

MGT 4196 – Strategy Consulting Practicum

Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 – 1:45 pm
Scheller COB RM 203

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Office Hours: Thursday 11 am to noon
& By Appointment (I'm happy to meet, pls email to arrange!)

Course Overview

The Strategy Consulting Practicum course is a fun way for students to gain new skills and perspectives via experiential learning. The course will help the student understand the strategy professional environment in a variety of settings: mid and large consulting firms, and also large multinational firms. Several frameworks will be discussed and diagnosed during the semester using strategy processes such as analysis, design, and implementation. Teams will facilitate several classroom activities as well as a consulting recommendation project at the end of the semester. Students will have direct exposure to working professional consulting team mentors and a number of intriguing guest speakers.

The course begins with the **McKinsey method of problem solving** as a common starting point. Ethical and conflicting issues will also be discussed in the early groundwork. Traditional marketing strategy and more contemporary models of lean, design thinking, and complexity are introduced in the middle of the course. Broader issues of work-life balance and career values round out the course materials. Approximately six guest speakers with a wide variety of backgrounds in strategic consulting will be meeting with the class. It is imperative that you come to class having thoroughly worked through the readings for each class. Accordingly, a portion of your final course grade will be based upon your contribution to class discussion.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is structured to help you achieve several major objectives. At the end of the course, you will:

1. Gain confidence in using business tools and processes to address today's business challenges.
2. Improve communication and collaboration skills for enhanced relationship building within a peer team and consideration for client value added.
3. Acquire better knowledge of key success factors for starting a career in internal or external strategic consulting.
4. Build awareness of a diversity of perspectives and methods in the implementation of strategic analysis and consulting.
5. Present recommendations in a framework-driven, concise and compelling manner with appropriate research and supporting arguments.
6. Increase comfort with ambiguity and handling difficult situations that arise in consulting environments.

Required Materials

- 1) A required HBS packet with articles, cases and notes is available for purchase and download (~\$56) link: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1377030>
- 2) “My Life in Full” by Indra Nooyi. Published 2021. Available in hardcover, ebook and audio versions. <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/my-life-in-full-indra-nooyi/1139032316>

Canvas: CANVAS learning management system is a vital communication tool for this course. I will try to limit myself to weekly announcements though my tendency is to share more often. 😊 Additional readings will be posted here with announcements. To help you stay organized I also use the Canvas calendar for class assignment due dates even if there are no Canvas deliverables (say a class presentation or small group activity).

Recommended Materials

- 3) **Textbook:** There is **no** required textbook but having access to a Strategic Management textbook would be useful. Having taken MGT3659 *Foundations of Strategy*, you may have access to Strategic Management by Frank T. Rothaermel – that’s a solid resource for anyone pursuing a Strategy concentration or certificate.
- 4) “Bulletproof Problem Solving” by Charles Conn and Robert McLean. Wiley Press 2018. <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/bulletproof-problem-solving-charles-conn/1129632136>
- 5) Keeping up to date with business news via the *Wall Street Journal* or *Bloomberg* is also very helpful. GT has discounted subscriptions available for WSJ. **Shortened URL:** [WSJ.com/GATech](https://www.wsj.com/GATech)

Grade Components

Your course grade will be based on the following components and percentage allocations:

A. Contribution to Learning	115 pts
A1) Attendance (30 pts)	
A2) Participation (35 pts)	
A3) Discussion boards (50 pts)	
B. Individual Assignments	135 pts
C. Reading and Concepts Exam	50 pts
D. Group Assignments	200 pts
D1) Project Presentation (90 pts)	
D2) Project Written Reports (55 pts)	
D3) Other project assignments (55 pts)	

Grade Component Details

A. CONTRIBUTION TO LEARNING (23%) 115 pts

This element is a compilation of individual efforts during the semester. This score is composed of three items.

- 1) Attendance in classes (30 points)
- 2) Participation in class discussions, feedback and questions for guest speakers (35 points)
- 3) Contribution to speaker discussion boards (50 points)

A. 1) **Attendance in classes:** We have approximately 15 classes discussing substantive articles and readings. Plus attending for guest speakers and team presentation days. Max 30 points

A. 2) **Contribution to Class Discussion:** You are not only responsible for your own learning but also that of your classmates. The *contribution to class discussion* grade is an assessment of your contribution to the learning of your classmates. Please be prepared to be cold called in each class. In grading class contribution, you will be assessed on the quality (not quantity) of your contributions. Contribution scores will range from 0 to 3 points per class. On some contribution days I may record the class discussion for purposes of later reviewing it to identify insightful class comments for the participation scoring. Contributions include asking good questions of the materials and each other as well as questions for our guest speakers and final team presentations. As an example, when we have a guest speaker or team presentations, I will assess the quality of the Q&A offered as part of the contribution to learning. Additionally, we will have two days of online feedback for our project teams. This feedback is scored on constructive and insightful ideas/questions you have for the teams. Max 35 points

A. 3) **Contribution to speaker/AI discussion boards:** You will be asked to contribute your own original thoughts as well as respond to remarks by others on a variety of topics and strategic applications as the course proceeds. We will also have discussion boards posted for each of our guest speakers and other classroom topics. Your contributions to these discussion boards will also be added into this section. Full marks require a “discussion” on these boards. This can include asking questions of your colleagues on the boards. Thus, you are expected to come back to the boards more than once over several days and respond to remarks from others. Posting of links and outside material on the boards is also encouraged where it adds to the conversation. Max 50 points

B. INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS (27%) 135 points

During the semester we will have a variety of individual assignments to add to the student learning environment. Examples will be periodic traditional homework assignments submitted via Canvas. Small team assignments will also be included here if they are not related to the team project. These scores will be added up and scaled as needed to Max 135 points.

C. INDIVIDUAL CONCEPTS AND READINGS EXAM (10%) 50 points

During the semester we will have a variety of readings and class discussions. This exam will cover a number of these items in a conceptual manner. Exact readings and topics covered will be discussed in class and canvas.

D. GROUP ASSIGNMENTS (40%) 200 points

STRATEGIC CONSULTING PROJECT

Each team will be asked to conduct a comprehensive strategic analysis of a major issue experienced by an organization. The team does NOT need to actually contact or personally know the organization though that could be helpful. The virtual client can be a large or small firm, a private firm, or a nonprofit. The key factor is that the team needs to identify a major challenge faced by the organization and be motivated to attack this challenge using problem solving insight and value creation for the client. Local organizations can be great as they may be contacted but this is

not required. Non-profits and other nontraditional organizations can provide for engaging projects.

Once teams select their client and an initial issue to address, a **consulting mentor will be assigned to each team**. This person is not meant to be a subject matter expert about your client but rather someone to help guide the team process. Each mentor has extensive experience as a consultant in strategic situations. Teams are expected to engage proactively and professionally with the mentor. These professionals can provide guidance for the project and they are also available at network resources.

The McKinsey problem solving method will be the baseline approach. Teams are welcome to bring in design thinking, complex systems or frameworks from other classes as suits the issue selected for hiring your strategic consulting team.

A good report will:

- Clearly and logically apply the course material to the phenomenon being investigated
- Present a thorough and rigorous analysis of the phenomenon
- Draw implications and suggest recommendations.
- Discuss execution issues surrounding your team's recommendations.

There are two major project deliverables –a slide deck/presentation (90 pts) and a written report (40 pts).

D1) Presentations will be max 20 minutes. Following this the teams will respond to questions from the class in the role of executives from the selected organization for approximately 10 minutes. Two teams will present in class as our final four classes: April 16th, 21th, 23rd, and 28th. Team consulting mentors will be invited to virtually attend the final presentation. Slide decks are to be submitted into Canvas

D2) Written reports are due by **noon on Friday May 1st**. Please designate one group member to submit the report to Canvas. Final reports should include any needed adjustments to address issues that arise in the final presentation.

D3) Interim reports for the project are due per schedule in a project handout. These interim reports may be shared with the team consulting mentor in addition to the class instructor. The goal of these deliverables is to keep the project moving along and provide feedback and guidance for the team as you work through the problem solving and analysis methods. At student suggestion, we will be incorporating two classes of interim presentation with online anonymous peer feedback incorporated in the process.

****Guidelines for report content, length, and format will be distributed closer to the date of the report.****

It is important that group members contribute their time, knowledge and skills fairly to the team activities. **Though it is the rare case** where there is concern during the semester about fair levels of contributions, please bring this up with me DURING the semester. I will ask for detailed peer evaluations and may assess penalties of up to 30% of the project grades if there is evidence of uneven team contributions (ie. if the team scores 90 on the project, an individual member could score as low as 60).

Classroom Management

Class Preparation

The class is quite discussion oriented. I have at times used the Socratic method to help everyone engage in the topic of the day. PLEASE read the relevant articles or book portions before class as this greatly enhances our class time together.

Generative AI (Chat GPT)

My approach for this course is that you of all college graduates should leave Georgia Tech knowing something of the current and potential uses of generative AI in strategic work settings. As this is a new area, none of us are experts and I plan to have shared knowledge of these tools as the semester progresses.

As for the classroom assignments, GenAI is very useful for idea generation and can provide interesting examples of some of our concepts (though all must be checked for accuracy 😊). However just as you might discuss a given homework assignment with a friend, it is NOT alright for that friend to write the assignment for you. I take the same approach with ChatGPT, Bard, Bing, etc. It is not ethical to cut and paste from a genAI source directly into something you are turning in as your own work. Thus, I consider this a violation of the GT honor code.

Name Tent Cards

Please bring a LEGIBLE name card and display it for each class. I would like to learn your names, and this will also help me keep track of your contributions. We may have a seating chart once we have a few classes and teams assigned.

Academic Honesty

Honesty and transparency are important features of good scholarship. On the other hand, plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses with serious consequences. If any student is discovered engaging in either behavior in this course, they will earn a failing grade on the assignment in question, and further disciplinary action may be taken.

Additionally, any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations. My objective is to create an environment where you can learn and grow, while ensuring that the work we all do is honest and fair.

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is a serious offense. You are not allowed to copy and paste or submit materials created or published by others, as if you created the materials. All materials submitted and posted must be your own.

Student Honor Code

All course participants (including myself and students) are expected and required to abide by the letter and the spirit of the honor code. If there is any way I can help you in complying with the honor code, please do not hesitate to ask. I will do the same.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Campus Resources for Students

In your time at Georgia Tech, you may find yourself in need of support. Below you will find some resources to support you both as a student and as a person.

Academic support

- Center for Academic Success <http://success.gatech.edu>
 - 1-to-1 tutoring <http://success.gatech.edu/1-1-tutoring>
 - Peer-Led Undergraduate Study (PLUS) <http://success.gatech.edu/tutoring/plus>
 - Academic coaching <http://success.gatech.edu/coaching>
- Residence Life's Learning Assistance Program <https://housing.gatech.edu/learning-assistance-program>
 - Drop-in tutoring for many 1000 level courses
- OMED: Educational Services (<http://omed.gatech.edu/programs/academic-support>)

- Group study sessions and tutoring programs
- Communication Center (<http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu>)
 - Individualized help with writing and multimedia projects
- Advising and Transition (<https://advising.gatech.edu>)
 - Study Strategies Seminar course <https://advising.gatech.edu/gt2801-study-strategies-seminar>
 - Academic coaching <https://advising.gatech.edu/academic-coaching>
 - Advising in your major <http://advising.gatech.edu/>

Personal Support

Georgia Tech Resources

- The Office of the Dean of Students: <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/get-help-now>; **404-894-6367**; Smithgall Student Services Building 2nd floor
 - You also may request assistance at https://gatech-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid383662?
- Center for Assessment, Referral and Education (CARE) **404-894-3498**; <https://care.gatech.edu/>
 - Smithgall Student Services Building 1st floor
 - Students seeking assistance from the Counseling Center or Stamps Psychiatry need to visit CARE first for a primary assessment and referral to on and off campus mental health and well-being resources.
 - *Students in crisis may walk in during business hours (8am-4pm, Monday through Friday) or contact the counselor on call after hours at 404-894-2575 or 404-894-3498. Other crisis resources:* <https://counseling.gatech.edu/content/students-crisis>
- Students' Temporary Assistance and Resources (STAR): <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/star-services>
 - Can assist with interview clothing, food, and housing needs.
- Stamps Health Services: <https://health.gatech.edu>; **404-894-1420**
 - Primary care, pharmacy, women's health, psychiatry, immunization and allergy, health promotion, and nutrition
- OMED: Educational Services: <http://www.omed.gatech.edu>
- Women's Resource Center: <http://www.womenscenter.gatech.edu>; **404-385-0230**
- LGBTQIA Resource Center: <http://lgbtqia.gatech.edu/>; **404-385-2679**
- Veteran's Resource Center: <http://veterans.gatech.edu/>; **404-385-2067**
- Georgia Tech Police: **404-894-2500**; <http://www.police.gatech.edu>

National Resources

- The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) | 1-800-273-8255
 - Free and confidential support 24/7 to those in suicidal or emotional distress
- The [Trevor Project](#)
 - Crisis intervention and suicide prevention support to members of the LGBTQ+ community and their friends
 - Telephone | **1-866-488-7386** | 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
 - [Online chat](#) | 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
 - Text message | Text "START" to **687687** | 24hrs day, 7 days a week

Summary of Sessions

Please note that I reserve the right to make **changes** in this schedule (including readings), and students will have adequate prior notice, via email, Canvas, and during class beforehand.

TENTATIVE Class Schedule Spring 2026 - MGT4196 (subject to change)				
Week	Class	Date	Day	Description
1	1	13-Jan	Tu	Introduction to course and answer class questions
	2	15-Jan	Th	McKinsey Approach to Prob Solving (Canvas) & Resume submitted
2	3	20-Jan	Tu	McKinsey Approach to Prob Solving (Canvas) & Individual proposed topics DUE
	4	22-Jan	Th	Sample Client Statements Presented - Pitch for team topics
3	5	27-Jan	Tu	Announce teams, Hypothesis Driven Thinking & Before the Hyp (2 HBS readings)
	6	29-Jan	Th	Broken Trust: Enron Debacle (HBS) & Team project topic Friday
4	7	3-Feb	Tu	BOOK: My Life in Full - Ch1 thru 4. India, Yale & BCG
	8	5-Feb	Th	"My Rookie Moment" McKinsey Video series -Team discussion
5	9	10-Feb	Tu	Developing Professionals The BCG Way (HBS)
	10	12-Feb	Th	Managing Client Conflicts (HBS) & Individual Assignment DUE before class
6	11	17-Feb	Tu	BOOK: My Life in Full - Ch5 thru 8. Strategy in 2 Corporations then Pepsi
	12	19-Feb	Th	Mason Pisciotta Home Depot (S&I Alum '22)
7	13	24-Feb	Tu	Class Project: First team status updates with online feedback & Mentor Memo 1 Friday
	14	26-Feb	Th	Sonia Alvarez-Robinson Exec Director GT Strategic Consulting (GTSC)
8	15	3-Mar	Tu	BOOK: My Life in Full - Ch 9 &10 PepsiCo CEO and design Thinking and "How Indra turned Design into Strategy" ARTICLE (HBS)
	16	5-Mar	Th	Anand Shah Senior Partner KPMG & 1st mentor check memo Friday March 6th
9	17	10-Mar	Tu	"Why Lean Changes Everything", "Problem Reframe It" and "10 Tools for Design Thinking" (HBS)
	18	12-Mar	Th	Anna Andani Delta (S&I Alum '24) & Team Goals memo Fri
10	19	17-Mar	Tu	"Use Design Thinking to Build Commitment" & "Regaining R&D Leadership: The Role of Design Thinking" (HBS)
	20	19-Mar	Th	BOOK: My Life in Full - Ch11 thru 12. Work life going forward & Ind. Design Thinking
		24-Mar	Tu	Spring Break - Holiday
		26-Mar	Th	Spring Break - Holiday
11	21	31-Mar	Tu	Biology of Corporate Survival (HBS)
	22	2-Apr	Th	2nd Project Updates & Class Feedback
12	23	7-Apr	Tu	Readings and Concepts Exam
	24	9-Apr	Th	"How Will You Measure Your Life" (HBS) & draft written report Friday
13	25	14-Apr	Tu	Presentation Prep time and work on 2nd mentor memo
	26	16-Apr	Th	Team Presentations (2)
14	27	21-Apr	Tu	Team Presentations(2)
	28	23-Apr	Th	Team Presentations (2) and Individual reflections due Friday
15	29	28-Apr	Tu	Final Class Day -Team Presentations (2)
Final Written Team Project Report is due by NOON Friday May 1st				