



ISDS 731

Information Technology Application

Spring 2001

Course Syllabus

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Course Web Site: <http://www.wiggo.com/isds731>

Section 01 Meets: MW 2:30-3:45 PM Room 111

Prerequisites: None.

Required Text: None. See class schedule on course web site for URLs of readings from various web sites.

Recommended: A regular reading of business periodicals (e.g., *Wall Street Journal*, *Fortune*, *BusinessWeek*, *Forbes*, *Barron's*) and information systems periodicals (e.g., *Infoworld*, *Wired*, *Forbes ASAP*, *PC Magazine*) is strongly recommended. Student (reduced price) subscriptions can be obtained the first week of the semester, and the library has subscriptions to some periodicals.

Course Description and Overall Goal:

This course serves as an introduction to how information technology, and particularly the emerging network infrastructure of the Internet, is reshaping and being used to reengineer management, organizational structure, decision making, product design, distribution channels, and industry boundaries. The firm as a global virtual learning organization will be explored as will methods for analyzing systems, and harnessing information technology to corporate strategy.

The course contains a substantial writing component. Students will prepare written technology analyses on an individual basis. The expected level of quality and professionalism of the content and presentation of these analyses will be that used in actual business organizations.

Much managerial communication is verbal. Therefore, class discussion of lecture, reading, and other materials forms a substantial portion of the grade for this course.

The principal objective of the course is for students to learn the fundamental technologies of information management and how those technologies can be applied in a business setting.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Development and reinforcement of a managerial perspective of the impact of computers and information systems.
2. Development of an understanding of the technical aspects and trends in hardware, software and telecommunications systems, including computer hardware and systems architecture, operating systems, and application programs.
3. An exposure to and practical experience in using hardware, software and telecommunications systems.
4. An understanding of a changing framework for IT, systems concepts, vocabulary, and IT/Business alignment issues.
5. An ability to make quality decisions based on typical scenarios and partial information regarding IT/Business issues.
6. Development of the ability to analyze and discuss the organizational and management implications of technology choices.
7. Practice in the selection and configuration of appropriate hardware and software solutions to business problems.
8. Development of the ability to recognize the critical issues in information resource and technology management.
9. Familiarity with current terms, concepts and issues and development of the ability to communicate with IT professionals in typical business settings.

Important Note Regarding Information Technology Skills

This is **NOT** a class for learning fundamental computer skills (i.e., how to use a word processor, send email or print a spreadsheet). Previous experience in rudimentary computer skills is required (as it is for most classes at the Freeman School) and will be expected for both in-class and out of class work. If you have little previous experience working in a networked environment or otherwise feel uncomfortable about your skills, please make some time to work with your laptop and/or seek help from more experienced peers. You should not expect to learn these basic skills "on the fly" throughout this module. Attempting to do so potentially puts you at a disadvantage and is likely to adversely affect your academic experience.

Course Assignments and How They Are Evaluated

Performance evaluation will be based on student performance in four types of activities: class participation, individual case analysis, final examination, and weekly assignments.

Class Participation -- **30% of the grade**

Attendance (**on time**) is required and is a component of the participation grade.

In a typical class, one or more students will be asked to start the class by answering a specific question or discussing a specific issue. A thoughtful reading of the chapter or case assigned for that class meeting should be sufficient to handle these leadoff discussions. As a group, we will then discuss the day's assignment to develop a fuller understanding of the issues presented. Voluntary participation in discussion of lecture or case issues is an important part of this process and an important part of your

class participation grade. Please raise your hand to obtain recognition before speaking.

Class participation grades are based on the instructor's assessment of the student's in-class contribution to the discussion. The bases for this assessment include the following:

1. Are the points made relevant to the discussion? Are they linked to the comments of others?
2. Do the comments add to our understanding of the lecture or case discussion?
3. Do the comments show careful reading and *understanding* of the text and/or case?
4. Does the participant distinguish among different kinds of data (that is facts, opinions, beliefs, concepts, etc?)
5. Is there a willingness to "take a chance" in the discussion, or are the comments "safe"? Examples of "safe" comments: (a) repetition of text or case facts without analysis; (b) repetition or seconding of a colleague's conclusions or comments.

Individual Technology Analysis Report -- 30% of the grade

The due date for this assignment is Wednesday, February 21. For this assignment, you will choose a company you are familiar with (from working there, or wanting to work there, or from a case assignment for another class, or anything else), and choose an appropriate technology from those we cover in this course (or any other technology), and perform an analysis of how that company could (a) adopt and use the technology or (b) create a product and enter the market for the technology. Before you begin your analysis, you must first write a very brief proposal of what you intend to do (what company, what technology, and either adoption scenario or market scenario) and hand it in for my prior approval. ***Do not begin the assignment until I have approved your proposal.***

The written technology analysis report constitutes 30% of your overall course grade. I will grade your papers for content only. The MCC will grade your paper for writing mechanics, writing style, and organization. Content will count for one-half (50%) of the grade, and the writing grade from the MCC will count for one-half (50%) of the grade. ***In order to facilitate this dual-grading system, please submit two (2) copies of each group case analysis report.***

The technology analysis report should be seven to twenty pages of double-spaced text and include a one-page executive summary, with charts and figures included where appropriate. ***But again, brevity is important.***

Approach the assignment as though you are management consultants hired by the management of a specific company (which you must choose and specify) to analyze the technology for either (a) adopting and using within the company or (b) entering the market for the technology. First, you must choose what real-world company you are consulting for. If you choose the adoption scenario (a), then any company that could use the technology is appropriate. If you choose the market scenario (b), then you must select a real-world company that has products using similar technologies or that would have the capability of developing a marketable product using the new technology. Whichever scenario you choose, you must recommend an action plan for the company to follow. The technology analysis report is your formal report to the company's management. Since this report is to executives, be concise. ***Brevity is important.*** Get to the point, but be able to support your conclusions with any appropriate analysis. ***All technology analysis reports are due Wednesday, February 21.***

The following is a ***suggested*** format for organizing your technology analysis report executive summary. It is up to you to decide on an appropriate format for your specific technology and your specific focal firm(s).

- (1) **Brief overview of technology** (*about one paragraph, at most one page*). What is the most important aspect of the technology? Why is it important?

- (2) **Analysis of the technology** (*about four pages*). What does the technology do? How does it work? What problems can it solve? What problems can it cause?
- (3) **Recommendations** (*about four pages*). What should your client do about the technology? **Be specific**. How does your recommendation follow from your technology analysis? How will your plan solve problems without causing new problems? How will it be implemented? **Include an action plan**. How much will your plan cost? Is it feasible? How will it be financed? What are the risks of your plan? What can go wrong? **Include a risk analysis**.
- (4) **Appendix** (*included in 20 page limit*). Include any exhibits or analyses that may be relevant.

General Rules Regarding Written Work:

- 1.) ***Use a spelling checker.***
- 2.) ***Minimal grammatical errors.***

These rules are firm because they replicate the conditions the student should expect to find in any well-run business establishment. In general, professionally managed enterprises do not commit, nor accept, needless spelling or grammatical errors in written or presented materials. They diminish the quality of the company's reputation for accuracy and attention to detail, and take attention away from the content of the message presented.

3.) ***Management Communications Center.*** The Freeman School offers an excellent resource in the Management Communications Center. Take advantage of it. The MCC will be grading both written assignments for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and style, so it is to your advantage to utilize the facilities of the MCC when preparing your papers. Remember that the MCC is busy, so don't wait until the last minute to ask for their help.

Weekly Assignments -- 20% of the grade

Each Monday beginning January 22, a brief assignment will be announced in class and posted on the course website at <http://www.wiggo.com/isds731>. The assignment will be due at the beginning of class the following Monday. There will be five such assignments, each accounting for 4% of your overall grade for the course.

Final Examination -- 20% of the grade

A final examination, which will probably be a take-home exam (although I reserve the right to schedule a proctored exam), will cover all of the material in the course.

General Information

- 1) Grade ranges: 93–100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83–86 = B; 80-82 = B-; 70-79 = C;
Below 70 = F. Grades will be weighted as specified above and summed to calculate your final grade.
- 2) I will be fully prepared for every class and expect you to be the same. I sometimes call on students whose hands are not raised, and therefore request that you advise me before class if some emergency has made it impossible for you to prepare adequately for class discussion.

- 3) Class attendance is required at *every* class meeting. Unexcused absences will result in a deduction to the class participation grade of the student. Excused absences are so rare as to be unworthy of itemization here (and do *not* include job interviews or Burkenroad Reports site visits). If a student does miss a class, it is his or her responsibility to find out *from classmates* what materials were covered, what additional assignments were made, and what items may have been distributed in class.
- 4) The course web site at <http://www.wiggo.com/isds731> is where I will post copies of all materials, including assigned readings, weekly assignments, and lecture slideshows (the day *after* the lecture).
- 5) I will attempt to learn your names as quickly as possible. However, to allow me to keep track of participation grades from the very beginning, I will be using a seating chart. Please sit in your assigned seats. If you do not, you will be marked absent.
- 6) Class will begin *on time*. You are expected to be in your seat and ready to begin the leadoff discussion at that time. Learn to be prompt. Showing up late to meetings shows a lack of respect, and will not help your career. Start getting used to it now, when all it can hurt is your grade.
- 7) Written work is due at the beginning of class on the day it is due. Late papers will be accepted only in the case of dire emergencies.
- 8) Please do not eat during class.
- 9) Hats and caps should not be worn in class.

Schedule of Classes

Date	Day	Subject	Reading	Other
1/17	Wed	Overview, distribution of syllabus, introductions.		
1/22	Mon	Information Technology Application and the Information Management Curriculum		
1/24	Wed	Hardware—Processors, Storage and I/O		
1/29	Mon	Platforms		
1/31	Wed	Operating Systems		
2/2	Fri	Client-Server Architecture		
2/5	Mon	Communications—Basics		
2/7	Wed	E-Commerce Infrastructure—Internet		
2/12	Mon	Communications—Wireless		
2/14	Wed	Software—Applications		
2/19	Mon	Software—Middleware		
2/21	Wed	Software—ERP and SAP		Technology Analysis Due
2/25	Mon	NO CLASS		Mardi Gras
2/27	Wed	NO CLASS		Mardi Gras
3/5	Mon	Software—Knowledge Management		
3/7	Wed	Summary and Conclusion		

ISDS 731 Student Information Sheet

Name: _____

Concentration: _____

Home Town: _____

Undergrad Degree & School: _____

Internship? _____ Doing What? _____

What Company? _____

Where? _____

Work Experience: _____

Career Objective: _____

Interesting Facts (hobbies, family, sports, other) _____
