

École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne  
College of Management of Technology

SYLLABUS  
(Version: 21/11/17)

MGT 528 – Operations: Economics & Strategy  
Wed 9h15-12h, Autumn 2017  
BC 01

Instructor

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Course Website

<http://econspace.net/MGT-528.html> [*login: 528student; password: TBA in class*]

**Summary.** Supply-chain management within a firm is concerned with the flow of goods and services from firms to consumers. The design of high-performance supply chains depends decisively on the information available to the different parties. The available information technologies, together with the incentives for the sharing of information within and across firm boundaries, are of key importance for the analysis and optimization of supply chains. This course provides an overview of the economic drivers and technological possibilities for designing a successful supply-chain strategy, especially in view of information flows.

**Required Text.** There is no required textbook for this course. Current required and background readings will be posted on the course website. A list of standard references is provided at the end of this syllabus. The ones particularly relevant for this edition of the course are printed in **bold**.

**Assessment.** Students need to complete a number of homework assignments (problem sets). There will also be a final exam as well as a team project.

The final examination covers the whole of the course. The course grade is computed as follows:

$$\text{Grade} = 0.2 (\text{Problem Sets}) + 0.3 (\text{Exam}) + 0.4 (\text{Project}) + 0.1 (\text{Participation}).$$

For all *problem sets* I strongly encourage cooperation. Since some of the analysis can be demanding in terms of the new intuition required, discussing the problems with others is very important. Solutions need to be written up and handed in individually.

**Course Website.** Go to <http://econspace.net/MGT-528.html> and log in using the username and password provided in class.

For all *problem sets* I strongly encourage cooperation. Since the questions are designed to be both interesting and challenging, discussing them with others is essential for mastering the concepts. Note that solutions need to be written up and handed in individually (see also the sections on *Homework* and *Honor Code* below).

- **Problem Sets.** Homework will be assigned about every other week in the form of a problem set. Homework is due at the beginning of class in BC 01 or by 13h15 in the OES mailbox (at the ODY entry) on its due date. **No late homework will be accepted and there is no makeup homework!** Graded homework assignments will be returned in class and thereafter may be picked up from the course assistant.
- **Exam.** There will be a *final exam given in January 2018 (on a date that is TBA)*. This exam is closed-book, but you are allowed to bring two sheets with your notes (A4, double-sided). You are expected to take the final exam on the date given. **There is no makeup exam!** If you have a justified scheduling conflict, please make an arrangement with the teaching staff before Wednesday, December 6. Any requests thereafter (other than documented emergencies) may or may not be granted.
- **Project.** The project is an integral part of the course and complements the course material. It should be carried out in teams of two or three students. Each team should submit a report of *at most 15 pages*. Specifically, the project should analyze how supply-chain management has changed or could change by an innovative use of information technology. In that sense, the analysis can be either backward- or forward-looking. In either case, the team should describe the status quo and attempt to quantify the benefits and costs of the IT innovation (e.g., on a per-product basis); the precise numbers are not as important as a clear justification of the result. In addition, the team should analyze how sustainable any competitive advantage derived from the proposed supply-chain innovation is likely to be. There will be a team presentation at the end of the course.

++**SPECIAL**++ The best team project will be awarded the **Deloitte OES Prize** on December 13, based on the project presentation and the submitted report. A senior member of Deloitte will be helping in the evaluation of the reports and presentations. This Deloitte OES Prize has been awarded since 2013 for the best course project.

The **evaluation criteria** for the Deloitte OES Prize are structured along three dimensions:

1. **The Business Concept**
  - Relevance and clarity of identified needs
  - Expert use of a quantitative model with estimated parameters
  - Relevance of concept / innovation to address the identified needs
2. **The Business Case**
  - Clarity of expected benefits; sustainability of competitive advantage
  - Evaluation of the implementation costs
  - Risk and change-management considerations
3. **Quality/Professionalism**
  - Quality of the report
  - Quality of the presentation
  - Relevance to course

In addition, it is **important** (for the Deloitte OES Prize in particular) that it becomes clear that *all* team members contributed to the project and its presentation.

- **Class Participation.** Your presence and participation in class are essential for gaining mastery of the material. At first sight it might seem to you that the concepts in this course are easy and might be quickly “crammed” before an exam. Experience shows that this first impression is more often than not incorrect, and in this course we therefore require your attendance and participation. From time to time there may be a mini-quiz in class. The results will enter into your class participation grade. Other ways to participate are asking insightful questions, moving the class discussion forward, come to office hours (both to the course assistant and the lecturer); obviously, not all dimensions of participation need to be maxed out to get an excellent class-participation score.

**Re-grading Policy.** Questions and concerns regarding grading must be submitted in writing along with the entire assignment to the teaching assistant. Any resubmission of the assignment will result in the *entire* assignment being re-graded. This means that your score after re-grading can be above or below your original score. *Re-grading requests will only be accepted within one week of the date of return of the graded item in question.*

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**Honor Code.**<sup>1</sup> The Honor Code is the EPFL's statement on academic integrity. It articulates the school's expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work.<sup>2</sup>

*“EPFL has the mission of generating, sharing and utilizing knowledge. It encourages development of the critical sense and spirit of innovation in a climate of collaboration, respect and mutual confidence among all its members.*

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see <http://jahia-prod.epfl.ch/site/polylex/ethics>

<sup>2</sup> [http://polylex.epfl.ch/files/content/sites/polylex/files/recueil\\_pdf/ENG/2.3.1\\_ch\\_code\\_honor\\_en.pdf](http://polylex.epfl.ch/files/content/sites/polylex/files/recueil_pdf/ENG/2.3.1_ch_code_honor_en.pdf)

- Favor constructive dialogue at EPFL, particularly via active involvement in the various EPFL consultative and participative bodies.
- Approach faculty-student interactions with a positive attitude.
- Strengthen relations between colleagues in a spirit of friendship, support and collaboration.

*I assume the ethical responsibilities and duties of academic and professional training by:*

- Acknowledging and respecting the value of the titles conferred by EPFL.
- Refusing to indulge in cheating.
- Refusing to indulge in plagiarism. I undertake to cite and clearly reference all sources of aid or information.
- Respecting all members of the EPFL community and the work they accomplish.
- Respecting the institution's infrastructures and its environment.
- Using resources provided by EPFL, particularly IT facilities, in an appropriate fashion.

*Through my actions and commitment to this Honor Code, I contribute to the impact and reputation of EPFL and thus enhance the value of my diploma."*

Specifically, adhering to the EPFL Honor Code implies that all work in exams and quizzes must be done individually. For homework, students may consult with the teaching assistant and with other students, but must write up solutions independently based on their own understanding. All references and sources (e.g., in the team project) must be clearly identified and properly referenced. Lastly, *if you work with other students on a problem set, you must acknowledge their names on the front page of your submission.*

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**Topics.** Following is the schedule of topics for this semester.

#### *Tentative Schedule*

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**Session 1 (September 20): No Class**

**Session 2 (September 27): Origin and Scope of Logistics & Operations**

**Session 3 (October 4): Supply-Chain Coordination**

**Session 4 (October 11): Supply-Chain Coordination (Cont'd)**

**Due:** Problem Set 1

**Session 5 (October 18): Strategic/Tactical/Operational Decisions**

**Due:** Team-Project Idea (1 page per idea)

**Session 6 (FRIDAY, October 20): Performance Metrics & Pricing**

**[Room: MED 2 1522 // 9 am – noon :: audio recording to be posted online.]**

**Session 7 (October 25): Performance Metrics (Cont'd)**

**Session 8 (November 1): Inventory Management: Basics**

**Session 9 (November 8): Dealing with Risk**

**Session 10 (November 15): Information Sharing and Enabling Technologies**

**Due:** Problem Set 2; Team-Project Proposal (3 pages; submit electronically)

**Session 11 (November 22): Cooperation and Relational Contracts**

**Session 12 (November 29): Sourcing Decisions and Contracting**

**Due:** Problem Set 3

**Session 13 (December 6): TBA**

**Session 14 (December 13): Team Project Presentations**

1. **Report** due on **Friday, Dec. 8 (by 17h00)**, at OES mailbox at the ODY entry or at ODY 3.01.
2. **Poster** due on **Monday, Dec. 11, electronically** (*optional* if you do not want to be considered for the OES Prize; irrelevant for grade).
3. **Slides** due: (a) **electronically** (in .ppt or .pptx) on **Dec. 12 (by 23h59)** to Prof. Weber; (b) **2 hardcopies** (for judges) on **Dec. 13, in class.**

**Session 15 (December 20): Review for the Upcoming Final Exam // LAST CLASS**

**The winner of the 5<sup>th</sup> Deloitte OES Prize will be announced in class on Dec. 13. There will be a prize for each member of the winning team.**

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**Background Reading.** Although we posted course readings as our main reference, I recommend a couple of other useful books and articles for occasional background reading if you would like to flesh out the material using complementary texts. *These sources are completely optional. You might want to refer to this list after the course has finished, as you become interested in studying specific aspects of supply-chain analysis and information systems in greater detail.* The books particularly relevant for this edition of the course are printed in **bold**.

**CACHON, G., TERWIESCH, C. (2009) *Matching Supply with Demand: An Introduction to Operations Management*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, New York, NY.**

GRAVES, S.G., RINNOY KAN, A.H.G, ZIPKIN, P.H. (EDS.) (1993). *Logistics of Production and Inventory*, Handbooks in Operations Research and Management Science, Vol. 4, Elsevier, Amsterdam, NL.

GRAVES, S.G., DE KOK, A.G. (EDS.) (2003). *Supply Chain Management: Design, Coordination and Operation*, Handbooks in Operations Research and Management Science, Vol. 11, Elsevier, Amsterdam, NL.

HOPP, W.J., SPEARMAN, M.L. (2011) *Factory Physics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Waveland, Long Grove, IL.

**LAI, R. (2013) *Operations Forensics*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.**

MEINDL, P., CHOPRA, S. (2009) *Supply Chain Management*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Prentice-Hall, Englewood-Cliffs, NJ.

MULANI, N. (ED.) (2003) *Achieving Supply Chain Excellence through Technology*, Montgomery Research, San Francisco, CA.

**SIMCHI-LEVI, D. (2010) *Operations Rules: Delivering Customer Value through Flexible Operations*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.**

SIMCHI-LEVI, D., KAMINSKY, P., SIMCHI-LEVI, E. (2002) *Designing and Managing the Supply Chain*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, New York, NY.

SNYDER, L.V., CHEN Z.-J.M. (2011) *Supply Chain Theory*, Wiley, New York, NY.

Some other relevant WWW resources:

- CIO (<http://www.cio.com/category/supply-chain-management/>)
- CIO Insight (<http://www.cioinsight.com>)
- Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (<http://cscmp.org>)
- EBN (<http://www.ebnonline.com>)
- Manufacturing.net (<http://www.manufacturing.net>)
- SupplyChainBrain (<http://www.supplychainbrain.com>)
- Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supply\\_chain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supply_chain) + links from there)

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