

Final Reflection – Advanced Project Management (IS 594)

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Before enrolling in IS 594, my understanding of project management was primarily shaped by formal methodologies and applied professional experience in consulting and technology-driven project environments. I had worked extensively with structured planning approaches, stakeholder coordination, timelines, and deliverables. While this background provided a strong operational foundation, IS 594 significantly deepened my perspective by reframing project management as a discipline centered on **analytical reasoning, judgment, and systems thinking**, rather than solely on procedural execution.

A central contribution of the course was its emphasis on projects as **sociotechnical systems**. Through lectures on strategy, organizational structure, workflows, and failure points, I developed a more holistic framework for analyzing projects. Challenges such as scope creep, delayed feedback, and stakeholder misalignment, which I had previously experienced in practice, were recontextualized as emergent properties of complex systems shaped by human, organizational, and technical interactions. This shift enabled me to move beyond execution-focused explanations and toward diagnosing underlying systemic causes.

IS 594 also refined my understanding of strategic problem framing in project management. In prior consulting engagements, I often encountered projects where execution plans were well defined, yet ambiguity remained regarding the actual problem being addressed. The course emphasized that project success depends as much on selecting and framing the right problem as it does on executing a solution efficiently. This insight clarified why technically sound projects can still underperform when strategic alignment and constraints are insufficiently examined at the outset.

The course further reshaped how I interpret evolving requirements in analytics and technology-focused projects. Previously, requirement changes were frequently treated as disruptions to be minimized. Lectures on complexity and adaptive project management reframed these situations as characteristic of complex problem domains, where learning emerges through iteration rather than complete upfront specification. This perspective helped explain why rigid planning approaches were often strained in environments where stakeholder understanding matured only after intermediate outputs were produced.

IS 594 deepened my understanding of methodological choice by emphasizing that no single project management approach is universally optimal. While I was familiar with both Waterfall and Agile methods before this course, the lectures highlighted that effectiveness is inherently **context-dependent**, shaped by uncertainty, organizational structure, and the cost of failure. Concepts such as failure mode analysis, resilience planning, and complexity-based reasoning provided structured ways to evaluate risk and adaptability beyond traditional planning techniques.

The practical component of maintaining a GitHub repository throughout the course reinforced these conceptual insights. Incrementally documenting lecture notes, project artifacts, and reflections demonstrated how repositories function as **coordination and knowledge systems**, not merely as storage mechanisms. The use of structured folders, README files, issues, and project boards translated abstract ideas such as workflows, iteration, and documentation into concrete practices. This

experience closely aligned with the course's discussion of open-source and distributed work models, highlighting the role of technical infrastructure in supporting collaboration, transparency, and institutional memory.

The repository documenting my work for this course is available at:

<https://github.com/arnaava2/IS594-Project-Management>

Overall, IS 594 has meaningfully expanded my understanding of project management by shifting my focus from task-level execution to system-level reasoning. The course strengthened my capacity to analyze uncertainty, align methodologies with context, and engage in reflective practice. These insights will continue to inform how I approach project management in academic, consulting, and technical settings, providing a durable analytical framework that extends beyond the scope of any single project.