**CRITICAL THINKING AND COMMUNICATION   
 BU 113**  
 **Spring Semester 2013**

**Teaching Team:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
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**Required Text:**

Ebert, R.J. & Griffin, R.W. (2013) Business Essentials (9th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall

**Course Objectives:**

Critical Thinking and Communication in Business (BU 113) aims to introduce students to basic business concepts and begin to develop the analytical, communication, and research skills necessary for success as a manager. Course objectives include:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental concepts in management, marketing, and finance by applying them in real and hypothetical contexts;
2. Think critically and analyze situations and issues from the perspective of various stakeholders: the company, the customer, the investor, and society;
3. Apply ethical decision making principles for business decisions in terms of ethical norms and analyze effects on various stakeholders (company, customers, investors, society);
4. Improve business communication skills: writing**/**grammar, presentations, and group discussion. Synthesize material from the class text, lectures, research, and personal/group experiences.
5. Develop relevant research skills, including the use of business databases, Internet resources, surveys, interviews, and proper citations (in text and references).

**Course Structure:**

This will be a team-taught course. Class will meet in large or medium group sessions for lecture material and periodically will meet in smaller groups for discussions, activities and presentations. There will be both team and individual assignments. Students are responsible for both reading and lecture material.

**Location of classes:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Large groups | Cheray 101 |
| Medium groups | Cheray 101 and JEM 290 |
| Small groups: |  |
| Scott | JEM 290 |
| Nelson | Cheray 101 |
| Bauer-Ramazani | JEM 168 |

**Assignments:**

**Individual Work**

1. **Résumé and Cover Letter.** Each student must prepare a résumé showing his/her personal experience and qualifications for a selected job position, as well as an accompanying cover letter. The resume will be used in interviews leading to team management decisions regarding human resource allocations. The resumes will also be a part of the team’s business plan. Students will receive critical feedback on marketing themselves through the resume, and on business writing. (**Assesses Objectives 1, 4**)

1. **Stakeholder Research Paper.** Each student will prepare a critical analysis and research paper on a recent ethical issue in business from the perspective of the company, the customer, the investor or society. Students will demonstrate their ability to assess ethical norms (as outlined by the [Josephson Institute of Ethics](http://www.josephsoninstitute.org/)); apply guidelines for making ethical decisions in the workplace (Kant’s Categorical Imperative, the Utilitarian Principle, the Professional Ethic, the TV test, and more); and analyze the effects of business decisions on various stakeholders (customers, suppliers, investors, employees, the community and others). Through this project, students also learn and apply relevant business research and critical thinking skills. A discussion/debate will follow in class. (**Assesses Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5**)
2. **Finance Application Memo**. Each student will prepare a financial review of a publicly traded company based on publicly available information about the company. The student will then prepare a 2-3 page memo (single-spaced) comparing the company to another firm in the industry. Students will incorporate research from business resources and provide in-text citations and references. (**Assesses Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5**)
3. **Team Evaluation.** Each student will prepare written interim and final team evaluations. In the interim evaluation, each team member will receive constructive feedback on his/her performance so corrective action can be taken to improve. Failure to follow through on the interim evaluation will adversely affect the grade on the final team evaluation. The final evaluation will be a 2-3 page memo evaluating the functioning of the team as a whole. It will also discuss corrective actions taken following the interim team evaluation and whether or not they were effective as well as what the students have learned about themselves. Students will complete and attach individual evaluations of each team member using a performance evaluation form. (**Assesses Objectives 1, 2, 4**)

1. **Self-Reflection Analysis**. During the final exam period, as part of the management and critical analysis focus of this course, students will write a memo discussing what they have learned about business, stakeholders and themselves from their experiences in this course. (**Assesses Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4**)

**Group Assignments**

1. **Run a group business.** Each team will select a product or service and sell it during the semester. The professors may prohibit the selling of an inappropriate good or service. (See business principles below.) The team will develop a marketing strategy, market the product, and keep financial records. (**Assesses Objectives 1, 2, 3**) Associated assignments include:
2. **Business Plan.** Each team will submit and present a business plan, including a management, marketing, and financial plan, describing the nature of their business concept. The projected income statement, beginning balance sheet and revised résumés of each team member should be attached. (**Assesses Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5**)
3. **Report to Shareholders.** Each team will report, analyze and present the performance of its business from marketing, financial, and management perspectives, and discuss suggestions for improvement. In addition, students will discuss their business experience from the perspective of various stakeholders (customers, investors, the company, and society) and draw connections between their experience and other discussions and projects in the course (site visit, stakeholder research paper, marketing stakeholder memo). (**Assesses Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5**)
4. **Product Pitch.** Each team will prepare a 1-2 minute commercial for their business, using some form of technology (beyond PowerPoint). For example, this can be a radio or video ad. Between one and five points will be awarded. These points will be added to each student’s marketing exam grade.

Each company will issue stock to investors ($.25 /share), with the whole class representing the investment community; each student is required to invest at least $1. **Shares may not be** **sold to investors outside BU 113**. Companies will be liquidated and dividends paid at the end of the semester. **A minimum of 20 shares must be offered.** Companies must pay a 10% income tax, and tax proceeds will be donated toward charitable purposes as directed by the students.

**Note that the following principles apply to the type of business you may select and the manner in which you must manage it:**

* Products/services offered by student teams at Saint Michael’s College must be legal, ethical, safe and consistent with the college’s mission.
* Use of SMC name/official logos requires permission of the SMC Director of Marketing.
* Products/services that promote or encourage use or abuse of alcohol and/or drugs are prohibited. No beverage containers of any kind will be allowed (no bottles, cups, mugs or glasses).
* Promotion and sale of products/services must be consistent with college policies, including no soliciting sales or delivery of products in dorm rooms.
* Product and product slogans must be approved by your professor.

1. **Site Visit and Stakeholder Analysis Memo**. Each company team will research and analyze a real company based on a site visit. Based on their interview the team will prepare a written analysis and presentation from the perspective of the stakeholders they represent (company, customers, investors or society). (**Assesses Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5**)
2. **Marketing Stakeholder Memo.** Students will analyze a marketing case from the perspective of the various stakeholder groups (company, customers, investors or society). A discussion/debate will follow in class. (**Assesses Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5**)

**Note**: For each group assignment, students will identify how well each group member contributed to the assignment, assign a percentage contribution grade, and attach any PowerPoint slides.

**Exams**

1. **Exams:** The three exams during the semester will not be cumulative, but will cover both lecture and reading material.

**Grading:** The student body of BU113 will decide on the first day of class on the distribution of percent for Individual Assignments, Group Assignments, and Exams. Individual assignments must carry no less than 30% and exams no less than 20%. The teaching team will weight specific assignments within the framework of the distribution arrived at by the students.  
 **% Due Date\***

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Résumé and cover letter (I) |  | 1/25 |
| Exam #1 (E) |  | 2/6 |
| Site Visit & Stakeholder Analysis Memo / Presentation (G) |  | 2/13 |
| Stakeholder Research Paper (I) |  | 2/27 |
| Business Plan and presentation (G) |  | 3/4 |
| Interim Team Evaluation (I) |  | 3/8 |
| Team response to group evaluation meeting (G) |  | 3/22 |
| Finance Application Memo (I) |  | 3/25 or 4/19 |
| Marketing Stakeholder Memo (G) |  | 3/25 or 4/19 |
| Exam #2 (E) |  | 3/27 |
| Product Pitch (G) | Bonus | 4/8 |
| Team Evaluation & Performance Appraisals (I) |  | 4/12 |
| Exam #3 (E) |  | 4/22 |
| Report to Shareholders and presentation (G) |  | 4/29 |
| Self-Reflection Analysis (I) |  | On or before 5/6 @ 9 AM |
| Peer Review (based on team and instructor evaluations) (I) |  | ongoing |
| Group Business Performance (G) |  | ongoing |

Total: 100 %

I= Individual project; G= Group project; E= Exam

\*Late work may be graded down or not accepted.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students must abide by the Saint Michael’s College Academic Integrity policy as outlined in the college catalogue and Student Handbook. Violations of academic integrity include the following: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, interference, and multiple submissions. Sanctions may include repeating the assignment with a grade reduction, failure for the assignment, a grade reduction for the course, failure for the course, or dismissal from the course (Saint Michael’s College [Policy on Academic Integrity](http://www.smcvt.edu/On-Campus/Offices-and-Services/Academic-Affairs/Academic-Integrity-Policy.aspx)).

**Attendance:**

Students should understand that the main reason for attending college is to be guided in their learning activities by their professors. This guidance takes place primarily in the classroom and laboratory. Students are expected to meet all scheduled classes unless prevented from doing so by illness or other emergencies. Failure to do so will adversely influence a student’s grade and may be reported to the Associate Dean of the College (Saint Michael’s College Class [Academic Regulations](http://catalog.smcvt.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=140#acad_regu)).

**Learning Disabilities**If you have a documented learning disability, please see the College’s Learning Disabilities Policy, and contact the Director of Accessibilities Services in Klein 111 or at 654-2828. Discuss options with your professors as soon as possible.

BU113 Grading System

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| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | A | 94-100 | or 4.0 | C | 73-76 | or 2.0 | | A- | 90-93 | or 3.7 | C- | 70-72 | or 1.7 | | B+ | 87-89 | or 3.3 | D+ | 67-69 | or 1.3 | | B | 83-86 | or 3.0 | D | 60-66 | or 1.0 | | B- | 80-82 | or 2.7 | F | Below 60 | or 0 | | C+ | 77-79 | or 2.3 |  |  |  | |

**Course Schedule: Spring 2013**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Day** | **Topic / Format** | **Reading due** | **Assignment due** |
| 1/14 | M | Introduction (small) |  |  |
| 1/16 | W | Résumé (large) |  |  |
| 1/18 | F | Form Groups/Group Dynamics (small) |  |  |
| 1/21 | M | Introduction to Marketing (large) | Chapter 11 |  |
| 1/23 | W | Introduction to Management (large) | Chapter 5 |  |
| 1/25 | F | Types of Business Ownership(small) | Chapter 3, pp.72-80 | **Resume and Cover Letter**  **Plagiarism tutorial quiz**  **Team performance goals** |
| 1/28 | M | Interview for Jobs and Stakeholder Perspectives (small) |  | **Bring 4 Copies of Résumé and Cover Letter.** |
| 1/30 | W | Structure of Organizations (large) | Chapter 6 |  |
| 2/1 | F | Site Visit Prep, Exam review guide (small) |  | **Revised resumes** |
| 2/4 | M | U.S. Business System (large) | Chapter 1 |  |
| 2/6 | W | **Exam #1 (small)** (**Ch. 1, 3, 5, 6, 11**) |  | **Study for exam.** |
| 2/8 | F | Business Communications (large) |  |  |
| 2/11 | M | Presentation Skills (small) |  |  |
| 2/13 | W | **Site Visit Presentations (small)** |  | **Site Visit & Stakeholder Analysis Memo & Presentation** |
| 2/15 | F | Break |  |  |
| 2/18 | M | Introduction to Business Plan (large) | Ch. 3, pp.58-71 | **Submit idea for group business.** |
| 2/20 | W | Ethical Context of Business (small) | Chapter 2 |  |
| 2/22 | F | Intro to Business Research Skills & Resources (medium/small) | Chapter 13 | **Bring Laptops to class, if possible.** |
| 2/25 | M | Business Research Skills & Resources: Working session (medium/small) |  | **Bring Laptops to class, if possible** |
| 2/27 | W | **Stakeholder discussion** (small) |  | **Stakeholder Research Paper** |
| 3/1 | F | **Marketplace (TBA)** |  | **Introduce Product/Service.** |
| 3/4 | M | **Business Plan Presentation (small)** |  | **Business Plan/ Presentation** |
| 3/6 | W | Finance-Inc. Stmt(small) **or** Marketing: Product (medium) | Ch. 14 p.356-370 (finance) or Chapter 11 (marketing) |  |
| 3/8 | F | Finance-Online research (computer labs JEM 142/140) or Marketing: Promotion (medium) | Ch. 12 (marketing) | **Interim Team Evaluation** |
| 3/11-16 | M-F | **Spring Break** |  |  |
| 3/18 | M | Finance-B/S (JEM 378) or Marketing: Leading and Motivating (medium) | Ch. 14 p.356-370; Ch.16 p. 423-426 (finance) or  Chapters 8 & 9 (marketing) |  |
| 3/20 | W | Finance Ratios (JEM 378) / Marketing: Price (medium) | Ch. 14 p. 370-380 (finance): or Chapter 12 (marketing) |  |
| 3/22 | F | Finance-Working Session (JEM 378) **/** Marketing: Place (medium) | Chapter 12 (marketing) | **Team response to team evaluation** |
| TBA |  | Finance Project Help Session |  |  |
| 3/25 | M | Finance-Risk, Return (small) / Marketing: Stakeholder discussion; Exam review guide. | Finance: Ch.16 p. 426-434 | **Marketing Stakeholder Memo**  (from Marketing Group)  **Finance Application Memo**  (from Finance Group) |
| 3/27 | W | **Exam #2 Finance (small):**  **Ch. 14, 16 OR**  **Marketing (medium): Ch. 2, 8, 9, 11, 12** | **Ch. 14, 16 (finance) Ch. 2, 8, 9, 11, 12 (marketing)** | **Study for exam.** |
| 3/29-4/1 | F-M | **Easter Break** |  |  |
| 4/3 | W | Human Resources (large) | Chapter 10 |  |
| 4/5 | F | Finance-Inc. Stmt.(small) **or** Marketing: Product (medium) | Ch. 14 p. 356-370 (finance) or Ch. 11 (marketing) |  |
| 4/8 | M | **Product Pitch (large)** |  | **Product Pitch** |
| 4/10 | W | On-line research (computer labs) / Marketing: Promotion (medium) | Ch.12 (marketing) |  |
| 4/12 | F | Finance-B/S (small) or Marketing: Price (medium) | Ch. 14 p. 356-370; Ch. 16 p. 323-326 (finance) **or** Ch. 12 (marketing) | **Team Evaluation Memo and Performance Appraisal forms** |
| 4/15 | M | Finance Ratios (small) / Marketing: Place (medium) | Ch. 14 p. 370-380 (finance) or Ch. 12 (marketing) |  |
| 4/17 | W | Finance-Working Session (small) **/** Marketing: Leading & Motivating (medium) | Ch. 8, 9 (marketing) |  |
| TBA |  | Finance Project Help Session |  |  |
| 4/19 | F | Finance-Risk, Return (small) / Marketing: Stakeholder discussion; Exam review guide. | Finance: Ch.16 p. 426-434 | **Marketing Stakeholder Memo**  (from Marketing Group)  **Finance Application Memo** (from Finance Group) |
| 4/22 | M | **Exam #3 Finance (small):**  **Ch. 14, 16**  **OR Marketing (medium)**: **Ch. 2, 8, 9, 11, 12** | **Ch. 14, 16 (finance) Ch. 2, 8, 9, 11, 12 (marketing)** | **Study for exam.** |
| 4/24 | W | Shareholder report working session (small)  Hand out Shareholder Report assignment |  | **Bring data on sales, expenses, inventory, shares outstanding and a calculator to class.** |
| 4/26 | F | Team Reflection Meeting (large or TBA) |  | **Hand in or email completed financial statement worksheet to your professor for review.** |
| 4/29 | M | **Shareholder Report Presentations (small)** |  | **Report to Shareholders and presentation**  **Team Evaluation Update (if required by your professor)** |
| 5/1 | W | **Dividend and Tax Distribution**  **Course Evaluation (small)** |  | **Dividends and Taxes due** |
| **Final Exam** |  | **Self-Reflection Analysis** |  | **Self-Reflection Analysis Due on or before 9 AM, May 6 (final exam period)** |