

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA
College of Business and Management

MEMORANDUM
PRELIMINARY, FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

TO: Stepan Karamardian, Dean
FROM: Allen G. Greenwood, Associate Professor of Management Science
DATE: December 1, 1992
SUBJECT: Project course

As per our discussions, I have outlined the plans for the required project course, BM 299 that is to be offered during the Spring and Summer 1993 quarters. Since this a new course, the information in this memo serves as a preliminary course description, syllabus, and schedule. It is anticipated that these plans will have to be modified prior to and during the course offering.

BM 299 -- Business Project

Purpose: The project course is intended to be an experiential learning component of the M.B.A. degree where material learned in the first year of course work is applied in a real-world business situation. Students, preferably working in teams, will act as consultants to an organization (manufacturing, government, or service) in order to analyze and solve an actual problem that the organization is currently facing. The project will span problem definition, analysis, generation of alternative solutions, recommended solution, and plans for or actual implementation. The main deliverables will be a proposal, final report and presentation, and a complete project file. While most of the course will involve field work at the client's site with periodic progress reporting to the faculty advisor and client, there be a classroom component that will focus on project management and administration techniques, as well as written and verbal communication skills.

cc: all second-year M.B.A. students
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Course Developer and Coordinator: Allen Greenwood

Business Faculty: Allen Greenwood and Michael Kouchakdjian

Each team will have a primary faculty advisor for their project.

Each faculty will be the primary faculty advisor for half of the students.

Project teams will be assigned to faculty based on the faculty members' preferences and expertise.

The proposal, final report, and presentation will be reviewed by both faculty advisors.

English Faculty: Faculty and instructors from the English as a Second Language(ESL) Department will assist the students in editing their reports and may assist the business faculty in teaching proposal and report writing, as well as presentation skills. Details of this arrangement still need to be finalized.

Visiting Lecturers: It is anticipated that quest speakers will be used on occasion to present/discuss such topics as project management, proposal writing, etc.

Course credit: As defined in the A.U.A. course catalogue, the project course carries 8 hours of credit. This eight-hour course will be divided into a two course sequence, with each course carrying four-hours of credit. The first course will be offered during the Spring 1993 quarter, the second during the Summer 1993 term. A separate grade will be given in each course. Grades will be assigned according to the criteria define below in the "Grading" section. All students planning to graduate in December 1993 must take this sequence of courses during the specified terms.

Team size: 1 to 4 students. One member of the team should be designated as the project coordinator. This role may be rotated among team members.

Project topics:

Project topic selection will be the responsibility of the team. Faculty will help each team define the scope of the project.

Topics must be approved by project course faculty.

Students working in the Center for Business Research and Development (CBRD) may use projects from the Center, but projects will be "off-loaded" from the CBRD to the project course.

Students involved in internship programs in the U.S. or in conjunction with AIESIC may select projects related to their work abroad.

Fees and agreement for project work:

Since the work resulting from these projects is expected to be of high professional quality, it is anticipated that companies/organizations will be charged a fee for the work that is performed by the students teams. This is to ensure that the organization is serious about this effort and is willing to cooperate. The fee structure has yet to be determined. All proceeds will be used for endeavors that will not only benefit the university, but the community as well, such as for purchasing subscriptions to journals or periodicals for the library. The teams will be considered as consultants to their respective organizations and it is expected that there will be a contractual agreement between the two entities.

Software:

The project management software, "Microsoft Project for Windows", will be used to organize, schedule, chart, and summarize all aspects of the project. Through Windows, information can be easily exchanged with such applications as Microsoft Excel, Lotus 123, and dBase. Therefore, familiarity with the Windows environment, as well as Microsoft Word and Excel is encouraged.

Specific analysis software will depend upon the individual needs of each team and their project. It is important that each group identify specific software needs early in the project so that we can attempt to purchase it.

Grading: A grade of A-F, on a +/- scale, will be given for each 4-hour course. Each member of the project team will receive the same grade for each item below, except the peer review.

Course I	
Classroom assignments	30%
Project proposal* - draft	10%
Project proposal* - final	30%
Project documentation*	15%
Major Milestone Review and Briefing*	15%
Course II	
Final Report* - draft	10%
Final Report* - final	50%
Project documentation*	10%
Presentation*	15%
Client review*	10%
Peer review	5%

*Criteria will be described in more detail later.

Course Structure: The course will be composed of the following modules:

- Formal, scheduled classroom meetings where all students meet as a group for lectures and discussions on the following topics (Classroom work will be front-loaded early in the Spring quarter. At the first part of the Spring term, this course will meet daily; later in the Spring term and during the Summer term, the course meetings will considerably less frequent to permit time for field work, developing the proposal, final report, etc.) Topics will include: project management techniques, project management software (Microsoft Project), estimating and tracking of costs, proposal writing, writing effective reports, making effective presentations, etc.
- Formal, scheduled meetings of all students for project reviews at major milestone dates and final presentations. These reviews will also include representatives from the companies or agencies for which the project is being conducted. The final presentations will be made at seminar sponsored by the A.U.A. to feature the project work done by its first class of business students. This seminar will be open to the public and widely advertised.
- Scheduled meetings between each team and their faculty advisor to discuss the progress of the project, problems, etc.

Course Schedule:

Since the students will be taking 2 to 3 courses per quarter in addition to project course, they are strongly encouraged to start early. During the Winter term, when there are no scheduled classes, students are encouraged to do as much of the initial work as possible, e.g. define the scope of the project, establish contacts at the client organization, gather data, etc.

The following schedule indicate latest dates; teams are strongly encouraged to plan to have their work completed prior to these dates.

early December 1992: Preliminary meeting with students

Prior to beginning of Spring quarter, March 15, 1993: Students form their project teams, develop their ideas for a project, establish the necessary contacts with the client organization, begin draft of proposal (at least an abstract and outline)

March 15 - April 2: Classroom lectures

March - May: Field work

March 23: Draft proposal due

April 2: Final proposal due

May 26: Major Milestone Briefing (last day of final exams for Spring term)

July 19: Draft of final report due

August 4: Final Presentation (day prior to last day of instruction)

August 9: Deadline for submitting Final Report and Documentation

Required Deliverables

Project proposal -- due April 2, 1993 (draft proposal due March 23, 1993)

- Problem Definition
- Statement of need
- Methodology(s) to be used
- Source of data
- Schedule of tasks, milestones, and deliverables
- Assignment of task responsibilities among team members
- Budget

Progress Report -- Major Milestone Review -- May 26, 1993

Final Report* -- due no later than August 9, 1993 (draft of final report due no later than July 19, 1993)

One page abstract of project definition and results**

Executive summary (no more than 3 pages)

- Problem Definition
- Statement of need
- Methodology(s) -- brief description of approach
- Summary of results
- Recommendations
- Need for further analysis

Technical Report -- detailed analysis, explanation of results

Cost analysis -- budget versus actual

References

Vita of each member of project team

* to become a permanent part of the AUA library collection

** to be included in a brochure summarizing all student projects conducted in this course.

Presentation (August 4, 1993)

- verbal summary of project
- seminar format

Project file

- Log of all correspondence, meetings, conversations, etc.
- Tracking of costs, time sheets
- Supporting data