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INFO 903-73 Systems of Operations and Technology

Dave Kroger
kroger@xavier.edu

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Syllabus

INFO 903 - 73: Systems of Operations & Technology

Spring, 2005

Wednesdays, 3:00-5:30

HAI 7

Professor: Dave Kroger

E-mail: kroger@xu.edu

IM:

- DaveKroger (AOL and Yahoo)

- Dave_Kroger@hotmail.com (MSN)

Homepage for course info: <http://blackboard1.xu.edu>

Telephone: 513 683-9601

Office: HAI – 21 (IS Lab)

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:15 - 2:45 and by appointment

Course Description

An examination of systems and technology involved in the production of goods and the delivery of services. The predominant focus is on the manager's use of information and technology to influence the design, operation and control of systems in order to enhance competitive advantage. Topics covered include analysis of current information systems, identification and assessment of an organization's strategic use of information systems and trends of information technology development. This course explores foundational business processes and information systems; it is highly integrative and will draw heavily from other functional areas in business.

Because this course explores foundational business processes and information systems, it is highly integrative and will link closely to the other courses in the MBA program.

Texts and Course Materials

You will have no text book for the course but will be required to order Harvard case studies from the following web site: http://www.study.net/r_mat.asp?crs_id=30003310

You will need to register for the site and may also be asked to enter a course password "infomba"

Other required readings will be linked from the course schedule.

General Course Objectives.

1. To understand facts, concepts, and principles related to *managing* with technology.
2. To understand factors involved in attempts to apply technology to real-life situations.
3. To develop an awareness of the possible limitations of technology.

4. To focus on technology and how it relates to the strategy of a business.
5. To apply different IT concepts to the workplace.

Williams College of Business Mission

"We educate students of business, enabling them to improve organizations and society, consistent with the Jesuit tradition"

How this course relates to this mission

Technology has had a major impact on nearly every organization and on society at large. The course will critically examine these impacts via case analyses, readings on current topics, and in-depth discussions about the social issues of technology and the Internet.

Attendance

You can expect me to attend each class session; I also expect that you will attend each class session. In the rare circumstance in which a student finds it unavoidable to miss a class, he/she should make arrangements to obtain lecture notes and assignment solutions from another member of class. Reasonable attendance is a condition for the granting of academic credit.

Assessment and Grading

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following activities (values given below are approximate, actual results may vary, don't try this at home):

Exams: 100 points	10%
Midterm: 100 points (10%)	
Technology Abstract: (Due February 9) 100 points	10%
Presentation (Throughout the Term) 50 points	5%
Case Analyses (Each Week) 200 points	20%
CEO/CIO Interview 100 points	10%
Research Study 150 points	15%
Collaborative Work (Throughout the Term) 200 points	20%
One Minute Paper (Throughout the Term) 100 points	10%

Course grading scale:

A 950-1000

A- 900-949

B+ 875-899

B 800-874

C+ 775-799

C 725-774

F under 700 points

Exams

Exams are open book/open notes/open mind, and may contain both objective and open-ended questions. Exams will be integrative across readings and topics. The final may be cumulative.

If a topic is covered in class, it is eligible to be included on the exams. The learning purpose of the exam is to assess each student's 1) command of the factual knowledge and concepts from the course and 2) his or her ability to generalize the concepts to business situations via critical thinking skills.

Absence from the exam will result in a grade of zero unless the exam is missed due to an illness or an immovable business engagement. Documented confirmation from a physician is required if an exam is missed due to an illness, or from your supervisor if an exam is missed due to a business engagement. In the event of an excused absence from an exam, a make-up will be given at the professor's convenience.

Exam study strategies: You do not have time to get behind. Therefore, diligently keep up with reading and thinking about the assigned readings, problems, and class discussions. It is also key to keep up with the questions & collaborative work on Blackboard.

The exams will be posted in Blackboard on the scheduled exam week. A window of time will be given for students to take the exam (for example, I may give you a 10 day window to complete it). Students will log onto Blackboard and follow the link to the exam. Exams will be "open book" but they will also be timed (you may have only 2-3 hours to complete the exam), so students must be organized and prepared. Exams will primarily cover weekly readings (those that precede each case). While the exam will not explicitly refer to facts in case studies, students may wish to use examples from the cases to illustrate their answers. Blackboard's exam feature is relatively easy to use. However, it is **very important** that you **complete the exam in one session without closing your browser or allowing your Internet connection to time-out**. You do not have to come to class to take the exam, it may be taken from home, work, or a computer on campus. I can provide you with a quiet private space to take it, if necessary.

Current Issues in Technology Abstract and Presentation

Part 1: You are expected to summarize an article about technology or how technology is affecting business and/or society. You will summarize and interpret the article in the following format: bibliographic information, executive summary and insights section.

- The bibliographic part of the format is where you will enter data about Journal, Author, date of publication, title of article, pages, URL if applicable.
- The Executive Summary section should briefly describe what the article is about, including all the key points.
- The Insights section describes why you feel this is an important article, how it fits into our readings, and elaborates on the implications of the technology for business today, in your own words. You will want to relate it both to the company/ organization for whom you work, as well as to the business environment in general. You may also want to consider social implications of the technology.

The total abstract should be one to one-and-one-half pages single spaced 10- or 12-point font. Each student must report on a unique article. You claim your article by posting on the discussion area for "Claiming your Article" on Blackboard, FCFS. It is your responsibility to determine that the article you want to post has not been already claimed by another.

Part 2: You are to prepare a five to ten minute PowerPoint presentation summarizing your findings to the class. A sign-up sheet will be provided for you to make your presentation. You will be graded on content, style, and delivery. Because our time is limited, students going over 10 minutes for their presentation (including questions) will be penalized points.

Case Analyses

Prior to the discussion of each case study, you will be required to prepare a one page (single spaced, 12 font, Times New Roman, default margins) case analysis. See the "Learning with Cases" article for details on what to include in a case writeup. In addition to the **brief** summary and identification of major issues in the case, your case analysis grade will be based on the quality and originality of your recommendations, creativity in problem solving, depth of insight, etc. During the term, we will cover 12 cases. Bring your analysis to class as a foundation for our discussions; you will turn them in at the end of each class.

Information Technology (market) Research Study

A 8-10 page double-spaced paper examining a research question related to IT. A typical paper might have the following sections: Introduction, Background, Research Questions and Methodology, Findings (or Preliminary Findings), and Conclusions. Sample research questions might be (there are hundreds of potential relevant topics):

- What impact does user feedback have on bid prices in Ebay auctions?
- What role does gender play in responsiveness to email advertising?
- What is the relative effectiveness of pop-up ads versus banner ads in user recall?
- What factors do users versus IT departments view as most important in a corporate Intranet?
- What is the correlation between fear of Identity Theft and dollars spent online?

To make such an analysis, you will need to find relevant references on your topic. You may use web sites, but they may constitute no more than 50% of your total references. The rest of your references need to be published articles, and you'll need a minimum of 6 references. You will also need to suggest a research method for answering the question: for example, a survey, interviews, or experiment. Your research method should provide the best data to answer the research question. It is expected that you will not have the resources or time to actually conduct the full study, so your paper will detail how the study should be conducted, complete with a sample survey, list of interview questions, or experimental design. Higher consideration will be given to students who get through a prototype (say, a group of 20 students who participate in your survey, or a handful of interviews actually conducted and reported). More details about the paper will be provided later in the course.

CEO/CIO Interviews

Interview your CEO (or a key manager in your organization) and your CIO (or key Information Systems official in your organization) regarding the direction of the organization from a technological perspective. Solicit their opinions on topics such as:

- The importance of technology to the organization
- The mission of technology
- The benefits/deficits of using technology
- The organization's technology needs
- Where the organization will be in three years in relation to technology
- Outsourcing plans, etc.
- Any key learning the organization has had with IT investments, if they had it to do over, what they would do differently?
- Article contents in "HBR Article: IT Doesn't Matter / Strategic importance of IT to organization / industry"

Summarize each of the interviews, then compare and contrast the perspectives recorded. Finally, include your personal reaction to this assignment in your report. This will be 6-8 double-spaced word-processed pages.

One Minute Paper / Participation

You are expected to take part in class discussions of the material, as well as in problem demonstrations. In addition you will be required to complete the One Minute Paper (OMP) at the end of every class. The purpose of the OMP is to elicit four responses from you while the class lecture is fresh in your mind. In the OMP you will have the opportunity to describe what area you are unclear about, what area you understand, what you would like to learn more about, and your overall perception of understanding of the materials just presented. I will be able to use this information to adjust what direction the next class period takes.

In addition to using the OMP to provide me feedback, your fellow colleagues will also be able to read the messages and respond with helpful suggestions regarding an area of weakness identified in your OMP. Your OMP and the responses to the OMP will form the basis of your OMP grade. It is important to note that the quality of a response counts, and not the quantity of the response. It is also important to note that a response is expected each week, and missing responses mean missing points.

Collaboration

The OMP is one method for forming outside classroom discussion via Blackboard. You are also expected to participate in weekly discussions on blackboard. The precise requirements will be discussed during the first class, but you can expect to visit blackboard at least twice a week to check in on, and participate in the discussions. One hint to the importance I place on collaboration is the proportion of your grade assigned to it. You can also begin more general or specific discussions yourself within the Discussion Room. This will also count towards your overall participation score. Use of Blackboard will be discussed during the 1st class.

Interacting with the Professor

Consider this your personal engraved invitation to do so! e-mail or IM are the best way to send me questions or to get information, although there is also a weekly “questions of the week” area on Blackboard where you can post questions, and where everyone can share the question and answer(s). You are encouraged to use this area to ask your questions, as you are encouraged to answer one another’s questions. If you send me e-mail, I will usually respond the same day, no more than two days (except on weekends or over breaks). You are also welcome to contact me by phone, fax, or see me in my office if you have questions.

Class Policies

Grading policy: It is important to recognize that a grade reflects another person's evaluation and judgment of your work. I will grade all exam questions, and cases. You are encouraged to meet with me at anytime to discuss the strengths and weakness of your course work (i.e., to gain understanding of your performance). I expect that there should be no surprises when you see the final grades.

Cheating policy: Cheating (using or attempting to use unauthorized materials in an academic exercise), fabrication (falsifying or inventing information), facilitating academic dishonesty (helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty), and plagiarism (representing the words or ideas of another as your own) will result in a grade of F for the course. If you have any doubt about whether you’re plagiarizing, ASK. Xavier uses turnit.com to check papers for plagiarism.

Courtesy policy: You will find that I value courtesy quite highly. If you feel that you are being treated discourteously by the instructor or by a fellow student, please let me know. It is my intent to challenge you always, disparage you never. Also, in the spirit of courtesy, **please turn all cell phones and pagers to “silent” (and phasers to “stun”) for the duration of class.**

Disclaimer: This syllabus has been prepared by a fallible human being and may contain errors. The fallible human being in question reserves the right to correct, amend, and otherwise modify this syllabus as necessary.