

BA 780 – Field Studies in Business (#03076) Spring 2004
Wednesday, 7:00 – 8:40 p.m., BA 343 (Sec 1)

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., Wednesdays on scheduled days of class only from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., By Appointment.

PREREQUISITES:) Completion of MBA Core, and 2) Currently employed or Engaging in a Business Internship during semester of enrollment.

COURSE OVERVIEW: This course provides opportunities for students to integrate their academic work with experience in the community, which is a key objective for the College of Business Administration. To achieve this objective, students will undertake a significant “learning experience” with an organization and then prepare an Integrative Analysis Report on their experiences. Most learning will occur outside of the classroom, and only a few class sessions are scheduled to focus on adding value to your learning experience and paper. The course requires 135 hours of effort at the organization and in fulfilling course requirements. This course counts as **elective** credit for any business major.

GRADING: Grading will be on a Credit/No Credit basis with “**C**” **level work** (73%) required to receive credit. Assignments may be submitted in the classroom on the due date or to the Management Office, SS 3356. Grades will be posted on Blackboard and will be based on:

- Class Participation 25 Points
- Course Contract 75 Points (Must be completed by **February 18, 2004**)
- Integrated Analysis Report 450 Points

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS: This class is supported by a **Blackboard site** (blackboard.sdsu.edu) that has the Syllabus, FAQs, and other course materials, which are incorporated in this syllabus by reference. Be sure to familiarize yourself with this material. It provides specific guidance for fulfilling course requirements and can answer many of your questions and save you time getting started. In addition, students are expected to **check this Blackboard site once a week** as this is the primary means for me to communicate important information to you. Your employer can access the same information on my faculty website: www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~rwilliam/Scheduled class meeting dates are:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Jan 21	Introduction
Feb 4	Submit Signed Contracts (See Blackboard for format) Submit Signed Waiver (Download from Blackboard) Submit Signed Employer Agreement Letter (Download from Blackboard)
Feb 18	Deadline for finalizing Course Contract with instructor to receive credit for the course. No class , except to receive revised contracts.
Mar 3	Last day to submit DRAFT 3-4 page report. No class , except to receive drafts.
Apr 21	Submit Integrated Analysis Report. No class , except to receive papers.

BA 780 PROCESS

I. Choosing your Organization. BA 780 focuses on the integration of work and learning, and requires students to have a “supervised” position with an employer. This can either be as an employee or as an intern. If you are seeking an internship, most organizations are acceptable as long as they provide a “legal” product or service for profit or not-for-profit. An internship presupposes the employer’s commitment to helping the student learn, in return for the work activities performed by the student. **Internships must be found by the student** and you can obtain assistance from the Internship Bureau in BAM 451 (619-594-4774) or contact SDSU Career Services. Once you have established an employee or intern relationship with an employer, you will need to develop a suitable **Learning Experience**.

II. Developing an acceptable learning experience. There are two types of learning experiences: a project or a series of learning activities. A project requires you to provide a deliverable to your organization that adds value, and is best suited for employed students. Learning activities are best suited for internships, and requires you to learn significant business processes. Specific details for each type of learning experience are provided below. Regardless of which type of learning experience you pursue, it must require you to apply high levels of cognitive processes in a business setting, such as applying what you have learned in school and analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of these applications. Routine tasks, such as data entry or clerical work, do not meet this high level of cognitive processes and are not acceptable. Your supervisor’s active involvement is crucial to you defining your learning experience. Your supervisor must agree to support your learning experience and later provide an evaluation of your accomplishments. Managers are always concerned with how to reduce costs, increase revenues, improve processes, or improve the quality of their product or service. Learning experiences that focus on these areas would most likely be acceptable. Regardless of the type of learning experience you pursue, you must meet the following requirements:

- You must **complete ALL activities and actions (Project) or ALL learning objectives (Learning Activity)** included in your Course Contract signed by you, your supervisor, and the instructor. Deviation from this agreement without approval of the instructor is not acceptable and will earn you a grade of No Credit. The agreement constitutes an acceptable level of effort for the granting of three units of academic credit and any reduction of this level of effort will cause you to fall short of the expectations of the course. If any activity, action or learning objective becomes untenable for reasons beyond your control, you will have to develop a new activity, action or learning objective of equivalent level of effort and have the instructor and supervisor agree to this revised effort.
- You must include in your paper as an appendix a **Supervisor’s Evaluation**. This evaluation must be on an official company letterhead and signed by the supervisor. This evaluation must: 1) indicate the total number of hours you worked, 2) provide an assessment of your satisfactory completion of Course Contract requirements, and 3) any other comments the supervisor deems appropriate to indicate the level and quality of your efforts. No credit can be received in MGT 401 if the instructor does not receive this signed evaluation with the correct information and on company letterhead.

III. Specific requirements for each type of learning experience. Samples contracts are available on the Blackboard site.

a. Project Contract: You must accomplish something that “adds value” to the organization and requires significant effort above and beyond your “routine” tasks. Projects involve solving business problems and providing a deliverable to the organization as proof of completion and value add. This option may be best for employed students. This contract is drawn up in writing by the student and supervisor. It must first be signed by the student and supervisor, and then the professor will evaluate it to ensure it meets class requirements. Please ensure your name is also printed at the bottom of the contract. Consult with your supervisor for approval, input and support. Most supervisors have many projects on their To-Do lists. Include the following in this Project Contract:

- Place your name in the upper right corner of your paper!
- A brief description of your organization, what it does, and your role.
- A clear project description of what you will accomplish, why, and what deliverables you will provide to your organization.
- Develop specific **activities and actions** you will accomplish to complete your project and specify **target dates** for completing each activity and action. Target dates must occur before your final paper is due. Also describe the **evidence** you will provide to prove your success on each activity and action. You must be able to prove you have completed each activity and action.
- An explanation of how this project will **add value** to the organization. The value must be measurable and verifiable and lead to improvements in the organization. Consider near-term value add (within time frame of class) and long-term value add. You will be held **accountable for the near-term value add** in your final report. Be sure that you can implement something and obtain results that can verify this near-term value add.
- A clear statement of the evidence you will provide to prove your project added the value stated. You must be able to prove you have added this value.

b. Learning Activity Contract: You must undertake a least five specific learning objectives that are appropriate in content, rigor, and level of difficulty suitable for upper division credit. This should involve learning “significant” business processes. It does not include learning routine tasks. You must provide proof of your learning. This option may be best for interns. This contract is drawn up in writing by the student and supervisor. It must first be signed by the student and supervisor, and then the professor will evaluate it to ensure it meets class requirements. Please ensure your name is also printed at the bottom of the contract. Your learning activity must be substantial and challenging. We expect you to learn something about how your organization functions and how to manage it. The key question is whether this learning is at a level of difficulty and appropriateness for an upper division business major. You should consult with your supervisor for approval, input and support of the learning objectives you set for the semester. Include the following in this Learning Activity Contract:

- Place your name in the upper right corner of your paper!
- A brief description of your organization, what it does, and your role.

- Provide **at least five** specific Learning Objectives that state:
 - What you will learn.
 - When (target timelines). Target dates must occur before your final paper is due.
 - A clear statement of the evidence you will provide to prove your success in learning what you state in each objective and in results attained. You must be able to prove you have learned what your objectives state.

IV. Integrated Analysis Guidelines. Content and format guidelines for your Integrated Analysis Report are on the Blackboard site.

V. Instructor Consultation. When seeking guidance from the instructor or GA regarding the acceptability of your proposed learning experience, you must be able to address in detail one of the two options described above. In addition, you must bring a **typed draft contract** in the established format for our review.