IDS 507: Advanced Systems Analysis and Design Project

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Overview

This course involves the execution of an actual information systems project. The project will involve the analysis, design, evaluation or implementation of information systems or technology related solutions and products for business. Since all students are expected to have the basic background in systems analysis and design, as well as project management, this course will concentrate on management of information/technology based projects and related issues. A number of business case studies and articles will be used to facilitate in-class discussions. As a projects course, the essential approach is that of learning by doing and teamwork.

Students are required to have completed all pre-requisites. All students are expected to be comfortable with application development, databases and systems analysis and design. This is a project-based course focused on real projects for clients. Student teams will be assigned to work on specific projects. A projects course differs from regular courses in many ways. As such, you should be clear about expectations, both in terms of day-to-day work and outcomes, workload, nature of work, and the how you will be evaluated.

- The course will take more of your time than other courses.
- Expect to spend at least half-a-day a week at the client site; based on the project, you may at times be required to spend more time at the client site. A key aspect of your work will involve coordinating, communication and interacting with the sponsor's personnel.
- Projects often require working with specific tools/software that you may not have worked with earlier; given your IS background, you will be expected to read up and learn to work with these on your own initiative.
- Your performance in the sponsor's environment and ability to satisfy the needs of the sponsor are critical. The sponsor's input on your performance will be considered in your evaluation.
- The successful completion of the project, which implies your sponsor's ability to use your implemented system effectively, or in general finding adequate value with your work, is a requirement for completing the course with a passing grade.

Students are expected to keep up with course related emails, announcements, etc. as discussed in class.

Students are expected to respect and act in accordance with the CBA Honor Code. Please familiarize with Honor code at www.uic.edu/cba/Faculty/academicaffairs/honorcode.html.

Evaluation (tentative)

Project completion and report: 50%
Weekly progress, reports, presentations: 20%
Class work, cases, etc.: 20%

Note that 10% of points have not yet been assigned to specific items—these may be from a written

exam, or other forms of evaluation that will be announced in class.

Please note that based on observation, and evaluation of your team-members, all members in a team may not obtain the same evaluation. Each team member will be required to evaluate every other member of the team. Repeat – final grades strongly consider instructor's evaluation of participation and contribution to the team effort.

Please also note that lack of adequate contribution/performance can lead to a team member being dropped from the team – s/he will then not get a passing grade for the course.

Procedures

Classes will be divided into two segments:

- Discussion: To help bring out critical issues related to the management of IS- related projects, class discussions and course work will also involve case studies. This portion of the class will focus on discussing IS project management concepts arising from case studies that students will be required to read beforehand. A problem/question will be posed to the class and each team will be required to resolve it and present their results to the class.
- Project Lab: This portion of the class will be devoted to each team working on their own to resolve issues related to their on-going project. The instructor and or/TA will visit each team to evaluate project progress and help resolve problems. All project team members must be present and be prepared for the lab.

Unlike the detailed instruction of a regular course, students are expected to study assigned material on their own. Assigned reading material will be announced beforehand, and it is your responsibility to read the material before the class meets, discuss group assigned work, and be prepared for class discussion. As mentioned, specific projects often require substantial reading, especially in the initial stages, to familiarize you with specific project environments and requirements, and to bring yourself up to speed on specific tools and systems.

Every team must submit a **weekly progress report**, which will include schedules and timelines. Students can use any software tools they wish, including MS Project. **Meeting minutes** must also be maintained. The Blackboard course site will be used to keep track of these and other project documents. There will be three major project related presentations: project definition and scope, intermediate report on progress, and a final presentation.

Good communication skills are a must for a systems analyst. As such, this course places considerable emphasis on communication activities. (Your course material includes chapters from a Business Communications book.) Every team will make various presentations, both in class and to the client, and submit weekly progress reports and meeting minutes. A final report summarizing the team's work, recommendations, etc. will be given to your sponsors at the end of the course. In these, content, layout, format, ease and effectiveness of communication, appearance and general presentability will be key to your evaluation.

Materials

There is no text book for this course. IS project management material is available from a multitude of sources, including numerous Web sites and published books. Students may feel free to use these resources to obtain additional background.

For the discussion portion of the class, course material will be made available from the Harvard Business Online website. Web site access information will be provided to students on course Blackboard site. In addition, the following book is recommended, but not required:

Harvard Business Essentials: Managing Projects Large and Small--The Fundamental Skills for Delivering on Budget and on Time, (Paperback), HBS Press.

The following is a list of the case studies and articles that will be discussed in class and will be made available on the Harvard Business Online Web site:

Case Studies and Articles (these will be required reading):
- Project Management: What's the Best Approach for IT?
- (Case) A& D High Tech (A): Managing Projects for Success by M. Jeffrey, D. Yung. A. Gershbyn
- (Case) PFM Devices - Complex Project Initiatives by M.Embry; T. Kayworth
- Why Project Networks Beat Project Teams, by J Cummings and C. Pletcher
- IT Priorities: Prioritizing Among a Portfolio of Projects
- The Runaway Project: A Large IT Project Goes Wrong [Chapters *from Adventures of an IT Leader* by Robert D. Austin; Richard L. Nolan; Shannon O'Donnell]
- (Case) A&D High Tech (B): Managing Scope Change by M. Jeffrey, D. Yung. A. Gershbyn
- Why Good Projects Fail Anyway by Nadim F. Matta , Ronald N. Ashkenas
- They Bought In - Now They Want to Bail Out. by Eric McNulty
- (Case) Activision: The 'Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer' Project by A. MacCormack , K. Herman , E. D'Angelo
- Diamond Framework: A New Model for Project Development by Dov Dvir and Aaron J. Shenhar, Harvard Business Review, August 14, 2007

Chapters from Harvard Business Essentials: Guide to Business Communications, Harvard Business School Press (some might be required reading, but students can read these at their own discretion):

- Good Writing: It Begins with Principles
- Everyday Writing: Memos, Letters, and E-Mail
- Presentations: Timeless Principles
- Backstage: Preparing Your Presentation
- Show Time: Making an Effective Delivery

Other Articles (some might be required reading, but students can read these at their own discretion):
- Understanding User Needs by M. Iansiti , E. Stein
- Too Far Ahead of the IT Curve? by J.P. Glaser, et al. Harvard Business review Article, 07/01/2007
- Radically Simple IT by David M. Upton, Bradley R. Staats, Harvard Business review Article, 03/01/2008
- Enterprise Resource Planning, Technology Note by R. D. Austin , C. X. Escalle , M. Cotteleer
- Generating Premium Returns on your IT Investments by Weill and Sinan Aral
- Sloan Management Review, Winter 2006, vol 47 no 2.
- What's Your Story? by Herminia Ibarra , Kent Lineback, Harvard Business Review Article, 01/01/2005
- Managing Oneself by Peter F. Drucker, Harvard Business Review Article, 01/01/2005

- How to Become a Better Manager … By Thinking Like a Designer by J Gutermann, Sloan Management Review, July 1, 2009.
- (Case) Microsoft Office 2007 by Marco Iansiti; Bianca Buccitelli
- Zen and the Art of Simplicity by Matthew E. May, Harvard Business Review, September 1, 2011
- (Case) Air France Internet Marketing: Optimizing Google, Yahoo!, MSN, and Kayak Sponsored Search by Mark Jeffery et al.
- (Case) Cisco Systems Architecture: ERP and Web-enabled IT by Richard L. Nolan; Kelley Porter; Christina Akers