MBA 628
Business Strategy: Information Technology
Spring 2006
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: ruth.king@uncg.edu
Class Room: 204 Bryan Building   Office Hours: Wednesday 4-6pm
Class Time: Thursday 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 four major in-class activities. The first part is the quiz session. The second part is the current event update session. The third part is a group-led assigned reading discussion session and the last part is the instructor-led discussion and conclusion session. There is no quarantine which order of these activities will take place at each class.

For the quiz session, there will be one quiz per week at the beginning of the class (In most cases). The quiz only covers the book chapter(s) assigned to that particular week. You will be able to drop two lowest scores from the quizzes to accommodate missing class due to potential business trips or illness. The purpose of having quiz is to encourage your reading the chapter(s) before the class.

For the current event update session, five students (one group) 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 required to (1) make enough copies for the class and (2) post your article on the class Blackboard (under the Current Event Site category and use the title of the article, source and date as the file name, eg. 10 Hot IT Trends, WSJ, 01 10 2006) 12 hours prior to the class time. Each event presentation will be allocated with 4~5 minutes and will be strictly enforced. (The clock starts ticking from the moment you are called to the moment you leave the podium). Please convey your message and use the airtime effectively. You will be graded based (1) whether your information is appropriate and interesting, (2) your management of time is effective and (3) your posting of the information is punctual.
For the group-led assigned reading discussion session, we will select 1-2 papers at the end of each class from the reading list that appears at the end of the syllabus and assign them to group(s) to present. Group members (can be presented by one person or more) will be responsible to lead the discussion of the assigned paper in the next class session. Please prepare your presentation using power point slides. In addition, groups 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 required to (1) make enough copies of your write-up and (2) post your power point file and write-up on the class Blackboard (under the Course Reading category and the corresponding week) 12 hours before the class time. Each discussion session will be allocated with 15-25 minutes and will be strictly enforced. Your entire group will be evaluated based on (1) whether you have brought up all the important points from the article, (2) and your additional elaboration on key points with insightful remarks and (3) stimulating interesting discussion among your peers in addition to the 3 criteria mentioned in the current event update session.

For the instructor-led discussion session, we will discuss main points from the assigned chapter(s) and incorporate the assigned reading material so that you can gain a comprehensive and integrated viewpoints for the topic discussed.

CLASS MATERIAL:


All other 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.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic integrity is a cornerstone of the intellectual life of a university. Consistent with University policy, violations of academic integrity will be considered a serious offense. Any student who is judged to have violated academic integrity, such as cheating and plagiarizing, will be subject to the penalties discussed in the Code on Campus Affairs.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Mere attendance does not count much toward your class participation. 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. Long winding rambling is not considered effective communication or active participation. Please be sensitive and conscientious about how you use the airtime since we only have 160 minutes per week to learn one topic. You are also encouraged to participate in the discussion forum facilitated by the Blackboard.
**CASE ASSIGNMENTS:**

There are four 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 (with appealing phrases and 3-4 sentences to substantiate your points effectively).** Long winding paragraph is strongly discouraged. Present your answer as if you were to present the recommendations/solutions to your senior manager and s/he has already known as many the facts as you do, so **don’t repeat or merely present the facts.** 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 **March 2, 2006.**

**Your one-page proposal is due on Thursday, February 2, 2006.**

**Your final written paper and power point file (both hard and soft copies) are due no later than Monday, March 13, 2006.**

**WRITTEN WORK:**

When material is submitted for evaluation it should be in suitable form. Written work should be typed. Neatness and clarity of presentation is expected in all work. When turning in your report, please do not use any additional fancy cover. A staple on the left top corner of the document will be sufficient. **Your cover page should include class title, number, time, and team number in addition to each individual’s name. Any missing information will result in the reduction of your grade.**

**TEAM WORK:**

Most of the time, teamwork provides the best opportunity to bring in creativity and diversity from group members. However, in some occasions, conflicts and resentment can occur in groups due to inequitable contribution, miscommunication and/or misunderstanding. You can consider using campus mediation services or group feedback and evaluation. **When anonymous group feedback becomes necessary and is used, the result will reflect on your final grade.**

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Current Event Presentation (Individual)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Quiz Scores (out of 7) (Individual)</td>
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<td>4 Case Analyses (Team)</td>
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<td>Group-led Discussion (Team)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Investigative Report (Team)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**Topic One (Week One - 1/12/2006): The Role of IT in Corporations**

1. The Information Systems Strategy Triangle, Chapter ONE
2. IT doesn’t matter, Nicholas G. Carr, Harvard Business Review, May 2003, 41-49

**Topic Two (Week Two – 1/19/2006): Strategic Management of IT and IT Resources**

CASE: American Airline Reservations Systems, MIS Quarterly
1. Information Technology and Changing Business Processes, Chapter FIVE
3. Deep Change: How operational innovation can transform your company, Michael Hammer, April 2004, 85-93 (A)
4. Human Reengineering, R. Cooper and M. L. Markus, SMR, Summer 1995, 39-50 (B)

**Topic Three (Week Three – 1/26/2006): Strategic Management of IT and IT Resources**

CASE: Cisco Systems Architecture: ERP and Web-enabled IT, Harvard Case
1. The Strategic Use of Information Resources, Chapter TWO
2. Architecture and Infrastructure, Chapter SIX
3. Dark Screen: An Exercise in Cyber Security, Goles, White, Dietrich, MISQ Executive, 42(2) 2005 (A)

**Topic Four (Week Four – 2/2/2006): IT Impacts on Organizations and on Work**

1. Organizational Impacts of Information Systems Use, Chapter THREE
2. Information Technology and the Design of Work, Chapter FOUR
4. Nomadic Culture: Cultural Support for Working Anytime, Anywhere, Chen & Nath, ISM, fall 2005(A)
5. New Way of Working (B)
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

1. Using Information Ethically, Chapter EIGHT
2. Knowledge Management, Chapter TWELVE
5. Inside the Fence: Sensitizing Decision Makers to the Possibility of Deception in the Data Use, Biros, George and Zmud, MISQ Executive, 4(1), March 2005 (B)

Topic Six (Week Six): Management of IS Organization and IT Outsourcing Strategy

CASE: Eastman Kodak’s Strategic Outsourcing, Harvard Business Case

1. The Management of IS Organization, Chapter NINE
2. Funding IT, Chapter TEN

Topic Seven (Week Seven): E-Commerce Revisited and Project Management

1. Doing Business on the Internet, Chapter SEVEN
2. Project Management, Chapter ELEVEN
5. Project Retrospectives: Evaluating Project Success, Failure and Everything in Between, MISQ Executive, 4(3) September 2005. (B)
6. Proving your Project’s Worth, Tynan, Infoworld, 2005, 25-29 (B)