COURSE SYLLABUS

Business 492
Problem Assessment and Critical Thinking
Fall 2006
Class times: Thursday 5:00–8:50 p.m. or Friday 1:00-4:50 p.m. in MH 125

Instructors
Keith Butler, Director of College Operations
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Course Description
Review of problem identification, problem solving, critical thinking, consultation, project management, and strategies for team effectiveness. Following formation of teams and project assignment, members prepare a Letter of Engagement for their senior experience project.

Text
Designing and Managing a Research Project: A Business Student’s Guide
M. J. Polonsky and D. S. Waller
ISBN 0-7619-2249-0

Course Website
The course has a place on Web CT, where you will use the Discussion Boards, post the electronic versions of your assignments and view your grades. You should visit this site often, as all announcements relevant to the course are posted at this location.

Course Learning Objectives
This course serves two purposes, the first of which is to review the individual and team skills necessary for successfully completing the team-based project you will complete in BUS 493. The second is to be sure that you have completed all of the requirements to embark upon the Senior Experience project. Among the desired outcomes of the class are:

- To review and apply team process concepts to form a functional Senior Experience team

1 The instructors reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as needed.
• To review and apply research skills that will help you successfully undertake your Senior Experience project
• To learn project management concepts that will help your team make good progress on your project
• To learn how to write a professional Letter of Engagement outlining the approach to completing your project.

**Academic Honesty**

“Students will be expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the Student Academic Honesty Policy. All written work and oral presentation assignments must be original work. All ideas/material that are borrowed from other sources must have appropriate references to the original sources. Any quoted material should give credit to the source and be punctuated with quotation marks.

Students are responsible for honest completion of their work including examinations. There will be no tolerance for infractions. If you believe there has been an infraction by someone in the class, please bring it to the instructors’ attention. The instructors reserve the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty, in accordance with the general rules and regulations of the university. Disciplinary action may include the lowering of grades and/or the assignment of a failing grade for an exam, assignment, or the class as a whole.”

**University Writing Requirement**

CSUSM has established a 2500 word writing requirement for each course. To meet this requirement, each student in this course will complete the individual and group writing assignments described in this course outline.

**ADA Statement**

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations must be approved for services by providing appropriate and recent documentation to the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 5205, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TTY (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive reasonable accommodations should request a meeting with the instructors outside of class to ensure confidentiality.

**Grading**

Grades of A (4.0), B (3.0), C (2.0), D (1.0) and F (0.0) will be awarded for this course. A grade of C (2.0) or better is required for a student to be allowed to continue into BUS 493.

**NOTE:** ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN AT LEAST TWICE EACH MEETING, AND BEING PRESENT FOR THE FULL MEETING IS MANDATORY. If you miss any of these attendance verifications/meetings you will not be allowed to continue

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2 From CSUSM Senate Resolution on Syllabus Guidelines
into BUS 493 Fall 2006, and will be required to retake BUS 492. If a student does not attend the full session for all three meetings of BUS 492 one of two outcomes will occur:

1) If the student earned a grade of at least a “C” (2.0) in the graded coursework for BUS 492, that student will receive an overall grade of “C-” (1.7) for BUS 492 and will need to retake 492/493 the following semester.

2) If the student earned a grade of “D” (1.0) or “F” (0.0) in the graded coursework for BUS 492, that student will receive a grade of “F” (0.0) in BUS 492 and will need to retake 492/493 the following semester.

If you attend the full session for all three meetings of BUS 492, AND if you turn in all of your required paperwork at the end of BUS 492, then the following grading criteria will apply:

**Week One**
Quiz on homework required prior to the start of class in Week One …….. 10%
CSU Business Assessment Test (given in class)………………………….. 10%
Web CT Discussion Board entries prior to Week One—cumulative grade end of Week Three

**Week Two**
Team Contract homework assignment from Week One……………………… 10%
Quiz on homework required prior to the start of class in Week Two …….. 10%
Project Management in-class assignment in Week Two……………………. 10%
Web CT Discussion Board entries prior to Week Two—cumulative grade end of Week Three

**Week Three**
Quiz on homework required prior to the start of class in Week Three … 10%
Web CT Discussion Board entries prior to Week Three—cumulative grade end of Week Three …………………………………………………….. 10%
Company and Industry Research Report……………………………………. 20%
Draft Letter of Engagement …………………………………………. 10%

Total 100%

**NOTE:** LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

A grade of A (4.0) will be awarded for 90-100%
A grade of B (3.0) will be awarded for 80-89.99%
A grade of C (2.0) will be awarded for 70-79.99%
A grade of D (1.0) will be awarded for 60-69.99%
A grade of F (0.0) will be awarded for less than 60%
Description of Graded Components

1. Quizzes
These are scantron-based, and require completion of homework assignments prior to the beginning of each course. They will be administered soon after the start of each class meeting. **YOU MUST BRING A RED SCANTRON SHEET, YOUR STUDENT ID NUMBER (e.g. @00-XX-XXXX) AND A PENCIL WITH YOU TO CLASS—NONE WILL BE PROVIDED.** A grade of 0-10 will be given for each quiz, which matches to the overall contribution of each quiz to your final course grade.

2. In Class Assignments
These assignments will be discussed in class.

3. Discussion Board
Located in WebCT. During BUS 492 the Discussion Board is used to help form teams, to ask questions of other students, and to begin reflection on the Senior Experience Process. The reflection that regular (weekly or more often) writing about your process engenders has been demonstrated through research to significantly enhance your outcomes from courses of this type. Thus, you are required to log in with a significant contribution at least weekly with a posting that requires original thinking. It can be a new post, or comments to someone else, and **you are expected to continue this process during BUS 493. Asking questions of other teams during BUS 493 is an especially good use of the Discussion Board.**

There are three general areas to the **Discussion Board:**

a. **Team Formation**—this area is to be used to communicate with other prospective team members as you work to establish your teams of four or five students.

b. **Questions, Comments, Areas to Improve**—this area is meant for you to talk with other individuals/teams about what they are going through and learning—discuss your projects, your BUS 492 instructors, your BUS 493 Faculty Supervisors, the Sponsor Contact, the Organization—whatever you like. The point here is for all of you to work together to solve the problems that occur. Keith and Regina will monitor this Discussion Board on occasion to insure that no one is engaging in personal attacks, using profanity, etc. Please remember to be respectful in your actions towards others.

c. **Process Journal**—this area is to be used for you to write about the process you are going through with the Senior Experience program. Again, the point here is reflection—write about your development through the process—what
have you seen, or learned, that is different from when you started the course? There is no specific requirement, other than regular weekly postings in BUS 492 for your BUS 492 grade and during BUS 493 for your BUS 493 grade. Write enough so that your instructors can see that you have reflected well upon your learning opportunities.

Postings will be reviewed, both during BUS 492 and BUS 493. A grade of 0-10 will be given at the end of Week Three of BUS 492, which matches to the overall contribution of the Discussion Board contributions to your final course grade, but no more than 1/3 of the final 10 points can be earned in any one week.

4. Company and Industry Research report
This assignment is expected to reflect substantial research and coherent writing (DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CUT AND PASTE DIFFERENT TEAM MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS INTO A FINAL DOCUMENT WITHOUT FULLY REVIEWING THE FULL TEXT FOR ONE WRITING “VOICE”). The Business Librarian, Ann Fiegen, will be available to help you with finding sources, but you should not approach her until you have thought through your team’s approach to this assignment.

A template of the Company and Industry Research report will be found in WebCT.

A grade of 0-20 will be given for the Company and Industry Research report, which matches to the overall contribution of it to your final course grade. The final Company and Industry Research report is due by 1:00 p.m. PDT Friday, September 1st, both electronically (posted to WebCT) and hard copy delivered in class.

5. Draft Letter of Engagement
This assignment is to be presented in the style of a formal business letter, from your team to the Sponsor Contact, cc’d to your Faculty Supervisor and to Keith. This letter should reflect what you understand the project to be, what methodologies you plan to use, and what the objectives/outcomes and overall deadlines are for the objectives/outcomes. Think of this as a type of contract between you and the Sponsoring Organization—you are committing to accomplish certain tasks, and the Sponsoring Organization is agreeing to that scope of work. You will finalize this Letter of Engagement with both your Faculty Supervisor and the Sponsor Contact during the first week of BUS 493, but your draft should reflect critical thinking and inclusion of all knowledge of the project to date.

A template of the Draft Letter of Engagement will be found in WebCT.
A grade of 0-10 will be given for the Draft Letter of Engagement, which matches to the overall contribution of it to your final course grade, and it is due by 1:00 p.m. PDT Friday, September 1st, both electronically (posted to WebCT) and hard copy delivered in class.

Schedule
BUS 492 will meet four hours per week for three weeks. It will be offered in two sections, both meeting in ACD 102:

Thursday evenings, starting August 17th, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., OR Friday afternoons, starting August 18th, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Attendance will be taken at least twice each meeting, and EACH MEETING IS MANDATORY. If you miss these meetings you will not be allowed to continue into BUS 493 Fall 2006.

Team formation
Students should form into teams prior to the start of BUS 492. Be sure to bear in mind the assignment process for projects. The Criteria for matching teams with projects:

1. Your team’s education and work experiences matched to the needs of the project. The projects have a stated mix of backgrounds required, from the list of ACCT, FIN, GBM, IT, MGSCI (Management Science), POM, MKTG, MGMT & HR, and your team composition will be examined to see if you have the background necessary for that project.

2. Your team’s Project Preferences—be sure to look at how many other teams have the same preference.

Faculty Supervisors and their available meeting times for Weeks 3-15 of the semester will be listed in the Database, matched to each project, for your consideration.

Important Dates
August 17 & 18

- BUS 492 begins. Class begins on time each week—do not be late—there is a quiz at the start of class each week covering tasks you were assigned to complete prior to class.
Meeting #1:

- Opening Quiz
- Understanding of team contracts
- Finalizing Team formation
- Review of entire SE process
- Understanding available projects
- Understanding the project matching process
- CSU Business Assessment Test in second half of class

Eighteen Hours of Scheduled Homework:

- Your team information and project preferences must be in the SE Database by Tuesday, August 22nd at 9:00 a.m. Have the team Contact Person put the Team information into the SE Database.
- Your team will input its Project Preferences, and will be matched to a Project prior to the beginning of Meeting #2. Have the team Contact Person put the Team Preference information into the SE Database.
- Team Contract Homework Assignment— the assignment will be discussed in Class #1 and is due at the beginning of Class #2.
- Reading Assignment prior to Meeting #2— the assignment will be posted on the Course Website.
- Video Assignment prior to Meeting #2— the assignment will be posted on the Course Website.

August 24 & 25

Meeting #2:

- Opening Quiz
- Understanding typical project outlines
- Project Management
- Methodology/Research Overview
- Attendance verification in second half of class

Eighteen Hours of Scheduled Homework:

- Reading Assignment prior to Meeting #3— the assignment will be posted on the Course Website.
- Video Assignment prior to Meeting #3— the assignment will be posted on the Course Website.
Company and Industry Research assignment electronic copy e-mailed to Keith Butler (kbutler@csusm.edu) prior to the start of Meeting #3.
Company and Industry Research assignment hard copy turned in at start of Meeting #3.
Letter of Engagement Draft assignment electronic copy e-mailed to Keith Butler (kbutler@csusm.edu) prior to the start of Meeting #3.
Letter of Engagement Draft assignment hard copy turned in at start of Meeting #3.

August 31 and September 1

Meeting #3:

- Opening Quiz
- Working with Sponsor Contacts and Organizations
- Professional and Business etiquette
- Working with your Faculty Supervisor
- Process for turning forms in and registering for BUS 493
- Attendance verification in second half of class

Homework:

- Review BUS 493 Syllabus.
- Set an appointment to meet with Sponsor Contact.
- Set an appointment to meet with Faculty Supervisor.
- Prepare to discuss the following at both meetings:
  - Introductions
  - Methodology
  - Letter of Engagement Finalized
  - All forms signed

BUS 493

BUS 493 begins at the end of BUS 492, in the week of September 4th, and will require an all-team meeting with the faculty supervisor each week throughout the rest of the Fall semester.

The week of September 4th all BUS 493 students in the large section will be moved by the Senior Experience office to individual CRNs for their specific Faculty Supervisor. If a student does not receive a grade of “C” (2.0) or better in BUS 492
that student will BE DROPPED from BUS 493 and will need to retake 492/493 the following semester. If a student does not bring, and send electronically, the required documentation to the Senior Experience office (Markstein Hall, Room 126) by 5:00 p.m. PDT Friday, September 8th that student will receive a grade of “F” (0.0) in BUS 492 and will need to retake 492/493 the following semester.

The required documentation is:

☐ Office of Community Service Learning form (individually)
☐ Student Guidelines form (team, plus Sponsor Contact and Faculty Supervisor)
☐ University Partnership Agreement (Sponsor Contact)--if required by Procurement
☐ Any additional documentation from Risk Management as specified