Technological University of Panama
College of Industrial Engineering
Course Syllabus

Course	:	Customer Service and Quality	**e-mail**	: humberto.alvarez@utp.ac.pa
Professor	:	Humberto Alvarez, Ph. D.	**Tel/fax**	:
Program	:	B. Sc. In Executive Bilingual Communication, College of Science and Technology	**Cel.**	: 9973-1119
Course Number	:	8617	**Credit hours**	: 3
Group code	:		**Course webpage**	: http://www.academia.utp.ac.pa/humberto-alvarez/customer-service

This course helps forming the concepts of quality and customer satisfaction in delivering services and products with efficiency and effectiveness

B. Objectives
The main objective of this course is to provide the conceptual and applied knowledge of the principles of customer satisfaction through quality in service delivering. The course is oriented to the development of the following competencies at the end of the term:

- To have current and state of the art knowledge on concepts, theories and examples of services typologies and service delivering policies.
- To recognize and understand the importance of quality in service delivering for customer satisfaction.
- To have the knowledge and capabilities to venture in new business areas.
- To be able of working in multidisciplinary teams developing managerial strategies oriented towards customer service and satisfaction.
- To find and efficiently use information on service and quality practices around the world.

C. Methodology:
To reach the proposed objectives the course will be taught through different methodologies and tools.
- Through lectures and presentation from the instructor to provide the basic knowledge and information about the different topics.
- Through case studies and field projects to develop abilities of analysis and application to participants
- Through presentations from the participants, to present the findings in the case studies and field projects and to help them develop communication skills, as part of their academic program.
- Through a final project, consisting on defining and proposing solutions to a real life customer service situation, preferable at the University

D. Course Evaluation

Midterms (2)	30%
Assignments	10%
Projects	25%
Final examination	35%
Total	100%
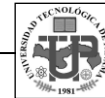
E. Course Content

1. Understanding Customer Service

    1.1 What is customer service?
    1.2 What is a customer?
    1.3 The nature of services
    1.4 Creating value to customers

2. The service encounter

    2.1 The service encounter's triad
    2.2 The organization
        2.2.1 The culture
        2.2.2 Physical surroundings
    2.3 Contact personnel
    2.4 The Customer

3. The challenges of customer service

    3.1. Elements of success and barriers to excellent customer service
    3.2. Perception and expectations
    3.3. Formulating a plan for success

4. Quality in the service encounter

    3.1 Defining service quality
    3.2 Defining, measuring and achieving quality in the service encounter
    3.3 Quality service by design
    3.4 Quality Tools for analysis and problem solving

5. Building customer loyalty

    4.1 Selecting the right customer
    4.2 Creating and maintaining valuable relations
    4.3 Customer care and management systems

F. References

References for this course will be upon availability of books and documents in English at the University's Bookstore. Otherwise, the instructor will provide notes, documents and other sources of information to complement this class. Some of the information will be taken from the following references:

Alvarez, Humberto R. (2016) *Notes on Customer Service*, Universidad Tecnologica de Panama, College of Industrial Engineering.

Harris, Elaine K. (2007) *Customer Service. A Practical Approach*, Pearson-Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

Fitzimmons, James A. and Mona J. Fitzsimmons (2001) *Service Management. Operations, Strategy and Information Technology.* Mcgraw-Hill, United States

Course webpage:

http://www.academia.utp.ac.pa/humberto-alvarez/customer-service

G. General information

Several aspects are important to mention for this course:

Grading:
The grading will be composed of several elements as mentioned above, including written exams, in-class and at-home assignments, field projects and a final exam consisting of an applied project.

Aspects to be considered in the grading include but are not limited to: in-class participation, peer evaluation, instructor evaluation of written exams, in-class presentation and written projects. In addition, aspects such as quality of work, written style and format of the written assignments are considered in the grading.
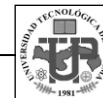
Since most of the projects are group assignment, the evaluation will consist of two aspects: group evaluation and peer evaluation, thus, the entire group will evaluate aspects such as participation, cooperation and delivery for each member of the group.

For written assignment, the APA Journal and Article Format will be used as reference. This document will be provided the first day of classes.

Any dishonesty regarding academic work will be punished accordingly. In other words, the University's bylaws have considerations regarding academic dishonesty actions such as, but limited to: plagiarism, copy, using no authorized material during tests, etc.

Rubric:

Grade	Individual work	Group evaluation (if applicable, 35%)
Type A Student 91 – 100	The student fully understands the content, concepts and theoretical and practical approach of the course. The student solves the written tests with complete knowledge of the responses. The student fully participates in all the class discussions and contributes with opinions and examples of high quality. The student is fully confident and responsible of his/her opinions during in-class presentations and project analysis and solutions	The group, in consensus, considers that the contributions and participation of the student are significant for the group understanding of the topic. The group, in consensus, considers that the contribution of the student has been excellent in the level of quality and grade of the group projects. The group, in consensus, considered that the academic skills, leadership and motivation influence the rest of the group.
Type B Student 81 – 900	The student understands the majority of the content, concepts and theoretical and practical approach of the course. The student solves the written tests with good knowledge of the responses. The student participates in most of the class discussions and contributes with opinions and examples of good quality. The student is confident and responsible of his/her opinions during in-class presentations and project analysis and solutions	The group, in the average, considers that the contributions and participation of the student are important for the group understanding of the topic. The group, in the average, considers that the contribution of the student has been important in the level of quality and grade of the group projects. The group, in the average, considered that the academic skills, leadership and motivation influence the rest of the group.
Type C Student 71 – 100	The student, in the average, understands the content, concepts and theoretical and practical approach of the course. The student solves the written tests with	The group, in the average, considers that the contributions and participation of the student are of some help for the group understanding of the topic.

	average knowledge of the responses. The student partially participates in class discussions and contributes with some opinions and examples. The student has confidence during in-class presentations and project analysis and solutions	The group, in the average, considers that the contribution of the student has been in the average in defining the grade of the group projects. The group, in the average, considered that the student has certain level of academic skills and motivation with respect to the rest of the group.
Type D Student 61-70	The student barely understands the content, concepts and theoretical and practical approach of the course. The student solves the written tests with partial knowledge of the responses. The student does not participate in all the class discussions nor contributes with opinions and examples to the class. The student has no level of confidence or quality during presentations, project analysis and solutions	The group considers that the contributions and participation of the student are of no significance for the group understanding of the topic. The group considers that the contribution of the student has been poor in the level of quality and grade of the group project. The group considers that the academic skills, leadership and motivation have barely or no influence for the rest of the group.
Type F Student 60 or bellow	The student does not understand the content, concepts and theoretical and practical approach of the course. The student can not solve the written tests or case study analysis. The student does not participate in any of the class discussions. The student is not confident nor responsible of his/her opinions during in-class presentations and project analysis and solutions The student has cheated of committed plagiarism in any of the tests, projects or academic work.	The group has a poor opinion of the contributions and participation of the student and his/her influence on the grades, quality or results of the group work. The group convinced that the student has cheated of committed plagiarism in any of the tests, projects or academic work.

Attendance:
Although attendance is not formally evaluated, the student is responsible for attending class, on time and with full cooperation, especially during the application of a written test or presentation and evaluation of a project. Students will be fully responsible of presenting their assignments and tests on time.

Communication:
All the communication will be conducted through email; thus all the students should activate their University's email address (nombre.apellido@utp.ac.pa) or provide a valid email address. Since the communication will be sent weekly, normally with attachments, all the students should have enough space in their mailboxes and to set up their fire walls and junk mail filters to receive the mail without inconveniences.

H. The Instructor

Professor Humberto Alvarez has a B. S. in Industrial and Mechanical Engineering from the Technological University of Panama, and M. Sc. and Ph. D. degrees at the University of Missouri – Columbia, U. S. A. He is a professor of Industrial Engineering. Dr. Alvarez is member of the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers, Institute for Operation Research and Management Science, Tau Beta Pi Engineering Society, the American Society of Engineering Education, the Hispanic Society of Professional Engineers and of the Industrial Engineering, the Systems Dynamics Society,
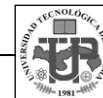
the Decision Sciences Institute, and Operation Management Society, all in the United States and of the Panamanian Academy for the Advancement of the Sciences. Additionally, is member of the Directorate of the National Research System at the National Secretary of Science, Technology and Innovation in Panama.

Students can expect fully cooperation and help of the instructor accordingly. In other words, you can use WhatsApp or email Dr. Alvarez any time (except early morning or late-night calls and missed calls) to ask questions about assignments or tests. In addition, you can make an appointment by email or telephone.

I. Class Schedule

The following schedule is proposed

Week	Topic	Activity	Comments
1	1.Understanding Customer Service What is customer service? What is a customer?	Class introduction and presentation In class reading and partial discussion: The Complaint Letter Case (from Fitzimmons and Fitzimmons, 2001) Lecture	Introduction to the concept of customer service through definitions and an example. First assignment - Group Assignment: Complete the Complaint Letter case
2	The nature of services Creating value to customers	Lecture Use of in class representation of personal experiences and other examples Reading: McManus, Kevin (2009), "Customer Service Shortage", IE Magazine, v. 41, No. 4, pg. 18.	In class discussion of the Complaint Letter case.
3	2. The service encounter The service encounter's triad The organization - The culture - Physical context Contact personnel The Customer	Lecture In class reading and discussion of McManus. Use of personal experiences from students and other examples	Project 1 Group Assignment: Understanding Service: The main goal of this assignment is to analyze and understand different types of service organizations based on the material covered so far in class.
4	Continues from previous topic Contact personnel The Customer	Lecture Use of personal experiences from students and other examples	
5	Continues from previous topic	Lecture Presentations and discussion of Project 1	Exam 1 The following week
6	Continues from previous topic	Wrap up lecture Exam 1	
7	3. Quality in the service encounter	Analysis of results of exam 1 Lecture Use of examples and student's	Assignment 2 Group reading: The End of Customer Service

	Defining service quality Defining, measuring and achieving quality in the service encounter	experiences	http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1720049_1720050_1721684,00.html
9	Quality service by design Quality Tools for analysis and problem solving	Lecture Use of examples and student's experiences Case study assignment: Setting a leading customer service example	Discussion of Assignment 2
10	Continues from previous topic Quality Tools for analysis and problem solving	Lecture Use of examples and student's experiences Discussion of case study	Project 2 Group Assignment: Understanding Service: The main goal of this assignment is to analyze and understand the organizations studied in project 1 but including the aspects not previously covered.
11	Building customer loyalty Selecting the right customer	Lecture Use of examples and student's experiences	Assignment 3 Reading: SEVQUAL
12	Continues from previous topic Creating and maintaining valuable relations Customer care and management systems	Lecture Use of examples and student's experiences Discussion on Reading Assignment	Exam 2 next week Final project: Group Assignment Analyzing a service provided by the University The objective of the project is to analyze a specific service provided by the university using the different concepts and tools explained in class, and to recommend a possible improvement.
13	Continues from previous topic	Wrap up lecture Exam 2	
14	Follow up session		Session for make up tests, projects and assignments.
15		Presentation and discussion of final project	Each presentation will be a 30 minutes' complete presentation and discussion
16	If necessary	Presentation and discussion of final project	Each presentation will be a 30 minutes' complete presentation and discussion

This proposed schedule will depend on the 2019 academic calendar found in the following link: http://www.utp.ac.pa/documentos/2018/pdf/utp-calendario-academico-2019-2020.pdf, and in the class schedule defined by the College of Science and Technology. Additionally, in case the instructor misses a class, there will be enough time in advance to make the necessary changes to accommodate the schedule to the new available time and make up classes.

Some basic rules for this class:

- Murphy's Law; Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.
- Arrow's impossibility theorem: when voters have three or more distinct alternatives (options), no ranked order voting system **can** convert the ranked preferences of individuals into a community-wide consensus.
- Occam's razor: Among competing hypotheses, the one with the fewest assumptions should be selected.