Oregon Master of Software Engineering

OMSE 510:
Distributed Team Collaboration
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Course Description

This course focuses on the transition from software engineer to leader of teams in a dynamic, distributed environment. The challenges of leading and participating in a distributed software engineering team are explored in depth, including cultural awareness, conflict resolution, and the use of technology to support collaboration online.

Learning Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the team development process and the critical elements for success in a distributed team environment;
- Appreciate the value of diversity in a team and learn to leverage differences to enhance team effectiveness;
- Develop skills for managing conflict in a team setting;
- Analyze, apply, and evaluate collaborative tools and methods in a distributed team environment;
- Reflect on the skills needed to become a successful distributed team leader.

Course Format

The course will consist of three modules. We will begin with a kick-off session, live online via Eluminate for an introduction to the course. This session is scheduled for *Wednesday, January 5, from 6:00 to 7:20 PM* via Eluminate. The link to the Eluminate session will be emailed to students prior to the January 5 start date. The first module will prepare you for collaborative teamwork by covering topics such as team development, team performance, and best practices in creative collaboration. In the second module of the course, you will begin working in teams online in a simulation exercise where you will be challenged to perform as a distributed software engineering team to accomplish a set of deliverables to satisfy a potential client. The full class activities during these weeks will be held in Desire 2 Learn (D2L), PSU's new learning management system. Additionally, students will select tools and methods for collaboration on their team project and will likely hold synchronous sessions that individual teams schedule. The final module of the course will consist of a full class lessons learned activity and individual reflection on the team collaboration experience. This session is scheduled for *Wednesday, March 9, from 6:00 to 7:20 PM*. Students may attend the session in person at the Distance Learning Center, Urban Center at PSU, Room #304, or online via Eluminate. The link to the Eluminate session will be emailed to students prior to the March 9 final session.

Required Resources

Books: Ancona, D., & Bresman, H. (2007). *X-teams: How to build teams that lead, innovate and succeed.* Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.

Wenger, E., White, N., & Smith, J. (2009). *Digital Habitats: Stewarding technology for communities.* Portland, OR*:* CPsquare.

Articles: Bennett, M.J. (1993). Towards ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. *Education for the intercultural experience*. (Paige, R.M., Ed.). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Goldsmith, M. (2008). How can I improve collaboration within my team? *Harvard Management Update*, (13)1, 3-3.

Thomas, K. (2008). *Making conflict management a strategic advantage*. Retreived April 21, 2008 from http://www.cpp.com/content/Whitepapers.asp.

Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychology bulletin*, 63, 384-399.

ADDITIONAL COURSE RESOURCES WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE INSTRUCTOR.

Graded Requirements

Participation in group discussions online	20%
Best practice article review	10%
Team simulation	30%
Team presentation	20%
Weekly entries in Self-Awareness Journal	20%

Individual Graded Assignments

PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS – 20%

You will be expected to participate in discussions online in the D2L discussion board as well as in scheduled Elluminate sessions and optional classroom sessions. You will be graded on your ability to present, explain, or defend alternative viewpoints as well as the degree to which you have mastered the concepts and principles inherent in the study of distributed team collaboration. Written work will be assessed not only on relevance to the subject presented, but also on adherence to good written form, use of sources, APA style, and professional presentation. Substantive participation in these online discussions counts toward 20% of your total grade. Participation will be assessed during the synchronous classroom / Elluminate sessions (see schedule on final page) and through evaluation of engagement in the online discussion board.

BEST PRACTICE ARTICLE REVIEW – 10%

You will participate in a discussion regarding what constitutes a best practice in distributed collaboration. As an outcome of that discussion, you will have a set of criteria you can use to

evaluate an organization or team that is working in a distributed model. You will locate an electronic article that describes a distributed team experience and share that article with the full class online. You will include your assessment of the best practices described in the article.

WEEKLY ENTRIES IN SELF AWARENESS JOURNAL – 20%

You will maintain a journal of your experiences and learning while studying distributed teams and while engaging in the distributed team simulation. You will be provided with a Self-Awareness Journal template to use for capturing your journal entries throughout the 10 weeks. The content of these entries should reflect your learning and experience working as a member of a distributed team, and should show evidence of changes in your thinking through our class discussions and assignments as well as through your team experience. You will maintain this journal weekly throughout the course, including responses to specific activities assigned by the instructor. The Self Awareness journal will be due in the final week of class and will be used for the final Lessons Learned session that will be held in the classroom and Elluminate in Week 10.

Team Graded Assignments

TEAM SIMULATION – 30%

You will participate in a simulation exercise. You will be challenged to accomplish a set of deliverables to satisfy a potential client while performing as a distributed team. You will be assigned to a team during the in-class / Elluminate kick off session during Week 1 of the term, at which time the full assignment details, requirements, and expectations will be provided. Your first task will be to review the assignment and then create an action plan, present it to your instructor for approval, and proceed to execute your plan during weeks 3-8 of the course. You will study distributed team best practices and tools by applying and evaluating them as you work to accomplish your deliverables. You will be given guidelines for evaluating the collaborative experience (the tools and the practices) as part of this simulation. You will create a technical specification in response to your instructor's requirements in the format of your choice to share with the instructor in a distributed team presentation that your team will facilitate during Week 9, and then a full class lessons learned activity during the final class / Elluminate session in Week 10.

TEAM PRESENTATION – 20%

You will present the outcome of the Team Simulation in an online facilitated session in Elluminate during Week 9 of class. Your team is responsible for scheduling the session with the instructor, as well as facilitating the session synchronously in Elluminate online. Planning for the logistics and delivery of this presentation should be included in your early action-planning phase. Your presentation will serve as the final step in the simulation with your instructor playing the part of the client while you propose your team's response to the client requirements. The presentation should include effective delivery of your proposal and its fit to the client requirements, visuals to support your proposed solution, and should include all team members as active participants in the session.

MODULE 1 – DISTRIBUTED TEAMS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES		
Week 1 Jan 3-9	Online via Elluminate **Wed. Jan 5, 6:00-7:20**	**Overview of Course Requirements and Process** **The Challenges and Opportunities of Distributed Teams** **Reading:** Ancona & Bresman, Chapters 1-2 Goldsmith (2008) **Participation:** Discussions & activities in the classroom and in Elluminate **Assignments:** Teams assigned for Team Simulation Self-Awareness Journal capture begins
Week 2 Jan 10-16	Online in D2L	**Team Formation and Collaborative Best Practices** **Reading:** Tuckman (1965) Best Practice articles shared online by classmates **Participation:** Online discussions & activities **Assignments:** *Best Practice Article Review due* Self-Awareness Journal entry
MODULE 2 – DISTRIBUTED TEAM SIMULATION		
Week 3 Jan 17-23	Online in D2L & in choice of Team Tools	**Action Planning & Design for Collaboration** **Reading:** Ancona & Bresman, Chapters 3-5 **Participation:** Online discussions & activities Team Participation **Assignments:** *Weekly Team Minutes due* *Team Simulation action plan due* Self-Awareness Journal entry
Week 4 Jan 24-30	Online in D2L & in choice of Team Tools	**Leveraging Creative Tensions – Diversity and Conflict** **Reading:** Bennett (1993) Thomas (2008) **Participation:** Online discussions & activities Team Participation **Assignments:** *Weekly Team Minutes due* Self-Awareness Journal entry
Week 5 Jan 31 – Feb 6	Online in D2L & in choice of Team Tools	**Collaborative Practices and Tools** **Reading:** Ancona & Bresman, Chapters 6-8 Online resources to support research **Participation:** Online discussions & activities

		Team Participation
		Assignments: *Weekly Team Minutes due* Self-Awareness Journal entry
Week 6 Feb 7-13	Online in D2L & in choice of Team Tools	**Collaborative Practices and Tools** **Reading:** Wenger, White, & Smith, Chapters 3-5 **Participation:** Online discussions & activities Team Participation **Assignments:** *Weekly Team Minutes due* Self-Awareness Journal entry
Week 7 Feb 14-20	Online in D2L & in choice of Team Tools	**Collaborative Practices and Tools** **Reading:** Wenger, White, & Smith, Chapters 6-8 **Participation:** Online discussions & activities Team Participation **Assignments:** *Weekly Team Minutes due* Self-Awareness Journal entry
Week 8 Feb 21-27	Online in D2L & in choice of Team Tools	**Sustaining the Distributed Team** **Reading:** Ancona & Bresman, Chapter 9 Wenger, White, & Smith, Chapters 9-11 **Participation:** Online discussions & activities Team Participation **Assignments:** *Weekly Team Minutes due* Self-Awareness Journal entry
Week 9 Feb 28 – Mar 6	Online in D2L and Team Pres. Via Ellumniate	**Team Simulation Presentations – online** **Participation:** Online presentation participation Team Participation **Assignments:** *Weekly Team Minutes due* *Team Simulation due* *Team Presentation due* Self-Awareness Journal entry
**MODULE 3 – FULL CLASS DEBRIEF AND LESSONS LEARNED**	
Week 10 Mar 6-13	In-class or online via Elluminate **Wed. Mar 9, 6:00-7:20**	**Lessons Learned** **Participation:** Online discussions & activities **Assignments:** *Self Awareness Journal due*