MBA 628  
Business Strategy: Information Technology  
Fall 2005  
Department of Information Systems and Operations Management  
The Bryan School of Business  
University of North Carolina, Greensboro  

Professor: Dr. Ruth C. King   Phone: 334-4989  
Office: 436 Bryan Building   Email: rcking@uncg.edu  
Class Room: 132 Bryan Building   Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 4-5pm  
Class Time: Monday 6:30pm -9:20pm   Mail Box: 479 Bryan Building  

COURSE DESCRIPTION:  
Information technology (IT) has become entrenched in the many ways we define business, execute strategy and manage the organization. IT is viewed as one of the critical success factors for organizations to achieve competitive advantage. This class will focus on issues that are strategic to business and IT leaders. Topics such as the role of IT, business-IT alignment, business intelligence, IT innovations, IT enabled process organization, electronic commerce and IT outsourcing will be addressed. The goal of this course is to familiarize students with the potential opportunities and transformational nature of IT and to equip students with a balanced and informed view and approach to managing IT in organizations.  

CLASS FORMAT:  
This course involves three major in-class activities. The first part is a current event update session. The second part is a student-led discussion session and the last part is the instructor-led discussion and conclusion session.  

For the current event update session, three to four students per week will bring in articles (1-2 pages) from business or IT journals, magazines or newspapers about issues that are related to IT and business at the strategic level and present them to the class. You are encouraged to send me the links or articles 8 hours before the class so that I can post it on the class Blackboard.  

For the student-led discussion session, we will select a few papers at the end of each class from the reading list that appears at the end of the syllabus and assign them to students. Each student will be responsible to lead the discussion of the assigned paper in the next class session. In addition, you are to prepare a write-up of approximately one page for distribution to the class. Approximately 2/3 of the write-up should summarize the main issues addressed in the article, the basis for the argument and the recommendations. The remaining 1/3 should include your evaluation of the article, your thoughts about how it contributes to the current thinking or the quality of the solutions to the problems, and your thoughts about how the issues can be addressed or dealt with differently and superiorly. You are encouraged to send me the summaries 8 hours before class so that I can post it on the class Blackboard.
CLASS MATERIAL:
There will be no textbook used in this class. All reading material (Except the Harvard Cases) will be distributed to you via Blackboard. Harvard cases can be purchased from the EUC. You are also encouraged to send relevant information to the instructor to be posted on the Blackboard.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:
Mere attendance does not count much toward your class participation (5%). You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss all assigned readings, to lead the class, to seek answers or additional materials that enrich or broaden our understanding of the topics. Quality of the contribution is more important than the quantity of the participation. You are also encouraged to participate in the discussion forum facilitated by the Blackboard.

CASE ASSIGNMENTS:
There are four Harvard Business cases for this class. Questions for each case will be posted on the Blackboard no later than one week before the due date. You will be working with your team to analyze the case questions and prepare the write-up. Please present your answers as succinctly and clearly as possible (One-page per question) and be creative when presenting your thoughts and ideas. Use tables, figures, outline forms to get the points across effectively. The analysis report is due at the beginning of the class. Late assignments will not be accepted.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT:
You and your team will complete an investigative report (about 8 pages, single-spaced) for the course. The topic of the paper is up to you and your team members. You may choose, for example, to develop an in-depth critique of a particular issue as discussed in class; expose critical and non-obvious inconsistencies between two common approaches or practices; pursue an in-depth study of an IT application (CRM, ERP or SCM) concerning its functions and impact in workplace; and/or conduct an empirical study and collect and analyze real data. The paper must contain some cases, interview results or real data. In evaluating your paper, my central criterion will be: how important are the ideas or empirical findings that you generate for advancing the understanding of IT strategy and management? The work must advance well beyond a simple literature review. You must use this paper as an opportunity to push the current thinking of the topic forward in a significant way. A one page proposal outlining your topic is due on the fourth week of class. I will not grade your outline but simply use it as a means to assist you with your pursuit of the investigation. You will present your report on October 17, 2005.

Your one-page proposal is due on Monday, September 12, 2005.
Your final written paper is due by Monday, October 17, 2005.

EVALUATION:
I will base my grading for the course on the following criteria:

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation (Individual)</td>
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<td>4 Case Analyses (Team)</td>
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<td>Student-led discussion (Individual)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Investigative Report (Team)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
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**Topic One (Week One): The Role of IT in Corporations**

4. Do you have too much IT? Andrew McAfee, MIT Sloan Management Review, Spring 2004, 18-22
5. IT investment is strategic to a firm’s survival, Melinda K. Cline and C. Steve Guynes, Information Strategy: The Executive’s Journal, Spring 2004, 39-47

**Topic Two (Week Two): Critical IT Issues CIOs Face**

1. Winning their hearts, their minds, and their databases: following an acquisition, merging company cultures and integrating business systems are the most vital challenges, Drew Robb, Information Strategy: The Executive’s Journal, Spring 2003, 12-17
Topic Three (Week Three): The Strategy Alignment between IT and Business + IT Governance

1. New meaning to IT alignment, Kavin W. Moody, ISM, Fall 2003, 30-35
3. Assessing IT/business alignment, Jerry Luftman, Information Strategy: The Executive’s Journal, Fall 2003, 7-14
5. Strategic information technology planning and the line manager’s role, Robert Heckman, Information Systems Management, Fall 2003, 16-21

Topic Four (Week Four): IT and Process-oriented Enterprises

CASE: Pfizer’s Virtual CIS, Harvard Case, May 2005
4. Deep Change: How operational innovation can transform your company, Michael Hammer, April 2004, 85-93

Topic Five (Week Five): What’s Your Strategy of Managing Data, Information, Knowledge and Decisions

CASE: Business Intelligence Software at SYSCO, Harvard Case, July 2004
**Topic Six (Week Six): IT Outsourcing Strategy**

**CASE: Eastman Kodak Co: Managing Information Systems through Strategic Alliances, Harvard Case, September 1995**

6. IT and business process outsourcing: the knowledge potential, L. Willcocks, J. Hindle, David Feeny and Mary Lacity, Information Systems Management, Summer 2004, 7-15
8. Offshore outsourcing: current and future effects on American IT industry, Laura L. Pfannenstein and Ray J. Tsai, Information Systems Management, Fall 2004, 72-80
10. Some thoughts on our globalized workforce, Stuart Robbins, Information Systems Management, Summer 2004, 86-87

**Topic Seven (Week Seven): E-Commerce Revisited**

6. E-business experiences of practitioners and consultants, Michael L. Gibson, Zhangxi Lin, and James R. Burns, Information Systems Management, Summer 2003, 8-21