

## ***Strategic Management Consulting Projects***

*Academic Year: 2015-2016*

*Trimester | Semester: 1st Semester*

*Instructor(s): Rute Xavier*

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### Course Objectives:

The SMC Project is a project-oriented course in which students work as teams of consultants to support a given client to solve a real business challenge. Groups of four students work together on a given project for the whole duration of the course, in direct contact with the client organization and pursuing their own project.

Examples of projects from past years were the following:

- Galp: Claims management
  - Galp: Client experience modelling
  - *Rotenvil*: Growth strategies – QREN Programs
  - ERSAR: New entities relationship – process redefinition
  - AdvanceCare: HR management – training model
  - Caixa Económica Montepio Geral – Modelling new channels evaluation
  - Caixa Económica Montepio Geral – Mobile payments
  - Banco Santander Totta – Credit/debit cards, Custody, Leasing processes: improvements and quick-wins.
  - Caves José Maria da Fonseca - Distribution Model
  - EDP – Customer experience Model
  - Embaixada dos EUA – Program Connect to Success: women entrepreneurship
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### Course Content:

The course consists of 12 sessions of 1,5 hours between the week of early February and end of May. These hours are an opportunity for all teams to work on their projects. Sessions are used for teams to present and discuss their progress with their respective instructor. Each instructor will guide a few teams (of 4 students each) – each session is divided in slots for each team to get specific support. All individuals of each team are expected to work one full and same day per week at the client site (e.g. the whole team spends all Fridays at the client during this period, using the opportunity to make progress as a team and exchanging data / analyses / ideas on solutions with the client).

- Group presentations step 1: Identification and work plan
  - Group presentations step 2: Disaggregation
  - Group presentations step 3: Validation
  - Group presentations step 4: Recommendations
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### Course Description:

On completion of this course a student should be able to:

#### A. Knowledge and Understanding:

- Describe and follow the steps of the consulting process
- Solve real management and business challenges (consulting-like experience)

#### B. Subject-Specific Skills:

- Identify and articulate organizational challenges
- Apply effective data collection techniques
- Use analytical frameworks to organize data analysis
- Interpret analysis
- Develop implementable solutions
- Prepare project reports and client presentations

#### C. General Interpersonal Skills:

- Client relationship skill
- Teamwork

The course is based on a field project that consists of working with the client organization to define the challenge, investigate root-causes, gather relevant data, analyze the data, generate and evaluate alternative solutions and present the proposed solution to the decision-maker.

The course develops the interaction between students and client organizations, by using a collaborative consulting methodology that contributes to understand and solve real management and business challenges. Students are expected to mobilize and apply the management knowledge acquired during the rest of the program, gather further knowledge if relevant, and continually involve the client in the generation of solutions to get feedback along the project and build-up commitment for implementation. The presented methodology is used only to create a baseline of explicit knowledge from what is the typical problem resolution process:

What is the problem? (definition and understanding)

What are the main root causes? (disaggregation and prioritization)

What should be analyzed? (information and interpretation)

What are the solutions? (recommendation and communication)

This methodology helps students develop their own approaches in a coordinated and structured manner. Students sign a confidentiality agreement protecting the client's data.

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Grading:

The evaluation for this course is based on the group project follow up and final presentation. It has three components:

- Internal evaluation, regarding the focus, structure and quality of the content as well as the relevance of the recommendations.
- External evaluation by the “client” based on the performance of the consulting team and the importance of the deliverables (adequacy and applicability).
- Peer-evaluation, regarding project team evaluation.

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**Rute Xavier** was a consultant in Accenture, Consultores de Gestão, SA, since 1996. She has been managing projects mostly in Financial Services (banking and insurance practice), Telecommunications and Information Technology.

She is Master in Finance by Catolica Lisbon School of business and Economics and she has a degree in Economics by New University of Lisbon (Faculdade de Economia da Universidade Nova de Lisboa).