11 – March 13, 2019
John Jostes, Visiting Faculty**

Context

Effective project management skills are essential for getting things done, particularly in groups, teams, and networks. This course focuses on skill-building as it applies to Group Projects, marketable skills upon graduation, and project planning and implementation in the consulting world. Students will learn skills pertaining to effective meeting management, time management and budgeting, flowcharting, component sequencing, and contingency planning.

This course starts from the observation that regardless of sector (public, private, NGO, etc.) leaders, managers and entrepreneurs are challenged in situations of project, product and/or program management, and sometimes a combination of these. In this course, we will address what it takes to get things done, particularly in group/team settings. Each class session is practice-based and will offer participants an overview of relevant tools and attitudes, as well as the opportunity to apply those tools and perspectives.

On a substantive level, this course explores the theory and practice of project management and collaborative problem solving tools in the context of environmental (i.e., natural resource) and public policy challenges. Core topics and questions to be addressed include:

- ❖ Competence: What are the basic competencies of the project manager responsible for the planning and implementation of internal and external projects (i.e., making things happen)?
- ❖ Dynamics, Improvisation and Cross Currents: What dynamics influence program design, time management, delegation, and unforeseen circumstances?
- ❖ Complexity and Uncertainty: What are the challenges created by uncertainty, risk and complexity and what tools and perspectives are needed to address those challenges?

Course Organization and Structure

The course is organized in four segments, each with a series of teaching modules nested within. Section 1 focuses on “Why Project Management Skills are essential for effective problem solving and value creation. Section 2 focuses on the importance of deliberately defining projects in a manner that motivates effective engagement, problem solving and program implementation. Section 3 concentrates on anticipating and responding to the unexpected – building contingency planning into project design. Section 4 focuses on the range of other challenges facing project managers and how to anticipate and plan for strategic corrections. The final section (Week 5) will respond to class participant questions and suggestions. The course will make use of case studies, short focused assignments and team presentations. The course will

be presented on two levels – for 1st year students preparing to undertake group projects, and for 2nd year students preparing to enter the workplace in public and private sector settings.

Week 1: PROJECT CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Prerequisite for first class session: Students are requested to email the instructor a short note containing a sentence describing a project that they have worked on and, a key word or phrase that characterizes either one thing that went well or one thing that went very poorly. These emails need to be submitted no later than 5:00 pm on February 7th. Students are also requested to contact career Services to take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator questionnaire. A pre-course seminar will be held by Career Services personnel that will outline results and implications of the MBTI questionnaire.

Session 1-1: Course Overview and Making Meetings Work

After a brief course overview, this session will focus on the nuts and bolts of effective meeting management.

- Course introduction and overview - Top 10 skills of effective project managers
- Preparing for Productive Meetings – The importance of purpose
- Agenda Development
- Meeting Facilitation Skills
- Note-taking and Follow-up.

Session 1-2: Values and Team Building – Motivating Good Work

This session will orient students to a variety of perspectives on leadership, needs and opportunities for exercising leadership in the foreseeable future, both as students, group project members, and managers within outside organizations and agencies. We will spend a portion of class focusing on the personal values that class participants bring to the MESM program, and explore how those values shape leadership development and team formation. Working teams will be set up during this class.

- Prescribing the Framework for Effective Project Implementation – four basic organizing questions
- Assembling Teams for Programs and Projects.
- Team Development and Project Synthesis

Readings for Week One: See GauchoSpace.

Week 2: PROJECT PLANNING AND SPECIFICATION

Session 2-1: Project Conceptualization and responding to Requests for Proposals – internal and external dynamics

This session will focus on the nuts and bolts of project planning and proposal development. Class participants will explore the scope, deliverables and scheduling challenges associated with implementing programs and projects. The elements of technical proposals for environmental/resource management projects will be detailed and explored in class. Issues to be discussed:

- Identifying key documents, deliverables, and approvals
- Role definition and collaborative problem solving
- Identifying and working with Project Stakeholders
- Using Gantt Charts and Block/Flow Diagrams

- Multi-layer flowcharting skills

Team Assignment: Flowcharting the project (one of four tentative projects):

- ❖ Invasive Species Removal in the Guadalupe Dunes
- ❖ Consolidating Overlapping Water Management and Delivery Districts
- ❖ Preparing a Climate Resiliency Plan for Happy Valley
- ❖ Implementing the Open Space Plan for San Luis Mesa

Session 2-2: Introduction to Budgeting and Team Brainstorming

This session will introduce the concepts and framework of project budgeting and provide class time for teams to convene and focus on developing generic budgets for group projects assigned for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Readings for Week 2: See GauchoSpace

Assignment: Students will be tasked with developing a generic time and cost budget for discussion in Week 3 based upon a fictitious request for proposal (RFP). Come to the next class with a draft excel Spreadsheet outlining your approach, cost and hourly estimates.

Week 3: BUDGET PLANNING & SPECIFICATION

Session 3-1: Budget Development and Refinement

This session will open with a class discussion of the assignment from the previous week regarding budget development and refinement. Discussion topics will include:

- Realistic time budgeting and costing
- Managing unrealistic client expectations and reality testing
- Tiering budgets and adaptive management approaches
- When and how to engage technical experts in the budget process
- Planning for Progress Reports
- Managing the cost of meetings and data collection
- Freebies – when, where and how.

Class Assignment: TBD

Session 3-2: Team Brainstorming and Project Refinement:

This session will provide class time for teams to convene and focus on refining group project proposals.

Readings for Week 3: See GauchoSpace

Week 4: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES TO EFFECTIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT (Part 1)

Session 4-1: What can go wrong will, and at a time you least expect it.

This session will focus on where things go wrong in the process of project management. The discussion will draw from several real-world case examples. Issues to be discussed in this class session include:

- Unrealistic deadlines
- Communication deficit
- Scope creep
- Uncertain dependencies

- Lack of accountability
- Poorly defined vision and goals
- Customers and end-users are not engaged during the project
- Insufficient consideration of barriers to implementation.

Topics not covered in Session 4-1 will be postponed to either Session 4-2 or 5-1.

Readings for Week 4: See GauchoSpace

Session 4-2: Team Brainstorming and Project Refinement:

This session will provide class time for teams to refine and finalize their project proposals.

Assignment: Describe your evolution as an effective project manager providing observations on your strengths and weaknesses, management style, and tools and tactics based upon the exercises and assignments completed in class.

Session 5: PARTICIPANT TOPICS AND WRAP-UP

Class Participants' Choice: Applying course-acquired skills to Group Project Opportunities and Challenges

- Possible opportunity for guest presentation/discussion

Class Assignments and Grading (subject to refinement prior to start of class):

Critical to the learning experience in this course is your risk-taking in a variety of situations, team-building activities and class discussions. In these settings you will not only learn practical skills but also have an opportunity to observe the perspectives, approaches and practices of your classmates. The amount and quality of participation in these settings, therefore, will not only affect your learning experience but that of the others in the course. In recognition of this fact, 50% of your grade for the course depends upon your participation, a portion of which will be evaluated by your peers in class. The grade will be calculated as follows:

Course participation (75%): Students are expected to not only engage in the case discussions and team work in good faith, but also to contribute to the debriefings and record their personal observations in a class journal. When you hand in your Team Project Summary on the last day of class, you will also be asked to identify the three classmates who contributed most to your evolution as a effective project manager and briefly summarize the reasons why.

Assignments (25%): Occasional written assignments will be required (1-2) as a part of class.

Text: The following text is required reading for this course. It can be found in the Bren Reading Room as well as on Amazon.com

Defining Moments: When Managers Must Choose between Right and Right (Cambridge MA; Harvard Business Press) Joseph Badaracco, Jr.

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, SEE GAUCHOSPACE COURSE SITE