ECO320
Business Leadership
Skills

Business Leadership Skills

Hours: 45
Credits: 6 ECTS
Prerequisites: none
Instructor name: Prof. Omar España A., PhD
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1. Course Description

This course is designed to equip students with essential competencies for success in today's dynamic business environment. This course focuses on developing four core skills: Effective Communication, Innovation, Collaborative Work, and Problem-Solving, which are crucial for effective leadership and decision-making in any professional setting. Through interactive activities, real-world case studies, and hands- on projects, students will strengthen their ability to communicate persuasively, think creatively, collaborate efficiently, and solve complex problems.

The course is structured around a comprehensive project, "Innovative Solutions for Future Business," where students will apply the learned competencies to design, develop, and present a business proposal. The project simulates a real-world business challenge, requiring students to work in teams, strategize solutions, and present their findings to a panel of evaluators.

Throughout the course, students will engage in team-building exercises, discussions, and prototype development, honing both individual and group skills. Each of the four course blocks focuses on one key competency, providing a structured learning experience that builds progressively. By the end of the course, students will be prepared to tackle complex business problems, drive innovation, and work effectively in diverse teams, empowering them to become effective leaders in their future careers.

2. Learning Objectives

- Enhance Effective Communication Skills: Develop the ability to communicate clearly, persuasively, and professionally in various business contexts, both orally and in writing.
- Foster Innovation and Creativity: Cultivate innovative thinking to generate creative solutions for real- world business challenges and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Improve Collaborative Work: Strengthen teamwork and collaboration skills, learning how to effectively contribute to and manage diverse teams in achieving shared goals.
- Master Problem-Solving Techniques: Apply structured problem-solving methods to identify, analyze, and resolve complex business issues with actionable solutions.
- Develop Strategic Business Proposals: Gain experience in creating business proposals that address current business challenges with innovative solutions, backed by sound reasoning and strategic planning.
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3. Formative Activities

Educational activities will be developed by means of different didactic strategies:

- Effective Communication Practice: Participate in a group discussion and give a business-related presentation to practice clarity, persuasion, and engagement.
- Brainstorming Solutions: Engage in a collaborative brainstorming session to generate creative ideas for solving a real-world business problem.
- Team Collaboration Exercise: Complete a team-based task, focusing on clear role assignment, cooperation, and the sharing of responsibilities to achieve a common goal.
- Problem-Solving Simulation: Apply problem-solving frameworks to break down a business problem and propose a practical, well-structured solution.
- Business Pitch Practice: Prepare and present a short pitch for a business solution, focusing on communication skills and persuasive techniques.
- Prototype Development: Collaborate to create a basic prototype of your solution, incorporating feedback from peers and instructors to improve functionality.
- Peer Evaluation and Reflection: Evaluate a peer's performance in collaborative tasks and reflect on the feedback to assess your personal growth.
- Refining the Final Proposal: Revise your business proposal based on feedback to ensure clarity, coherence, and thoroughness before the final submission.
- Pitch Rehearsal: Practice delivering your final pitch to peers, focusing on effective delivery, confidence, and persuasion techniques.
- Personal Reflection and Action Plan: Reflect on the skills you've developed and identify areas for continued improvement in the future.

4. Methodology

The course syllabus follows the communicative approach methods, based on the core principles of procedure conception and constructive acquisition of knowledge. The methodology is based on the teaching-learning procedures, focused on the learner, which encourages active participation and results in the development of general and specific competencies that provide knowledge, capacities and attitudes for their future professional careers.

5. Evaluation

The form of assessment is based on the core principles of the educational assessment, i.e., an active and participative teaching-learning process focused on the learner. The instructor uses numerous and differentiated forms of assessment to calculate the final grade received for this course. For the record, these are listed below. The content, criteria and specific requirements for each assessment category will be explained in greater detail in class.

5.1. Grading system

In the Spanish educational system, it is required to quantitatively express the result of each student's evaluation. In order to do so, Nebrija faculty uses different strategies and instruments such as: papers, exams, tests, projects, self-evaluation activities, etc. In order to issue a final grade for the Spanish Plus programs the following scale is established:

- 30% Attendance and active participation in class
- 30% Daily work/ Papers/ Essays
- 40% Exams/ Final papers or projects*

Therefore, the final grade is the average between attendance and participation, daily work and exams, presentations, projects and essays.

Active participation in class is evaluated by means of different activities such as:

- Activities and exercises correction;
- Reflection upon the different contents in the course;
- Oral activities (individual, in pairs or in groups). Fluency, correction, adequacy and relevance are taken into account;

Daily work makes reference to any activity or task that is done inside or outside of the classroom, whether during the class time or at any other time.

Exams/ Final papers or projects

The course includes a midterm and a final written exam on theoretical concepts and course facts. Also, two projects will be elaborated, both including an oral presentation in front of the class. If a student, unjustifiably, does not do or submit an exam, paper or project, it will be graded with a '0'.

5.2. Attendance, participation and grading policies.

5.2.1. Attendance policy

Attendance is mandatory. The maximum number of absences allowed is 6. In case of missing 7 or more sessions in one course, the student will receive a zero in his/her participation and attendance grade. In addition, not attending classes will not excuse the student from handing in in any homework, papers or essays previously assigned.

The following situations must be considered:
- There are 3 sessions of class per week. Each session of class will count as an absence.
- Two delays of more than 15 minutes will be considered an absence. The entrance to class will not be allowed after 30 minutes once it has started.
- There are no excused absences. E.g.: Not attending class because of sickness will count as an absence. The student is responsible for catching up with any homework done while absent.
- Exams dates have been officially approved by the university, therefore, they will not be changed*

*Except for those courses where the professor will set up specific dates and inform the students at the beginning of the program.

5.2.2. Criteria to evaluate participation

Criteria to evaluate participation	Grade
The student participates very actively in the class activities. S/he successfully does the requested tasks. S/he contributes to a good development of the course, encourages his/her classmates and favor debate in class.	8.5 - 10
The student participates actively in the class activities. S/he does the requested tasks and submits them on time. Shows great interest to learn.	7 - 8.4
The student, occasionally, makes interesting remarks, but s/he basically answers when s/he is asked. S/he does not show a clear interest in the course. Misses classes occasionally.	5 - 6.9
The student does not participate unless s/he is asked. S/he has unjustified absences and delays. His/her attitude is not very participative.	0 - 4.9

5.2.3. Criteria to evaluate Daily Work

Criteria to evaluate Daily Work	Grade
The student always does all the work demanded by the professor, not only during the class but also at home. He/she always or almost always meets the deadlines established.	8.5 - 10
The student almost always does all the work demanded by the professor, not only during the class but also at home. Occasionally, he/she submits work after the established deadline.	7 - 8.4
The student occasionally does the work demanded by the professor, not only during the class but also at home. He/she does not normally meet the established deadlines and even occasionally does not submit the work.	5 - 6.9
The student never or almost never does the work demanded by the professor. He/she never or almost never meets the established deadlines.	0 - 4.9

5.2.4. Grading criteria

Number Grade	Letter Grade	Percentage
10	A+	100%
9.5 – 9.9	A	95 – 99 %
9 – 9.4	A-	90 – 94 %
8.5 – 8.9	B+	85 – 89 %
7.5 – 8.4	B	75 – 84 %
7 – 7.4	B-	70 – 74 %
6.5 – 6.9	C+	65 – 69 %
6 – 6.4	C	60 – 64 %
5 – 5.9	C-	5 – 59 %
0 – 4.9	F	0 – 49 %

5.3. Warning on plagiarism

When writing a university paper or essay and reference is made to certain authors, it is mandatory to cite them by means of a footnote or a direct reference. In no case it is acceptable that a student uses a text, no matter how brief it is, written by somebody else without putting it in inverted commas, as this means s/he is trying to make it look as his/her own. This is called plagiarism and in a university context, it could be penalized with expelling.

6. Bibliography

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Senge, P. M. (2006). The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. Doubleday.

Porter, M. E. (1985). Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance. Free Press.

Pisano, G. P. (2015). You Need an Innovation Strategy. Harvard Business Review.

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Hamel, G., & Prahalad, C. K. (1994). Competing for the Future. Harvard Business Review Press.

Sternberg, R. J. (2006). The Nature of Creativity: Contemporary Psychological Perspectives. Cambridge University Press.

Harvard Business Review. (2015). HBR's 10 Must Reads on Innovation. Harvard Business Review.

7. Lecturer Brief CV

Omar España holds a Ph.D. in International Management from Universidad Rey Juan Carlos. He earned his undergraduate degree from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. He has a Master Degree in European Union Law from Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and Master courses in Management Sciences from Universidad Rey Juan Carlos and ESCP Europe.

He has taught at his alma mater, at Universidad de Guadalajara, at Universidad del Valle de México in Mexico. He has also worked as a lecturer and visiting professor at more than 15 universities in Spain, France, England, Germany, United States and China, among others. He has over 40 publications in specialized journals and books. He was also Coordinator of the Center for Latin American Studies where he promoted the creation of the first Mexico-European Union Studies Center.

He has developed his career within the private sector as a consultant and trainer and is Managing Director of EBA-Consulting, a firm that provides professional services in several areas of international management, talent and skills management. He has participated in several international negotiation processes between multinationals and governments. He is founder of International Relations Alumni at UNAM. and member of European Commission's Alban Alumni, FCPyS, MDUE, Cerale-ESCP-Europe and Euroscience.

His professional interests include Productivity, Human Resources, Training for Leadership International Trade, and Commercial Relations.

8. Office Hours

Tutorial schedule will be confirmed in the first couple of sessions, to guarantee that the time schedule suits the needs of students and instructor. However, it is always advisable to make an appointment with the lecturer beforehand in order to ensure availability.

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9. Course Content

MODULE 1
- Foundations of Communication: Theories of Communication
- Key Tools for Effective Communication
- Strategies for Overcoming Communication Barriers: Advanced Communication Skills
- Digital Communication and Final Practice

MODULE 2
- Foundations of Innovation
- Tools and Techniques for Innovation
- Developing Innovative Mindsets Tools and Techniques for Innovation
- Fostering Innovative Mindsets and Team Dynamics
- Personal Development for Innovators

MODULE 3
- Introduction to Collaborative Work
- Building Communication Skills in Collaboration
- Building Team Roles and Responsibilities
- Enhancing Collaborative Problem-Solving
- Building a Collaborative Team Culture
- Continuous Improvement in Collaborative Work

MODULE 4
- Introduction to Problem-Solving Skills, Problem-Solving Models and Frameworks
- Decision-Making in Problem-Solving
- Advanced Problem-Solving Techniques
- Collaborative Problem-Solving
- Evaluating and Reflecting on Problem-Solving