COURSE DESCRIPTION
The goal of 603 is to provide students with an integration experience. Student teams work with a client in a consulting role and are required to write a comprehensive business plan for this client. I assume that students have the necessary professional skills to create the plan, although help from me and other sources is available, of course. During the first week, students receive information about the projects and businesses, are assigned into teams, select a project according to their interests and meet with the client. During the remainder of the semester, students meet and interact with one or several contact persons at the client, engage in various forms of research, and prepare and write a professional business plan. There are also weekly meetings with the course instructor. The class culminates in the plan presentations during finals week. The presentation is followed by a Q&A that doubles up as an oral exam testing each student’s individual knowledge regarding all aspects of the plan.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE
1. Apply and integrate knowledge acquired during your career as a student to real business problems, involving analysis, solution development, and implementation.
2. Sharpen your communication skills by interacting with professionals, writing a comprehensive report, and presenting it to a challenging audience.
3. Engage in entrepreneurial and strategic thinking.
4. Learn how potential entrepreneurs create opportunities and capture the rewards of their activities (or how they might miss them).
5. Recognize and demonstrate the interaction between different business areas, e.g. innovation/R&D, operations, financing, accounting, management, and marketing.
6. Develop basic managerial skills such as leadership, decision making, and prioritizing.
7. Perform as part of a group of peers challenged by a demanding project with severe time constraints.
8. Improve skills in achieving group effectiveness.
9. Show integrity, courtesy, reliability, and respect for others.
10. Learn to teach yourself by working independently.

THE PROJECTS
During the first week of formal class meetings, I will assign you to a team of 5 – 6 members (depending on number of projects available). Teams will select projects described on a separate handout. Each team takes on one specific project. From then on, we will have weekly group meetings but no regular class meetings until the presentations begin. Once you have selected your project, it becomes yours. You meet with and continue contact with the client independent of me.
The projects involve writing a business plan for individuals, businesses, not-for-profits or start-ups in the Western Montana region. These are real business situations where clients are putting their money and reputation on the line. Therefore, the results of your efforts have to be excellent. Each report must be of professional quality before it is considered finished and sent to the client. Also—and importantly—use appropriate ethical conduct in all your work (see Appendix E).

Each team needs to get and keep in touch with its selected client on at least a weekly basis throughout the course. In meetings, through phone calls, etc. you need to establish rapport, find out precisely what the client’s needs are and define the project. Also, you should create a time plan for the project. Please share this plan with me during our first group meeting. Given the short timeframe of the class and the amount of work involved, students need to manage the work of their teams effectively. I expect that the work will be done solely by your team with occasional assistance from your client, me or one of the business school faculty. If significant sections of the written plan come from your client, you need to indicate that to me.

**Requirements/Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Business plan presentation*</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Individual performance during presentation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Written business plan*</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Peer evaluation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reflective paper</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*group grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. & 2. Business Plan Presentation and Individual Performance

Each team will present its work to the client and a group of faculty during finals week (in person or online via Zoom). Each presentation will take ~45 minutes, with no more than 25 minutes actual presentation (which may be interrupted by questions) and 20 minutes of Q&A with the client and faculty. Each student needs to perform part of the presentation.

Participating faculty are some of your instructors during your graduate classes. Thus, there may be a marketing, finance, accounting, etc. professor present that could ask individual presenters specific questions building on their courses and as they relate to your plan. Evaluation of all presentations is based on the form in Appendix A. Individuals will be evaluated regarding their knowledge of the entire plan and presentation skills by the faculty group (that’s why I call this an “oral exam”). However, assume your audience for the presentation to be potential investors. Thus, be sharp in your presentation.

3. Written Business Plan

A general outline for business plans is attached in Appendix D - this is illustrative only. The plan content should be discussed with the client and me. Find the format for the title page in Appendix B of this syllabus. References and sources of data should be listed throughout the document in the form of footnotes. The length of written text cannot exceed 20 pages, but additional exhibits can appear in the appendix. Your final deliverables should be submitted via Moodle.

The report is graded based on its comprehensiveness, substance, attention to detail, consistency, writing style (e.g., one voice, not individual sections; clear; convincing) and professional appearance. The plan is due 24 hours before the time of your presentation. Late
submissions will be penalized with one letter grade (10 pts.) if submitted within the next 24 hours after being late, but are not accepted later than that unless prior arrangements have been made with your instructor.

4. **Peer Evaluation**
The ability to work with others is crucial. Success requires synergy and effective cooperation. Equal input is expected from each team member; use your management skills to ensure this. Of course, I am open to discuss group problems. A team member can be expelled at any time from a group based on a unanimous decision of the other team members and in agreement with the instructor. The expelled team member can either join another team or finish the project on his/her own.

This peer evaluation for the consulting project will concentrate on evaluating whether each member of the group did their fair share of the work at high quality and conscientiously. The related form is in Moodle.

The peer evaluation is converted to a percentage. It will directly affect your grade as the two group grades (written plan and presentation) will be averaged and multiplied with your peer evaluation to come to your project peer evaluation grade. For example, assume that the average of your group grades is 90 pts. and that your peer evaluation is 85%. Your peer evaluation grade is $90 \times 85\% = 76.5$ pts.

5. **Reflective Paper**
After you have completed and presented the business plan, write a one-page essay (11pt font, normal line spacing) in which you each individually critically evaluate your team effort during this course, addressing issues such as leadership, teamwork, strategy for this project, ethical issues, available or missing know how, performance relative to the client’s, the instructor’s and your own expectations, etc. Support your claims with specific information and draw on relevant concepts and principles you have acquired on these topics in your MBA program if possible. The grading rubric for this assignment is in Appendix F. The paper is due with the peer evaluation via moodle.

**GENERAL COURSE POLICY**

1. **Prerequisites**
The prerequisite for MBA 603 are successful completion of MGMT 665. The instructor reserves the right to administratively drop, at any point, any student who has not met the prerequisites.

2. **Academic Honesty**
Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of dishonesty will result in a zero point grade for the assignment. Make sure that you properly cite throughout all your reports all your sources of information so that they can be identified by the reader. Using footnotes is required.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php).
3. **Written Assignments**
   For the written assignments, writing style, the appropriate use of headlines, spelling, grammar, etc. are taken into consideration for grading. Assignments must be submitted in one document, printed on standard paper (8.5” x 11”), have one inch margin all around, 1.5 line spacing and 12-pt. font size. Overall professional appearance is mandatory. Any deviations will result in lost points.

4. **Scale for Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>930 - 1000</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>870 - 929</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>830 - 869</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700 - 729</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 - 699</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 599</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 500</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
   Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations in this course. To request course modifications, please contact me as soon as possible. I will work with you and Disability Services in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at [http://www.umt.edu/dss/](http://www.umt.edu/dss/) or call 406.243.2243 (Voice/Text).

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA MBA PROGRAM

*College of Business Mission Statement*
The University of Montana’s College of Business is a collegial learning community dedicated to the teaching, exploration, and application of the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a competitive marketplace.

*Master of Business Administration Mission Statement*
Serve our region by educating leaders that effectively manage organizations in the global environment.

*Master of Business Administration Assessment and Assurance of Learning*
As part of our assessment process and assurance-of-learning standards, the MBA program has adopted six learning goals for our students. These are as follows:

- SOBA MBA graduates will demonstrate...
  - integrated knowledge and understanding of various business functions *
  - strong communication skills supportive of their leadership abilities *
  - integrity and ethical behavior in individual and collective work *
  - analytical and critical thinking in decision making
  - an understanding of emerging trends in information technology and the interplay between information technology and organizational strategy
  - an understanding of the implications of the global business environment.

* as evaluated in this course

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**
1. **Will clients be provided for us?**
   A list of clients with projects will be provided. All clients are selected at the instructor’s discretion.
2. **Will I have to work in a team?**
   Yes, students work in teams of class participants.

3. **Can I choose my team members?**
   No, I will assign teams. My main criteria for group selection are diversity in skills and experience.

4. **What if two or more teams apply for the same project?**
   No project can be executed by more than one team. If more teams apply for one project, the instructor will assign this project to the team which apparently has the most appropriate skills, unless this conflict can be resolved between the competing teams.

5. **How are meetings with the instructor scheduled?**
   I will meet with each group on a weekly basis at a scheduled time during the class time or otherwise mutually agreed time.

   FOR ANY REMAINING UNCERTAINTIES FEEL FREE TO ASK ME!