

# INFO 5901: MPS Project Practicum (Spring 2018)

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**Credits:** INFO 5901 – 2; INFO 5900 – 1 **Lectures:** Mondays 4:40pm-5:40pm, Upson Hall 142 **Instructor:** Kyle Harms **Teaching Assistants:** Lola Legrand, Philina Chen **Contact:** course related: [info5901-prof@cornell.edu](mailto:info5901-prof@cornell.edu); non-course related: [kyle.harms@cornell.edu](mailto:kyle.harms@cornell.edu) **Course web site:** [<https://cmsx.cs.cornell.edu>] **Office Hours:** Instructor: Gates 224, Mondays 10:00-11:30, Tuesdays 10:30-12:00 TAs: Gates G19, Thursdays 15:00-16:00

## Overview

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In this course (INFO 5901) students will receive guidance toward working on their MPS project (INFO 5900).

Class will consist of two primary activities:

1. *Project work:* This course is adjacent to working on your INFO 5900 MPS project, a semester-long project sponsored by an industry or academic client. Students will apply the skills they learn in the MPS program to a real-world project that includes requirements, project management, deadlines, and deliverables. Substantial class time will be dedicated to specific activities related to the team project.
2. *Guest speakers:* lectures and case studies in key professional disciplines such as communication, presentations, teamwork, risk management, project management and execution. The purpose is to help students develop project skills during the semester that will benefit them in their future employment.

This course is based on material by Gilly Leshed and Jon Saxe.

## Policies

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### Attendance

On-time class attendance is required. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. You are allowed for up to **two absences**. This should give you enough flexibility to plan for interviews, religious holidays, unexpected sickness, family emergencies, etc. You must notify the course staff via [info5901-prof@cornell.edu](mailto:info5901-prof@cornell.edu) in advance if you will be absent. Any absence beyond two, regardless of the reason, will result in reduction of your grade.

### Laptops and Cell Phones

Please no laptop or cell phone usage during lectures. Especially during guest lectures.

### Late Submission

Unless otherwise announced, all project deliverables are due at the beginning of the class on the day that they are due. The paper part (if any) must be handed in class, and the electronic part (if any) must be submitted by the time of the beginning of class. Late assignments will receive a 0. Under exceptional circumstances points will be deducted at the discretion of the instructors for late assignments. Exceptional circumstances will be considered only if discussed with the teaching staff in advance.

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is crucial to your personal ethical identity. Your rights and responsibilities in this area are outlined in the

Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm>. Violations of the code of conduct include but are not limited to:

- Implying your project is further along than it actually is in a project status report.
- Submitting work in this class that has also been submitted for a grade in another course without prior permission of both instructors.
- Using, obtaining, or providing unauthorized assistance on papers or any other academic work. All outside assistance should be reported, and the work of others should be properly referenced.
- Misrepresenting another person's work as your own. This means presenting someone else's words or ideas without proper attribution, which is considered *plagiarism*. Proper attribution includes quotation marks and page numbers for any words taken directly from any piece of another author's work, and/or a citation when you have paraphrased or summarized somebody else's work. Sources need not be published to be cited; any document that you use as a source that you are not the sole author of must be cited or attributed in this way. If you have any questions or concerns about how to attribute or whether a source must be cited, please ask for clarification in advance. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be strictly sanctioned. More information is available at <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/>.

You are responsible for obeying the Code of Academic Integrity. Ignorance of the code is not an excuse. Academic integrity is a serious matter and will be treated as such.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please provide your accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Some aspects of this course such as guest lectures and project activities and assignments may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. It is Cornell policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services and the teaching staff for a confidential discussion of their individual need for academic accommodations. More information about Student Disability Services can be found at <http://sds.cornell.edu/>.

## Guest Lectures

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Frequently throughout the semester, we will invite a professional to guest lecture about topics related to project management and professionalism in information science.

## Project Milestones and Deliverables

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In your semester-long project, you will be working in a team for an industry/academic client, to define the problem, come up with a project plan, research into the problem space, apply a broad design thinking perspective to address the problem, and complete milestones and deliver artifacts and presentations.

Project teams will be assigned at the beginning of the semester based on a match of the project needs and students' skills. Each team will have diverse skill-sets to draw upon. This will be valuable to you as well as to the companies that are sponsoring the project. It will provide you with the knowledge and skills required to work on a real-life problem faced by a company and thus prepare you to excel in your careers.

## Project Selection and Assignment

Before the semester, students will receive a document with descriptions of the projects offered by industry/academic sponsors. The teaching staff will then assign students to project teams. We will make an effort to assign students to one of their top five ranked projects, however, this might not always be possible.

## Clients

A representative from the industry/academic sponsor will serve as the project client. You should ensure that the project is progressing to the satisfaction of the client and that you are fulfilling the goals that the client sees important for the project.

The team should choose one student who will serve as the contact to the client. You can rotate this position through the semester, but you should ensure that there is only one person who is in charge at any time to keep in touch with the client.

You should schedule to meet with the client (in person if local or via phone or Skype if remote) every other week, for about 30 minutes. It would be useful to schedule all the meetings at the outset of the semester. Having an agenda of what you will present and discuss at the meeting will help you organize and prepare for the meeting. In addition, plan to have a weekly email update to the client to demonstrate consistent progress on the project.

## Conflict

Conflict is a normal part of any team project. If you have a conflict within your group that you cannot resolve internally, you are required to bring the conflict to the attention of the teaching staff immediately. Prolonged team conflict will result in a grade reduction.

## Weekly Logs

Each student will keep a weekly log of progress in which you will note what you did, what you learned, and how your team is doing this week. At the end of each week, each student will submit a short summary of this log. The purpose of these weekly logs is to ensure steady progress and accountability of each student and the team as a whole.

## Milestones and Deliverables

The details below outline project deliverables. Additional details about the requirements of each assignment will be provided in class and through Blackboard.

- **Project Plan:** The first deliverable will consist of a document in which the team will identify and justify the primary ideas of your project, describe the problem you plan to address and the methodologies you intend to use, outline the sources, tools, and techniques you will use to address the problem, and provide a detailed time-line with your activities, work distribution and project plan for achieving the project goals.
- **Progress Report I:** The purpose of this mid-way report is to ensure that you are making systematic progress toward completing the project successfully. In this report, you will describe what you have achieved so far and outline any changes to the project plan since you presented the initial plan.
- **Progress Report II:** In this report you will demonstrate that you have achieved considerable progress in the project. As in Progress Report I, you will describe any changes to the project plan since the last report. Here you will also provide a detailed plan toward successful completion.
- **Final Report:** This document will summarize your team efforts over the semester and will serve as an executive summary that you hand over to the client. In this document, you will describe the problem you worked on, the methods and tools you used, the activities you carried out, and the final outcomes you are providing to the client. If your project involves the creation of a product, you should append to your report a handover package with the product.

- **\*\*Final Presentation:** \*\*You will prepare and present the results of your project to the client. Your presentation should be polished and professional. It should also accurately describe the final outcome of your project.\
- **\*\*Project Showcase:** \*\*At the end of the semester, you will present with your team what you have worked on during the semester. All clients, as well as the information science community: students, researchers, and faculty, will be invited to the session. Your presentation will be in the form of a poster, around which discussions will be held. The showcase will be held Monday, December 4, 2017.

## Project Guidance

The TA will check-in with each team every other week and provide the team with ongoing guidance and feedback.

Please note that because the MPS projects cover a wide range of topics, the teaching staff do not necessarily have the specific knowledge required to help you overcome technical or knowledge-based challenges, should they occur. In these cases, you are expected to identify the required sources that can help you overcome the challenges. The teaching staff will do their best to help you identify these sources.

## Peer Evaluations

At few points during the semester, students will complete self and peer evaluation surveys. We will use these evaluations for two primary purposes:

- In case of team conflicts or difficulties, we will identify teams that need intervention from the teaching staff. We will do our best to help teams resolve conflicts toward successful completion of the project.
- At the instructor's discretion, individual grades for the team project might be adjusted based on group members' evaluation of each other's quantity and quality of contribution to the group effort. This is in the interest of fairness.

## Grading

I grade to a scale, not to a curve. Letter grades are assigned by the *integer-part* of your percentage; the *decimal-part* is not a factor. For example: 96.01, 96.5, and 96.99 are all A's. 97.0 is an A+.

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A+ 97-100% A 93-96% A- 90-92% B+ 87-89% B 83-86% B- 80-82% C+ 77-79% C 73-76% C- 70-72% D+ 67-69% D 63-66% D- 60-62% F 0-59%

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When reporting the progress of your project to the teaching staff, if you are in anyway deceptive about the status of your project, I reserve the right to lower your grade. This includes lowering your final grade.

## INFO 5901

Your grade is computed as the following weighted average:

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Attendance and Participation: guest lectures, work sessions, weekly logs, peer evaluations, team contract, practice presentation, etc. 20% Project Assignments: project plan, progress report I & II, final report, presentation, poster, project deliverables, etc. 70% Final Client Evaluation 10%

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100% of your grade is given by your client.

## Schedule

This class schedule is tentative and is subject to change as the semester proceeds.

+-----+   Date   Agenda   Assignments Due   +-----+
+-----+   Mon 8/28   Projects Assigned     +-----+   Mon 9/4   No Class
Reading on Teamwork   +-----+   Mon 9/11   Guest Lecture:   Log, Team Contract
Project & Risk       Management     +-----+   Mon 9/18   Guest Lecture:   Log,
Project Plan       Teamwork   (10%)   +-----+   Mon 9/25   Team Check-in &   Log
Meeting     +-----+   Mon 10/2   Team Check-in &   Log, Progress Report
Meeting   I (10%)   +-----+   Mon 10/9   No Class   Log   +-----+
+-----+   Mon 10/16   Guest Lecture: Agile   Log       Development     +-----+
+-----+   Mon 10/23   Guest Lecture: Client   Log       Communication     +-----+
---+   Mar 10/30   Team Check-in &   Log, Progress Report       Meeting   II (10%)   +-----+
----+   Mon 11/6   Effective   Log,       Presentations     +-----+   Mon 11/13   Team
Check-in &       Log       Meeting     +-----+   Mon 11/20   Team Check-in &
Log       Meeting     +-----+   Mon 11/27   Practice Presentation   Log, Practice
Presentation   +-----+   Mon 12/4   Presentations with   Final Presentation
Clients   (10%) & \         Poster (10%)       Showcase with Posters       (Client, Faculty and       IS invited)     +-----+
+-----+   Mon 12/11   11:30 AM: Final       Report (10%) &       Project Deliverables       (10%)   +-----+
+-----+