This is a “projects” course, focusing on learn-by-doing rather than only learn-by-reading/listening. If you do not like to work in teams, this is very likely NOT the course for you. And for undergraduates, it’s an “open honors” course, which means that you must qualify as either an Honors Program participant or someone who passes a screening by the Honors advisor in the Bauer College. All graduate students are welcome who have some familiarity with Marketing, via a course or experience.

Instructor: Dr. Betsy Gelb, 385E Melcher Hall, gelb@uh.edu, 713-743-4558. Office hours: Wed. 10-11:45 and 1:30 – 2:30.

Class meets: Mondays and Wednesdays, 387 Melcher Hall, 2:30 – 4 p.m. (not in 120, despite what the schedule says). But often it doesn’t meet, because you are working on your projects. Consequently, when it does meet you are expected to be there or to let me know in advance what’s preventing you from attending. There is no textbook and there are no exams.

I use WebCTVista to send grades; other material is at http://www.bauer.uh.edu/gelb

Purposes of the course:

1. Increasing your sophistication concerning consulting, marketing planning, client relations, oral presentations, teamwork, written communication

   • Sophistication concerning working in teams is measured by your satisfaction in doing so and the quality of output

   • Understanding of how managers and professionals evaluate marketing presentations of all kinds means understanding that all presentations are, whatever else, marketing presentations

   • Communication skills in written and oral presentations reach a professional level only when everything you say or write would be clear to a college sophomore and would at the same time gladden the heart of a purist in the English language. It is a marketing reality that people who confuse “its” and “it’s” do not appear to be as smart as they need to be, and those who don’t proofread over and over again do not appear to be as careful as they need to be.

2. Achieving a positive outcome for a not-for-profit organization
Learning Goals:
This course addresses the following learning goals for the BBA Program: (1) disciplinary competence, (2) communication, and (3) critical thinking skills.

Format: You'll work in teams of three (usually), meet with your client, prepare a proposal, present it to the rest of the class, and have it approved by the client in general terms and by me in very specific terms. Then:

• You'll do the work you proposed, or may amend it as you go along and see a better direction. The work will include a break-even model showing the financial consequences needed to justify what you propose.

• You'll keep both the client and me up to date on progress through regular reports.

• You'll present the results of your work to the class and to the client.

• You'll turn in a written report to me and then to the client.

During the time you are working on your project, you will meet with the client at least four times. You'll meet with me at least once, and will prepare progress reports for me.

Beyond the scope of your project, you are encouraged to get media publicity for your client organization.

Grading
Your semester grade is based on a 100-point scale:

• Proposal -- up to 20 points

• Class participation, oral presentations, attendance, and progress reports form the individual component of your grade, up to 20 points. Whoever writes a progress report should sign it. Please note that there are four, so please see that everybody on your team writes at least one. Each should be in memo form and contain zero errors of any kind.

• The group’s break-even model is worth up to 10 points.

• The project provides up to 50 points. Your client evaluates your project, but my evaluation is the one that controls your grade.

All team members get the group proposal grade, the grade on the break-even model, and the group project grade as long as there is no sub-par rating by a teammate, which means operationally that your evaluation from the group must average at least 2.8, on a 3-point scale. Below 2.8 but above 2.2, you lose 1/5 of the points awarded to your team. At 2.2
or below, you lose 2/5. It makes **excellent** sense to check regularly with your teammates to make sure that your work is considered satisfactory or better.
Note: There is no credit for late assignments. I assume that someone in your group is healthy and mobile even if someone else is not. If you haven’t seen your client when a progress report is due, please turn in a report saying so and giving the date when you will see the client, then turn in a report immediately after that meeting.

Two notes from the Bauer College Dean’s office:

The University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy is strictly enforced by the C. T. Bauer College of Business. No violations of this policy will be tolerated in this course. A discussion of the policy is included in the University of Houston Student Handbook, http://www uh.edu/dos/hdbk/acad/achonpol.html. Students are expected to be familiar with this policy.

The C. T. Bauer College of Business would like to help students who have disabilities achieve their highest potential. To this end, in order to receive academic accommodations, students must register with the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) (telephone 713-743-5400), and present approved accommodation documentation to their instructors in a timely manner.

Schedule

August

21 M Review of syllabus. Completion of forms

23 W Assignment of teams and clients. Time to get together and get organized. If you will miss this class but are staying in the course, it’s a MUST to let me know that before class. It’s a lousy way to treat a potential teammate to have that person wondering whether you are taking the class or not.

28 M Discussion of client meetings, client relations, proposals

30 W Deadline for scheduling your first meeting with your client. Discussion of how to resolve things when teammates don't see eye to eye or you don't see eye to eye with your client.

September

4 M Labor Day – no class

6 W Also no class today; you are meeting with your client this week.

11 M First progress report due, describing meeting with your client and your plans for your proposal. Teams sign up today for meetings class the time slots that would work for you, even if inconveniently. This is your last chance to ask questions about your proposal, so smart folks will have completed a draft so you know what your questions ARE.
13  W  No class -- you are working on your proposal.  But I’ll have your progress report, with my comments, available for you to pick up in the Gelb mail slot in the copier room behind the reception desk in 385 by 2:30.

18  M  **Proposal due.** One person from each team will informally present today what you plan to do this semester for your client. Also a written proposal that is in finished, professional form is due in to me at 2:30 p.m.

20-21  W-Th  Team meetings with me in my office, 385E. We’ll talk about your proposal and what you can show the client as a proposal general enough to cover a range of projects if necessary. No Wednesday class.

25  M  Discussion of money -- how you will incorporate in your project the projected break-even scenario for your clients in dollar terms.

27  W  No class -- you should meet with your client this week to discuss what you are proposing to do for your project, including their role in providing information and helping in whatever other ways are needed.

**October**

2  M  **Second progress report due.** How did your client react to your proposal discussion? Are you planning to make any changes in what your team discussed with me? What did you learn about the client organization? Please remember -- specifics are good; generalities are bad; misspelling the name of the organization or anyone in it is awful. Then lecture/discussion of publicity. This is something you can do to help your client think you are wonderful.

4  W  No class, but I will have your progress report ready to return with my comments in the Gelb mail slot by 2:30.

9  M  Speaker on not-for-profit organizations for part of this class: Dr. Jane Harding, Executive Service Corps. Then we’ll leave a half hour at the end of class to meet in teams so that if you have questions for me, I’m there to answer them.

Right about now, you should be working on your project, big-time. If you have the slightest question or qualm, I want to know about it. That's what phones and e-mail are for. Even if it's a detail, let me know -- please! And you need to meet with your client sometime this month.
Third progress report due. I want to know what is new with your client, what problems you are having, how far along you are. It makes perfectly good sense to prepare as much of your project as you have done (certainly the background section and what you are doing for this client) and turn it in as an attachment to this report. I am happy to comment, and this isn't a graded assignment so you get a free critique, in effect. It’s fine to include a “trial balloon” break-even model so you get that critiqued as well. We’ll discuss any questions you have about those in particular, but any questions are fine.

November

1 W No class, but I will have your progress reports ready to return today at 2:30, so please have someone from your team come up during what would have been the class period to pick them up. You want my comments on the break-even model that is part of your progress report before you turn it in next Monday for a grade, right?

6 M Pro forma break-even model due. One person on your team presents to the class your model of how whatever your project recommends will financially affect your client. Please also turn in your model in writing, complete with an introduction (roughly one page) that would allow someone to understand it with no previous knowledge of the client organization or of what you are doing. I’ll have it graded and ready to pick up by 2:30 Wednesday; please have some team member come to pick it up.

27 M Project due. One member of your team presents it to the class. The project in writing is due in to me at 10. It incorporates the break-even model, possibly revised. It is prepared to be delivered to the client.

29 W Projects returned, and we’ll discuss your presentations to your client. Do set up the appointment for that presentation early, please; people disappear in December, and you don’t get a grade without an evaluation from the client. I’ll ask you when you will be presenting to the client, so please have that date. Teacher evaluation; please bring a pencil.

December No class – you are presenting to your client. Please be sure I receive the client’s evaluation sheet no later than Monday, December 11. And please turn in with that sheet a copy of your report and a final progress report, since you will obviously have visited the client to make your presentation.