WHCP 891 (.25 cu) Internship Term Paper
Syllabus – Summer 2016

Course Overview:

This course has been developed for MBA students who are about to enter their second year, and who will be doing a summer internship in the United States. It is a pilot, offered for the first time in Summer 2016, and the maximum enrollment is 50 students. The grading is pass/fail, and all submissions will take place through the course's dedicated Canvas site.

As a course with a paper requirement, WHCP 891 offers you an opportunity to reflect on some of the knowledge you acquired during your first year at Wharton applied in a business setting. If the terms of your internship preclude you from writing about your internship, there is the option to enroll in the MGMT 891:900 class.

Please note that if you are an international student and you take this course in support of your curricular practical training, not passing can impact your ability to gain work authorization in the U.S. post graduation.

Course Due Dates and Requirements:

Jun 20, 2016 (at 11:59 P.M. EST)—Preview Paper—Submit a preview of your final paper that explains its purpose and structure. The preview should be approximately 250 words.

August 21, 2016 (at 11:59 P.M. EST)—Final Paper—Submit your final paper (see assignment description below). Your final paper should be approximately 2,000--2,500 words. If you wish to add tables or charts, please add an appendix. An appendix and a list of references will not count toward your word limit.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. **Improve Your Ability to Write Clearly and Concisely**

How to achieve that goal: Students will receive individualized feedback from a professional writing coach on their papers' structure, support, usage, style, and grammar.

2. **Analyze Communication Effectiveness in the Workplace**

How to achieve that goal: See paper requirements below.

3. **Determine Industry Best Practices for Use of PPT and Visualization of Data:**

How to achieve that goal: Survey peers and colleagues to determine effectiveness and best practices re: use of PPT (or other slide software) and of visualization of data. Since the MBAPO will compile results and share them among all students in this pilot, students will learn insights about PPT and visualization of data across different industries in the U.S.

Final Paper Description:

Please note that your final paper will remain confidential. The only people who will read it are those responsible for your grade.

Your final paper will have four sections titled:

- Summarize
- Analyze
- Survey
- Propose

Begin by identifying **two initiatives** at your summer internship in which you were directly involved that had a communication component.

For each initiative:

Summarize– Summarize your involvement with the initiative, as well as each initiative's objectives and context, along with the challenges of executing the initiative and some of the obstacles that you or your colleagues addressed.

Analyze—Use the questions below to develop an analysis of how communication was practiced at your internship for each of the two initiatives you've chosen. You're welcome to comment on both oral and written communication as they relate to the following questions:

- What did effective communication at your internship look like (give examples)?
- What did ineffective communication look like (give examples)?
- How, if at all, was the effectiveness of communication measured or evaluated at your internship (informal debrief after presentations or pitches, etc.)? Is there a process in place? Comment on that process if it exists, and suggest ideas for evaluation if none exist.
- What sort of feedback, if any, did you receive on your communication skills?
- What did you learn from the feedback?
- What changes would you have made to improve the effectiveness of communication for this initiative?

- Summarize key communication learnings from this initiative.

Survey—Gather and analyze best practices on slide-use and visualization of data. Students conduct only one survey - explained below.

Please note that, unless otherwise instructed, we plan to share the survey results with the other students in this course. **Please specify any aspects of your survey that are confidential and can't be shared with other students.**

Begin by gathering data on effective slide-use from a minimum of five of your friends or colleagues. You can refer to slide-use and data visualization from any project this summer – the survey doesn't need to reflect projects from your paper (above). If your friends are working in different industries from you, you'll include observations about different firms' approaches.

How you gather the data is up to you. You can create a formal survey, schedule conversations with people, whatever you like, but **you are required to pose and learn answers to the following seven questions**:

1. What industry are you working in this summer?
2. What type of slide software does your employer use?
3. Does your employer rely on a specific approach to slide design?
4. If yes, how would you characterize that approach, and/or what are the firm's objectives in using this approach? (More about objectives below)
5. When are slides used? before, during, and/or after a meeting, pitch or discussion?
6. Approximately what percentage of slide decks' content is:
   a. Data
   b. Text
   c. Images/pictures
7. In general, how are data presented? e.g., charts, graphs, infographics, tables. (If there are no generalizations to draw, simply describe a few examples).

Compile the raw data in an appendix to your paper.

After you've gathered your data, summarize slide-use at your internship by drawing from the results of your informal survey and adding your own observations. (If you surveyed friends and not work colleagues, your summary will include findings beyond your firm).

It's not always clear how firms define "effectiveness" for slides and visualization of data, but:

- Can you describe your surveyed firms' objectives for these aspects of communication? And
- Given those objectives, what suggestions do you have for improvement? Your suggestions can apply to your summer firm, or more broadly to workplace settings.

For students enrolled in WHCP 891: The MBAPO will collect and distribute the results of all student surveys. This will give students the chance to learn best practices across many diverse internships and industries throughout the U.S.

Propose: Drawing on what you learned from your internship and from surveying your peers, suggest:

- Some useful ways to measure the effectiveness of workplace communication
- Some ways to improve the teaching of communication at Wharton