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Essential of Project Management

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This special lecture gives an outline of the most essential project management principles. The contents are taken from the author's experiences in managing large aerospace projects (e.g., HIPPARCOS, HUYGENS, and SOHO) at ESA's European Space Operations Centre in Darmstadt, Germany, during the period from 1985 to 1994.

Because most students are not very familiar with 'management', the lecture first provides answers to questions like 'why do we need management?' and 'what is project management?'. Subsequently, the specific activities and skills required for effective project management will be identified and discussed. This includes planning and organizing of the project work but also addresses the balancing of the various priorities and conflicts due to technical, financial, and scheduling constraints.

Of particular importance are leadership (i.e., people-management) skills, which take account of human capability, motivation, and performance within a team. This involves building an effective team environment with the proper balance of human morale and work output. Finally, a few useful guidelines for effective inter-human communications and for the conduct of effective meetings will be presented.