Course Information

Course Title: Business Consulting
Course Number: BUSM798Q
Professor: Nicole Coomber (she/her); Albert Krall (he/him)
Reachable at: ncottre@umd.edu; albert.krall@gmail.com
Term: Spring 2022
Credits: 2
Course Dates: January 25 - March 17
Course Times and Time Zone: Monday and Wednesday, 10:00 AM - 11:50 AM, EST
Office Hours:
Prof Coomber: Wed 12:30-1:00 p.m. and Thu 2:00-3:00 p.m. in VMH4518 or [Zoom](#)
Prof Krall: By appointment; please email albertkrall@gmail.com
Classroom: VMH 1336

Course Description
Consulting I is designed to help students develop the three essential skills for a successful consulting career: teamwork, analysis, and presentation skills. Professors Coomber & Krall will help you develop these three skills through class discussion and applied exercises.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, you should be able to achieve the following learning objectives:

- Work constructively as a team to analyze a business situation and present clear, convincing, and well-supported recommendations;
- Approach problem solving using a structured methodology;
- Understand the business imperatives of consulting firms and the dynamics of the consulting industry;
- Reflect on your own performance in a team and as an individual and make recommendations for future improvement.

This class will not teach you data analytics, strategy, marketing, operations, finance, or any other business discipline. Nor is it designed to teach you all the possible consulting frameworks, since there are as many frameworks as there are consulting firms. This course will also not cover how to case interview, although the skills you learn here will be helpful for case interviews. Students are expected to build upon the classes they have taken in the core curriculum and be proactive about seeking outside knowledge using tools such as VBIC.

Course Materials
- Required:
  - Garrette, B., Phelps, C., and Sibony, O. (2018) *Cracked it: How to solve big problems and sell solutions like top strategy consultants.* Palgrave MacMillan. ISBN 978-3-319-89374-7
    - [Amazon Link](#)
    - [Publisher Site](#)
- Optional (selections of these readings will be posted on Canvas):

- Maister, D., Green, C. H., Galford, R. M. (2001). The trusted advisor. Simon and Schuster. ISBN 978-0743212342. [A scanned excerpt will be provided on Canvas]
- Minto, B. (1987). The pyramid principle: Logic in writing and thinking. ISBN 0-9601910-2-X. [Book is out of print but can still be found; a scanned excerpt will be provided on Canvas]

Course Outline & Assignments

Full Course Outline:

Session # and Date	Topic	Deliverable
1 **Wed, Jan 25**	**Welcome & Defining Management Consulting** - Before class: - Read Garrette, Ch. 1 During class: - Follow along with slides - Complete your avatar - Participate in breakout session After class: - Review introductory exercise and ask questions during office hours if needed	

2
Mon, Jan 30
	The Consulting Industry & Consulting Skills
	Before class:
	- Complete Exercise #1
	
	During class:
	- Follow along with slides
	- Participate in your breakout session
	- Begin Goal-Setting Exercise
	
	After class:
	- Work on your team's presentation on the following cases from the textbook:
	  - Team 1 & 2: Case 1, When the Music Industry Went Out of Tune
	  - Team 3 & 4: Case 2, The Grameen-Danone Strengthening Yogurt
	  - Team 5 & 6: Case 3, The Call Center Story
	  - Team 7 & 8: Case 4, New Strategy at JCPenney
	  - Team 9 & 10: Case 5, A Fat Chance for Sugar
	- Be prepared to present at your team's scheduled session
		Exercise #1

3 **Wed, Feb 1**	**Pitfalls of Problem Solving (Presentations Teams 1-5)** Before class: - Upload your team's presentation to Canvas During class:	**Goal-setting Exercise** **Team Presentation #1 (Teams 1-5)** **Peer Review #1 (during class)**

	• Present with your team • Complete peer evaluations of your fellow students during class via Google form After class: • Review faculty & peer feedback on your presentation	
4 **Mon, Feb 6**	**Pitfalls of Problem Solving (Presentations Teams 6-10)** Before class: • Upload your team's presentation to Canvas During class: • Present with your team • Complete peer evaluations of your fellow students during class via Google form After class: • Review faculty & peer feedback on your presentation	**Team Presentation #1 (Teams 6-10)** **Peer Review #1 (during class)**
5 **Wed, Feb 8**	**Stating the Problem** Before class: • Read "The 4S Method in One Page" (posted on Canvas) • Read Garrette, Ch. 4 During class: • Follow along with slides • Participate in breakout session After class: • Attend office hours if needed	
6 **Mon, Feb 13**	**Structuring the Problem** Before class: • Read Garrette, Ch. 5-7 During class: • Follow along with slides • Participate in breakout session • Midpoint Expectations Discussion (Google Form) After class: • Touch base with your team to plan how you will meet for Monday's session • Start working on Team Presentation #2	
7 **Wed, Feb 15**	**Structuring the Problem - Presentations (Teams 6-10)** Before class: • Upload your team's presentation to Canvas During class:	**Team Presentation #2 (Teams 6-10)** **Peer Review #2 (during class)** **Midterm Peer Evaluation (after class)**

	- Present with your team - Complete peer evaluations of your fellow students during class via Google form After class: - Review faculty & peer feedback on your presentation	
8 **Mon, Feb 20**	**Structuring the Problem - Presentations (Teams 1-5)** Before class: - Upload your team's presentation to Canvas During class: - Present with your team - Complete peer evaluations of your fellow students during class via Google form After class: - Review faculty & peer feedback on your presentation	**Team Presentation #2 (Teams 1-5)** **Peer Review #2 (during class)** **Midterm Peer Evaluation (after class)**
9 **Wed, Feb 22**	**Understanding & Managing the Client** Before class: - Read excerpt from *The McKinsey Way*, posted on Canvas - Read excerpt from *The Trusted Adviser*, posted on Canvas - Complete Exercise #2 During class: - Follow along with slides - Participate in breakout session After class: ● Touch base with your team to plan how you will meet for Wednesday's session	
10 **Mon, Feb 27**	**Live Case** Before class: - Read summary of client problem, posted on Canvas During class: - Participate in case session - Participate in breakout session with your team - Ask client questions After class: ● Meet with team to begin working on live case	**Exercise #2**
11	**Client Q&A**	

Wed, Mar 1	Before class: ● Teams prepare one question per team to the client During class: ● Client representatives will be present to answer student questions After class: ● Student teams should create a draft of their final presentation for the client.	
12 **Mon, Mar 6**	**Sell the Solution** Before class: ● Read Garrette, Ch. 10 & 11 During class: ● Follow along with slides ● Participate in breakout session After class: ● Meet with team to continue working on live case	

13
Wed, Mar 8
	Faculty Office Hours (Teams 1-5)
	Before class:
	● Create draft presentation to run through with faculty advisers
	● Read except from Minto, The Pyramid Principle posted on Canvas
	
	During class:
	● Arrive in classroom at your scheduled time
	    ○ Team 6:
	    ○ Team 7:
	    ○ Team 8:
	    ○ Team 9:
	    ○ Team 10:
	● During the remaining class time, meet with your team and send questions via email to client
	
	After class:
	● Incorporate faculty feedback into your team's presentation
		Team Presentation #3 (Draft)

14 **Mon, Mar 13**	**Faculty Office Hours (Teams 6 - 10)** Before class: ● Create draft presentation to run through with faculty advisers ● Read except from Minto, The Pyramid Principle posted on Canvas During class: ● Arrive in classroom at your scheduled time ○ Team 6:	**Team Presentation #3** **Peer Review #3** **Final Peer Evaluation**

	○ Team 7: ○ Team 8: ○ Team 9: ● During the remaining class time, meet with your team and send questions via email to client After class: ● Incorporate faculty feedback into your team's presentation	
Final Presentations Wed, Mar 15 10:30AM-1PM and Thur, Mar 16 5PM-7PM	**Final Presentations (during final exam time)** *N.B. Teams only need to attend during the 2-hour block for their client. Details will be provided closer to the date so please block out the entire time for now.* Before class: ● Upload your team's presentation to Canvas During class: ● Present with your team ● Complete peer evaluations of your fellow students during class via Google form After class: ● Review faculty & peer feedback on your presentation	**Final Deliverable - Self-Evaluation due Mar 14**

Team Assignments
- Team Presentations #1-3
- Midterm & Final Peer Evaluation
- Peer Reviews #1-3 (during class)

Individual Assignments
- Goal Setting Document
- Exercises #1-2
- Self-Evaluation
- In-class participation

Grading Structure

Assignment	Points
Individual Assignments	
Goal Setting Document	10
In-Class Participation	10
Exercise #1	10
Exercise #2	20
Self-Evaluation	40
Team Assignments	

Team Presentation #1	50 (40 points + 10 points peer reviews)
Team Presentation #2	50 (40 points + 10 points peer reviews)
Team Presentation #3	75 (40 points + 10 points peer review + 25 points client assessment)
Midterm Peer Evaluation	10
Final Peer Evaluation	25
Total	**300**

Course Policies

University Class Policies
Students are responsible for knowing their rights and reviewing all course related policies found at this link to **UMD's Graduate Schools list of Course Policies.**

Class Assignments/Discussions/Participation
The primary goal of our discussions is to enhance the collective learning of the class. The following guidelines can help you make effective contributions to our class discussions. Please see the following list of tips for effective and meaningful discussion participation.

Examples of Good Discussion Contributions:
- Comments that report and explain content, opinions, or analysis by stating clear assumptions, critically self reflecting, citing specific sources, and/or conducting explicit, systematic analysis
- Comments/questions that provide or seek clarification
- Comments with good timing as well as good substance providing substantiated claims and evidence and sharing sources where possible
- Comments that make points clearly
- Comments that move learning forward by building an argument and/or drawing on other comments
- Comments that respectfully articulate a point of agreement/disagreement

Examples of Ineffective Discussion Contributions:
- Destructive personal or intellectual attacks
- Interrupting peers
- Monopolization of the discussion
- Disrespectfully articulating a point of agreement/disagreement
- Out-of-sequence comments / destroying the flow of class discussion

Recording and Online Privacy

Our class sessions will all be recorded for use by enrolled students, including those who are unable to attend live. Students who speak during class are consenting to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, please discuss this with your faculty immediately.

Resources & Accommodations

Accessibility and Disability Services
The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The **Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS)** provides reasonable

accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682, or email them at **adsfrontdesk@umd.edu**. Information about **sharing your accommodations with instructors**, **note taking assistance** and more is available from the **Counseling Center**.

Student Resources and Services
Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit **UMD's Student Academic Support Services website** to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you.

In particular, everyone can use some help sharpening their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting **UMD's Writing Center** and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center.

You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need (**UMD's Student Resources and Services website** may help). If you feel it would be helpful to have someone to talk to, visit **UMD's Counseling Center** or **one of the many other mental health resources on campus**.

Basic Needs Security
If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please visit **UMD's Division of Student Affairs website** for information about resources the campus offers you and let me know if I can help in any way.

Statement on Diversity and Inclusion
As part of the **Smith School's commitment to diversity and inclusion**, we recognize the importance of a diverse student body as necessary to a THRIVING environment. We are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. The Robert H. Smith School of Business strives to ensure all members of the Smith community feel welcomed, valued, and proud of every aspect of who they are. Through education, knowledge creation, advocacy, programming, and support, Maryland Smith commits to building an inclusive community that fosters a sense of belonging among all stakeholders.

I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

Technology Policy
Please refrain from using cellphones and other electronic devices during class sessions unless we have designated such use as part of a class exercise. Students who need to use laptops to take notes may do so, but please ensure that you are not distracting other classmates with the content of your computer screen. If you plan to "toggle" back and forth in a way that other students might find distracting, please plan to sit at the back of the classroom. In general in a consulting environment, your managing partners and clients should understand why you are using a laptop during meetings so you may want to make them aware. During guest presentations we may ask you to stow your laptop as a courtesy to our guests.

Faculty Expectations
- We will respond to emails within 48 hours. Feedback on assignments and grades will be returned in a timely manner, targeting an interval of 7 working days.
- We will hold ourselves to the same high standards we hold our students

- We will be responsible for communicating any and all course, grading, or syllabus changes
- We will do our best to ensure all students have a positive learning experience in our classroom
- We will do our best to ensure all students have a voice in our classroom

Student Expectations

While the following is not an exhaustive list and in no way can replace your grade in this class, the rubric below can assist you in clarifying how to be successful in this course. If you are concerned at any time that you are falling behind please contact us via email as soon as possible.

Unsatisfactory	Beginning	Developing	Excellent
Poor attendance	Mostly on-time attendance	Consistent, on-time attendance	Consistent, on-time attendance
Little or no meaningful contribution to class discussion	Occasional participation or contributions to class discussion	Frequent meaningful participation or contributions to class discussion	Consistent meaningful participation or contributions to class discussion
No or late submission of major assignments	On-time submission of all assignments	On-time submission of all assignments	On-time submission of all assignments
Minimal effort on assignments (inside and outside of class)	Demonstrated effort on some assignments	Demonstrated effort on most assignments	Demonstrated effort on all assignments
No high quality output on any learning assessment or subpar quality across several learning assessments	High quality output on some learning assessments	High quality output on most learning assessments	High quality output on all learning assessments
Disrespectful classroom etiquette	Respectful classroom etiquette	Respectful classroom etiquette	Respectful classroom etiquette

Attendance and Participation

- Given the interactive style of this class, participation will be crucial to learning and your performance in this class. Attendance is particularly important also because class discussion will be a critical component for your learning.

- Each student is expected to make substantive contributions to the learning experience, and attendance is expected for every session.

- Students with a legitimate reason to miss a live session should communicate in advance with the instructor, except in the case of an emergency.

- Students who miss a live session are responsible for learning what they miss from that session.

- Additionally, students must complete all readings and assignments in a timely manner in order to fully participate in class.

Absences and Late Policy

Late assignments require prior permission from the instructor and must be accompanied by a legitimate reason for not meeting a target deadline.

The complete university policy on absences can be found here.

As per university policy, one missed class with an email notification (preferably before) is acceptable. For absences longer than 1 class session, or more than twice in the semester, documentation is required.

With appropriate documentation students will be given a 48-hour grace period for major individual assignments (Exercise #2, and Self-Evaluation) without a grade penalty. Team assignments must be presented in class and therefore cannot be presented late. If a student needs more than a 48-hour grace period, please contact us to discuss your options. There may be a late penalty assessed.

For Major Scheduled Graded Events (MSGEs), only University approved absences (religious observance, unforeseen life circumstances out of your control (with documentation), or documented illnesses with appropriate documentation will be accepted.

Academic Integrity

The University's **Code of Academic Integrity** is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld. In accordance with this code, the Smith School does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this code and its implications because all acts of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this code. All students are expected to adhere to this Code. It is your responsibility to read it and know what it says, so you can start your professional life on the right path. **As future professionals, your commitment to high ethical standards and honesty begins with your time at the Smith School.**

It is important to note that course assistance websites, such as CourseHero, are not permitted sources for Smith School courses, unless the instructor explicitly gives permission for you to use one of these sites. Material taken or copied from these sites can be deemed unauthorized material and a violation of academic integrity. These sites offer information that might not be accurate and that shortcut the learning process, particularly the critical thinking steps necessary for college-level assignments.

Additionally, it is understandable that students may use a variety of online or virtual forums for course-wide discussion (e.g., GroupME or WeChat). Collaboration in this way regarding concepts discussed in this course is permissible. However, collaboration on graded assignments is strictly prohibited unless otherwise stated. Examples of prohibited collaboration include collaborating with fellow students on your case analysis, quizzes, or your self-evaluation.

Finally, on each exam or assignment you must write out and sign the following pledge:

"I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."

To help you avoid unintentional violations, *the following table* lists levels of collaboration that are acceptable for each type of assignment. If you ever feel pressured to comply with someone else's academic integrity violation, please reach out to me straight away. Also, *if you are ever unclear* about acceptable levels of collaboration, *please ask*!

	Open Notes	**Use Book**	**Ask Friends**	**Search Online**	**Work in Groups**
	Students may look at their class notes while they complete this deliverable	Students may look at the assigned course textbook/readings while they complete this deliverable	Students may get help from classmates, friends, or others to complete this deliverable	Students may search the web for related ideas or information while they complete this deliverable	Students may complete the deliverable through joint work with others
Goal Setting Document	✓	✓		✓	
In-Class Participation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exercise #1	✓	✓			

Exercise #2	✓	✓			
Self-Evaluation	✓	✓		✓	
Team Presentation #1	✓	✓		✓	✓
Team Presentation #2	✓	✓		✓	✓
Team Presentation #3	✓	✓		✓	✓
Midterm Peer Evaluation	✓				
Final Peer Evaluation	✓				

Course Evaluation

Please submit a course evaluation through CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. Campus will notify you when CourseEvalUM is open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses. Please go directly to the **Course Eval UM website** to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing through Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Please note that the only individuals who see the comments you write are the instructors. We ask that you keep your comments professional and free from gendered language. If you have serious concerns about the course, please bring them to the instructors during the course rather than using the course evaluation as a forum for course improvement.

Copyright Notice

Course materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission.

About the Instructor
Nicole Coomber

Nicole completed her PhD in Education Policy and Leadership in May of 2012 at the University of Maryland's College of Education, and is an Associate Clinical Professor at the Robert H. Smith School of Business. She teaches organizational behavior, management consulting, and leadership in the undergraduate, MBA, and online MBA programs. Dr. Coomber also serves as the interim assistant dean for the full-time MBA program. She has consulted with organizations including Gilbane Associates, ABC Construction, and Sequoia Equities on diversity & inclusion and HR. Dr. Coomber is married to a federal government attorney. They have four boys.

Albert Krall

Albert "Ab" Krall '81 earned his undergraduate degree in Information Systems Management, when the Smith School was called the College of Business and Management. There were many companies seeking graduates who could write computer programs, but Ab was attracted to the consulting industry by the diversity of experiences offered, the extensive training and the chance to work alongside highly-talented colleagues.

He went to work for Accenture (then Arthur Andersen) after graduation and stayed there for a 27-year career. After a cross-industry foundation for 6 years, his work focused on the telecommunications marketplace, and

he worked with companies such as Verizon, AT&T, Iridium, BellSouth and Vodafone. He and his family spent 5 years overseas - twice in Australia and once in Japan. He retired from Accenture in 2009, and went back to consulting as a Managing Director at Deloitte, from which he retired in mid-2017. Ab also served as chair of the Smith School Advisory Board, where he continues as a board member. He and his wife Kristen live in Annapolis and have three children, where they enjoy all activities associated with life on the Bay.