Overview

Businesses have always used management information systems to thrive. Today they are utterly reliant on the automation of management information systems; even the briefest interruption in service can cost a firm millions of dollars or even threaten its survival. Business professionals need at least a basic understanding of the role of management information systems in helping businesses to be efficient, effective, and competitive in our technology-oriented world.

Learning Objectives

After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
1. Discuss the use of decision support systems for business decision making and process improvement, and explain the role of data warehouses in these systems.
2. Exemplify the use of technology—including networks and MIS infrastructure—to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of business processes.
3. Discuss the major policies businesses should implement to protect the privacy, security, and integrity of corporate and customer information.
4. Design and implement Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and Microsoft Access databases to support business decision making.
5. Explain the major types of enterprise applications and the methodologies used to develop them and manage their development.

These goals are related to the following learning goals of the business minor program:
- Students will develop analytical, problem-solving and decision-making skills that can be applied in a variety of business situations within a global business environment.
- Students will be able to use process analysis techniques and tools in order to assess and improve the ways in which organizations conduct business.
Prerequisites
Before taking this class, you should have completed 30 credit hours (i.e., sophomore standing).

Expectations
Taking a course online requires dedication and organization. In order to have a successful semester, it is important that you:
• Visit the course website regularly (at least once weekly).
• Stay on schedule with the material covered, and complete all assignments on time.
• Participate actively in online BB discussions.
• Check your Mason Live email (or, if you forward your mail, the forwarding location) daily.
• Dedicate five to seven hours per week, on average, to the class.
• Contact me promptly if a problem arises that is interfering with your performance in the class.

Learning Resources

Required Course Materials – Textbook and Connect

If you want a printed book, you can purchase it from the GMU bookstore, packaged with a Connect access code. You can also obtain a printed book from a variety of online sellers.

Course Website
Our course website on Blackboard serves as the information hub for this course. To view the site, visit [http://mymason.gmu.edu](http://mymason.gmu.edu), log on using your Mason Live user ID and password, and click the “Courses” tab. You should see MBUS302-B02 listed; if not, please email me immediately.

The website includes a Welcome video and a “Start Here!” area providing an orientation to the course and to online learning. Please review these before starting on other course materials.

Unit Folders and Lessons
Each week’s assignments and activities can be found in unit folders on the course website. Each folder contains links to one or more lessons. Each lesson contains detailed list of readings, activities, and other assignments, and also provides perspective on the material. In addition, you can get the “big picture” of the course, with topics and due dates, from the weekly course schedule available on the course website.

Availability of Learning Tools
This course is offered completely online, except for exams which will be in-class. Course materials are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Announcements and Course Updates

I will post a course announcement every Monday providing an overview of the week’s activities. All emails will be posted as announcements on Blackboard. I may sometimes post lower-priority announcements on Blackboard without emailing them. It is a good idea to check the Announcements area each time you visit the course website.

Blackboard Collaborate

Blackboard Collaborate provides a virtual meeting area for our class. It supports audio, text chat, a whiteboard, and screen sharing. We will use it for virtual office hours and one-on-one meetings (see below), and possibly for optional live tutorials.

You need either a headset with a microphone or a microphone plus headphones in order to participate in sessions using audio features. You can run Collaborate on a PC or Mac, and also on an iPad (with a reduced set of features). The course website has additional information on Collaborate.

How to Get Help

We have vastly different technology backgrounds in the class, and I expect that you may require individual help or tutoring from time to time. Please don’t let yourself get frustrated if you’re struggling with a concept or assignment. Asking for help isn’t a failure—but giving up because you didn’t seek help is.

The previous paragraph assumes that you have first taken advantage of all course resources related to the topic—readings, videos, and practice activities. One-on-one help is available to supplement these resources, not to replace them.

Technical Help

- If you have problems with the Mason network, Blackboard, or Virtual Computer Lab (VCL) contact GMU’s ITU Support Center (703-993-8870).
- If you have problems with Connect, contact McGraw-Hill’s Customer Experience Group Support Center (http://mpss.mhhe.com) by phone, online chat, or email.

Help with Course Concepts or Logistics

If you need help with course concepts or logistics, you can reach me via email (which I check frequently) or on the Ask the Professor forum on the course website. I will respond within 24 hours or less Monday through Friday, and usually on weekends as well, but see “Three Before Me” below.

“Three Before Me”

The website and readings are your first sources for finding answers to your questions. It is your responsibility to use them, and then to ask for help if they do not provide the answers you need. Unfortunately, past students too often asked me questions they could have answered themselves—emailing me seemed easier than checking the website, and I am known for quick
responses to email. In other words, they took advantage of my willingness to help. This used up time I could have spent doing things to benefit the class as a whole.

As a result, all requests for help must be accompanied by a list of three appropriate places in the course materials where you sought the answer but didn’t find it (e.g., the syllabus, the unit folders, or a relevant video, depending on the question). If you don’t include this information with your request, you should not expect an answer. The exception is if you found an answer but you’re not sure you understand. In that case, just tell me where you found the answer (you don’t need three sources).

This is called a “Three Before Me” policy and is becoming commonplace in education. It benefits all of us: employers want to hire (and promote) people who are able to work independently, while still understanding when it’s appropriate to ask for help.

However …

As I said at the start of this section, don’t let yourself get frustrated or upset if you run into problems. Do your best with the resources provided, but if you still need help, ask. That’s what I’m here for.

### Grading and Assignments

Weeks begin on Monday and end on Sunday. All assignments are due before midnight on Sundays, except for initial posts in online discussions, which are due on Thursday in order to allow time for responses later in the week. See the Class Schedule for specific due dates.

Each unit in the course will be available one week in advance so that you can work ahead of schedule if you choose; however, you must participate in discussions during the week in which they are assigned.

Late homework submissions will not be accepted for any graded activity, unless there are truly compelling, severe circumstances that caused the late submission, supported by appropriate documentation.

Grades will be awarded in accordance with the GMU Grading System for undergraduate students. See the university catalog for policies: [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog) for more information.

Final grades will be posted to PatriotWeb, which is the only vehicle for students to obtain those grades. A student with a “hold” on his/her PatriotWeb account will be unable to access final grades until the hold has been removed by the Registrar.

Raw scores may be adjusted by the instructor to calculate final grades.

Grade Percentage will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>≥ Grade</th>
<th>&lt; Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final grades will be determined based on the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation (BB Collaborate)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exams

Two exams to include a Final Exam will be given. The exams will be comprehensive of the topics they cover. Exams are based upon the class lectures, textbook material, and possibly additional readings. All examinations are to be by individual effort as they will be graded. **NO collaboration of any kind is permitted.** See the honor code paragraph below. Any collaboration will be treated as an Honor Code violation.

Make up Exams - Notice will be given before each exam (including any changes); if you cannot take the exam at the designated time, you must make arrangements with the me before the exam is given to schedule a make-up exam. For cases other than approved ODS accommodations, exams may be made up only under extreme emergencies AND at the sole discretion of the instructor. Missed exams will be assigned a score of zero.

The midterm and final exam will be conducted **on-campus, in a classroom.** The dates/times/locations will be posted on Blackboard as soon as possible.

**Additional Exam Rules**

- All exams will be written and “closed book, closed notes, closed friends” – no reference materials other than those provided with the exam will be permitted.
- Students without proper identification (e.g. GMU ID, Driver’s License, etc.) will not be admitted to any exam
- No student may enter the classroom after the first student has left the room.
- Exams are retained by the Department and will not be returned to students.
To be successful in this course, homework will be an integral part of learning the course material. It is in your best interest to complete each and every homework assignment. Homework is for your benefit; it is a diagnostic tool by which students may assess their understanding and performance. Failure to do so will adversely affect performance, and will negatively impact course grades. Avoid falling behind. Homework assignments will be posted on BB or on the Connect website. Homework problems, both their assignment and solution, are the sole responsibility of the individual student.

- Homework will only be accepted through Blackboard submission. Scanned, hand written work will not be accepted.
- All Excel HW must be done in Excel while Access HW must be done in Access. No hand drawn graphs will be accepted.

### Activities

#### Startup Activities
During the first week of the semester, you will be asked to post a personal introduction to the class. This activity is worth ten points.

### Technology Requirements

To take this course, you will need the following hardware and software (this information is also in the “Start Here!” area of the course website):

#### Hardware
- A PC running Microsoft Windows Vista/7/8/10, or a Mac running OS X 10.6 (Snow Leopard) or higher, with at least 2GB of memory. It’s best to have a screen size of at least 13 inches.
- A fast, reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A wired connection is strongly recommended for taking exams.
- Computer speakers or headphones to listen to recorded content.
- A headset with microphone, or a built-in or external microphone plus headphones, to participate in live audio sessions using tools like Blackboard Collaborate.
- Sufficient hard disk space to download required software and save your course assignments.

#### Software
- A web browser supported by Blackboard (see [Blackboard Support](#) for more information)
- Access to Blackboard Collaborate. To verify, complete the [Blackboard Collaborate System Check](#). Collaborate has its own software requirements (including an up-to-date version of Java), which the system check will verify.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader ([free download](#))
- A current version of Adobe Flash Player ([free download](#))

### Microsoft Office Applications
To complete the homework, you will need access to these Microsoft Office applications:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Acceptable versions (Windows)</th>
<th>Acceptable versions (Mac)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>2010, 2013</td>
<td>Does not run on the Mac</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “Microsoft Excel and Access” area on the course website offers several low-cost/no-cost options for obtaining or using these applications (including ways for Mac users to use Microsoft Access remotely).

### University Policies and Resources

#### Academic Integrity Policy
You are expected to adhere to the [George Mason University Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits actual and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. These rules apply to this course:

- For Connect activities, discussions, homework, and written assignments, you may use both hard copy and electronic references for general information when preparing your answers. However, your answers must be entirely your own work with no assistance specific to the assignment given or received. There is one exception: you are **encouraged** to seek assignment-specific help from the instructor if you need it after using resources provided as part of the course.

The School of Business recommends a minimum penalty of a zero on the relevant assignment (or, for more serious infractions, an F in the class) for a first-time Honor Code violation. We take the Honor Code seriously; so should you. Consult the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) website for more information about Honor Code issues.

#### Disability Policy
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) to make arrangements.

#### Accessibility
GMU has services available to create recordings, transcripts, or other materials to meet the needs of students requiring accessible media. I have done my best to provide an accessible course (see the “Accessibility” area on Blackboard for specifics); however, please contact me if:

- You have problems using a course resource due to an accessibility issue; or
- You need access to a resource that is not yet accessible.

If you would prefer not to identify yourself, you can also report the issue anonymously on the [Accessibility Issues Form](#) provided by the GMU Web Accessibility initiative. Please be sure to provide the course number and my name so that the information reaches me quickly.

#### University Policies
Students must follow the [GMU University Policy](#) and the [Responsible Use of Computing Policy](#).

#### University Resources
GMU provides a number of resources to facilitate student success and assist students with academic or personal issues (e.g., [Counseling and Psychological Services](#), [Learning Services](#)).
University Career Services, Writing Center). If you need assistance, please consider taking advantage of these services. If you have questions about these services and wish to discuss your situation with me first in order to determine how to obtain the help you need, please don’t hesitate to contact me.