MIS 102 – Spreadsheet Apps for Business (Self-Study Course)

This syllabus is tentative. I reserve the right to add or to alter this syllabus as needed throughout the semester.

General Course Information
Course: Spreadsheet Apps for Business
Course Number: MIS 102 – 2B2
Location: Innovation Hall – 317, Fairfax Campus
Time: 3:00 pm to 4:15 pm
Course Material: Available on the Blackboard within a section “Course Content”

Instructor Information
Instructor: Aastha Chaudhary, MS in Computer Science, Adjunct Professor
E-mail: achaud17@gmu.edu (Email is the best way to contact me)
Office Hours: 12:15 pm to 1:15 pm (By Appointment)

Required Materials
- **SIMnet 2013 - Skills Approach - Excel** Registration Card – card is available (1) packaged with the physical copy of the book or (2) individually at the website gmu.simnetonline.com at the price of $70.75. The SIMNET access includes access to an electronic version of the book. So you should buy the package from the bookstore only if you need the physical copy of the book. ALL students must get their personal access code to SIMNET (The code will allow access to SimNet for about one year, i.e., if you have a SimNet 2010 access code from a previous semester, please contact me so that I can get you SimNet 2013 code).

- **Microsoft Office Excel 2013: A Skills Approach, Complete. McGraw-Hill.** ISBN: 0077394224 / 9780077394226. Both the exams will be based on information from the book. As I mentioned earlier, the book is available electronically within the SIMNET environment. The book’s website is:
  - You can find data and image files for the exercises at the text's Online Learning Center: [www.mhhe.com/office2013skillsapproach](http://www.mhhe.com/office2013skillsapproach).
  - **Note:** In the above text, the tests will cover Chapters 1- 9 except Skills 8-13 and 8-14 (Solver). The book’s website contains data files that can be used with these labs. **Exam 1 covers Chapters 1- 6; Exam 2 covers Chapters 1- 9 except Skills 8-13 and 8-14 (Solver)**
  - The SimSearch section of the SimNet software. (This option is free with SimNet registration.)
  - The Help section of Microsoft Excel 2013. (This capability is included with the Excel software.) It is worthwhile to become familiar with this part of Excel, especially if you have never used it before.
  - The following videos are also very helpful resources:
    - [http://www.lynda.com/SharedPlaylist/4a281ce5936e4d0189aa4497930482e6](http://www.lynda.com/SharedPlaylist/4a281ce5936e4d0189aa4497930482e6) (Available to Mason Students free)
    - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBy7BZs-zx0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBy7BZs-zx0)

Course Information and Objectives:
This is a 1 credit-hour, **Self-Study**, “Satisfactory / No Credit” course designed to help you acquire and to test whether you possess an adequate level of proficiency in and comfort with spreadsheet software. Satisfactory completion of the course is a requirement to pursue (i.e., complete) an undergraduate degree in any area of the School of Business at GMU. Further, most employers expect their employees to be proficient in *Excel* and to be able to learn a new software on their own.

As a **self-study course**, it is your responsibility to learn how to enter, organize, update, and analyze data appropriate to different business scenarios using the Microsoft *Excel* spreadsheet software package. This includes an exploration of the rich and varied capabilities of the software. MIS 102 will help you become aware of the uses and familiar with the capabilities of spreadsheets in business. (Note that this is one of B-School's Undergraduate Learning Goals).

However, if you are planning on taking BUS 210 (Business Analytics I), you do not need this class. Also this class is not a pre requisite to any other class.

**Course Policies and Class Sessions:**

1. All class sessions are in **Innovation Hall 317**.
2. You are required to come to class on days in which you are planning on taking the tests.
3. Although it is not required, I will strongly encourage you to come to the first class. The first class is intended to briefly introduce the course, course content, course expectations, and to familiarize you with the lab setup and lab rules for taking the exams. All other classes are exam-taking sessions in the lab.
4. The exam schedule is shown below. You must pass two separate exams to get a “Satisfactory” grade in MIS 102. You get a maximum of two attempts to pass each exam. If you do not pass either Exam 1 or Exam 2 after two attempts you will receive a “No Credit” grade.

**Disability:**

If you are a student with a disability and you need an academic accommodation, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474 or ods.gmu.edu. (All accommodations must be arranged through the DRC and should be made during the first week of the semester/class!)

**Inclement Weather:**

In the event of inclement weather, check the GMU Homepage or call 703-993-1000. Class will be held if the university is open. Therefore, plan accordingly. In the event of a delayed opening, we may try to have the exam session for those who can make it to campus. Make-up class sessions may be rescheduled by the university, but they are difficult to arrange for our class since it is in the computer lab. Ultimately, use your best judgment on whether or not you should travel. (You can sign up for the Mason Alert system to provide emergency information for various situations at [http://alert.gmu.edu](http://alert.gmu.edu). A poster with information on what to do in case of an emergency is in each classroom; additional information can be found at [http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert](http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert).)

**Requirements for a “Satisfactory” (i.e., passing) Grade:**
As noted above, you must take and pass two exams during the term. The exams must be taken in **Innovation Hall 317** on the day and times listed on the schedule for the section in which you are registered. Both exams must be passed; you will have up to two attempts for each exam. **You must score 75% or above on both Exam 1 and Exam 2 to pass the class.**

Both exams are in a software package called **SimNet**. **Exam 1** is a multiple-choice exam containing 25 questions on general Excel 2013 proficiency from Chapters 1-6 in the textbook. **Exam 2** involves the completion of 20 hands-on exercises in an Excel 2013 simulated environment; material for Exam 2 comes from Chapters 1-9. You’ll have up to an hour for each exam. At the end of the exam session, all unanswered questions will be counted as incorrect.

**SimNet:**

Each individual MUST buy the **SimNet** registration card (https://gmu.simnetonline.com) for Excel 2013 in advance of taking the exams. You can complete the **SimNet** registration for your specific MIS 102 section (at https://gmu.simnetonline.com) once you have your registration card. (Note: The class link in **SimNet** will be available by the time the semester starts.) The **SimNet** registration process can also be completed during the first class session, although this may use some of your exam time. **IMPORTANT: Each student MUST enroll in SimNet for the section in which you are actually registered for the course. Students trying to take exams with another section or outside the scheduled classroom will be disqualified for the entire term.**

After entering **SimNet**, you will have access to one (or more) practice exam(s) at appropriate times during the duration of this course. (Practice Exam 1 will become available as the semester starts; Practice Exam 2 will become available as we complete the Exam 1 testing.) I strongly encourage you to go through Practice Exam 1 to become familiar with the type of questions that may be asked and to better understand the Exam 1 expectations. It is also worthwhile to go through Practice Exam 2 and other lessons in **SimNet** to become familiar with **SimNet**’s hands-on format that is used in the simulated Excel 2013 environment for Exam 2. **Note that these Practice Exams are intended to provide you with some experience with how the exams work in SimNet; they are NOT broad study aids on all that might be asked on an exam.**

You can take the Practice Exams at any time or place you desire on a computer that has an Internet connection and meets minimal hardware-software specifications. Recall, however, that the Exams must be taken only in the **Innovation Hall 317** computer lab during your designated times on the appropriate dates.

**Systems requirements for using SimNet:**

- Your system must use Mozilla Firefox 3.0 (or higher) or Internet Explorer 7 (or higher) for **SimNet** to work properly when you practice outside the lab. All computers on campus have both browsers installed and available. Google Chrome also works.
- Mozilla Firefox is the recommended browser by **SimNet** for use in the labs on Exams!
- Turn off the Pop-Up Blocker while you are using **SimNet**. In Firefox, use Tools/Options/Content, and then uncheck “Block Pop-Up Windows.”
- Make sure you have Adobe Flash Player to simulate the test environment in **SimNet**. The latest version is available for free download from [www.Adobe.com](http://www.Adobe.com).
- If the simulated Excel screen in **SimNet** continues off the bottom of the screen, turn off (i.e., uncheck) some of the toolbars in Firefox. (Right-click near the top of the Firefox screen and uncheck the Add-Ons Toolbar, etc.)

**University Policies and Resources – Honor Code:**
This class operates in accordance with the University Honor Code (http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code), stated as follows:

“To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.**”

Honor Code violations can include using electronic devices other than the lab computer (e.g., phone, tablet, laptop, etc.) during an exam session, accessing the Internet (other than the SimNet site) during an exam session, using e-mail during an exam session, among others. These inappropriate actions will result in an immediate failing grade on the current exam session and will be reported to the Honor Committee for additional appropriate action.

**University Policies and Resources – Code of Student Conduct** – Underlying the University’s mission are basic values which must be respected if these goals are to be achieved (http://studentconduct.gmu.edu/university-policies/code-of-student-conduct). These indispensable community values include:

- The importance of personal integrity
- The right of every individual to be treated with respect and dignity
- The freedom of intellectual inquiry in the pursuit of truth
- The freedom of speech and open exchange of ideas
- The acceptance and appreciation of diversity
- The freedom from discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, and political views
- The freedom from violence aimed at limiting freedom, interfering with, or disrupting university activities

**Emergencies:**

Emergencies do sometimes happen that force you to miss class, i.e., to miss an exam session. Should this occur, you need to immediately contact me to let me know your situation. Note that e-mail is probably best. If ill, a doctor’s note may be requested. I will try to work with you, but I have some limitations in what I can do. And, notification days or weeks after the missed class will not be considered.

**Suggested (though not complete) list of topics in Excel that you MUST know:**

**Test-1**

- Concept of Formula
- Difference between relative and absolute references while entering or copying formulas
- 3D referencing - How to write formulas linking data in multiple sheets in a workbook
- How to use formulas involving arithmetic operators +, -, *, and /
- The proper use of parentheses and percentage calculations
- Differences between numbering formats, e.g., currency, accounting, comma, percent, etc.
- How to copy formulas and fill neighboring ranges with data and data series
- How to hide/unhide columns and rows, and hide or unhide the cell borders, including formatting
- Statistical functions for sums, averages, highest, lowest, and data counting (e.g., COUNTIF, COUNTA) … know what they are for and how to use them
- The financial functions for periodic payments for loans, present value, and future value (e.g., PMT, PV, etc.)
- Conditional formatting and copying/removing formats
– How to create simple graphs/charts from a spreadsheet data range (e.g., bar/line/pie charts, 2d-/3d-charts, etc.), including when to use each chart type
– The testing conditions (involving =, <, >, <=, >=, AND, OR, etc.) to write “IF” statements, including Nested-Ifs LOOKUP, VLOOKUP, HLOOKUP

Test 2 includes all of the above and the following
– How to work with data in tables, sort into ascending/descending order, and filter selected data
– How to group/separate data in a table, generate subtotals, create summaries
– Using, designing, building, adding to PivotTables
– The Excel 2013 environment for saving, printing, and changing page layouts
– Charting – trendline
– Familiarity with Table Tools Design tab
– Data validation
– Formatting a cell
– Add background to a sheet
– Add and remove Page Breaks
– Freeze Pane
– Adding hyperlink

Note that this is an incomplete list and does not address many of the specific details of using Excel.

Course-Related Communication:

Most course-related communication will be done through Blackboard and/or e-mail. Major announcements (e.g., rescheduling a class due to a weather-related closure) will be broadcast via e-mail through Blackboard. Therefore, regularly check your GMU e-mail. If you have course-related questions, feel free to contact me by e-mail. Per university policy, please use your GMU e-mail account for course-related communications. Use a meaningful and informative message header (such as: MIS 102 – Question about Exam 1, etc.). And, also be sure to include your name and your MIS 102 section number (and/or time) in your message.

You will find your Exam scores in SIMNET under grades. You must pass both the tests (get at least 19/25 in first and 15/20 in second) for passing. In the Blackboard there will be a quiz that you need to complete before you can take any test.

Exams are given in Innovation Hall 317 based on the schedule above. Make sure you have your GMU ID with you to gain admission to the exam session; you must have your ID with you to take an exam. Further, you must take your exam with the section in which you are registered. You will not be admitted into the lab for that session if you arrive more than 5 minutes after the start of the time of the Exam. In addition to knowledge of Excel spreadsheets, the speed of exam execution may be a factor, especially for the second exam. All Exam sessions have duration of about an hour. All exams automatically shut down 60 minutes after the start of the exam or 65 minutes after the start of the class session.

Note: You will be allowed to use Excel Help during the exam sessions. However, you may not use the Internet or Internet-based material during the exams. Note that some items within Excel help may link to material on the Internet. If a link in Excel Help opens a window and has a web address, you have moved beyond Excel and must immediately exit that Internet page.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE: THIS SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE.**
### MIS 102 – Memo of Understanding

Please read this Memo of Understanding and then take quiz on Blackboard. You will need the following items to correctly answer the Blackboard Quiz. You cannot take any SIMNET test before successfully completing the Quiz. The Quiz in Blackboard will be available from tomorrow. You will take it in your own time.

Please read and review the Syllabus. The Syllabus, class schedule, and class policies will be discussed in the first class meeting. It is important that you make sure you understand the class intent and structure.

- You must read the MIS 102 Syllabus.
- This is a self-study course, so I am responsible for learning the material.
- (Other than the first class session) I do not need to come to class unless I am taking an Exam.
- I MUST take the Exams with the section for which I am registered.
- I MUST take the Exams in the computer lab; accessing the Exams outside of the lab and/or Exam time will result in an immediate grade of “NC,” i.e., “No Credit,” for the class. Note that Practice Exams can be done on any computer at any time and any location.
- I MUST have a SimNet Access Code for Excel 2013 to take the Exams. Exams taken with a “Trial” Access Code will not count toward completion of the course. It is my responsibility to select the correct access code when registering with SimNet.
- I MUST pass both Exam 1 and Exam 2 with a score of 75% or higher to receive a grade of “S,” or “Satisfactory,” for the course. This is a ‘Passing’ grade. I must pass Exam 1 to proceed to Exam 2.
- I may make up to two attempts each to pass both Exam 1 and Exam 2.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7(^{th}) June</td>
<td>Course Introduction and Introduction to Excel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14(^{th}) June</td>
<td>Exam 1, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21(^{st}) June</td>
<td>Exam 1, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28(^{th}) June</td>
<td>Exam 1 and Exam 2, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID [Last chance to take Exam #1](You need to let me know of any conflict in advance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6(^{th}) July</td>
<td>Exam 2, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID [Exam Make-up Class, 6:00 pm to 7:15 pm] - INNOVATION HALL 223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11(^{th}) July</td>
<td>Exam 2, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID [Exam Make-up Class, 5:55 pm to 7:10 pm]</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12(^{th}) July</td>
<td>Exam 2, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID [Last Day of the Class and a Last chance to take Exam #2]</td>
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• I will have up to an hour to complete an Exam.
• If I arrive more than five minutes after the start of a class, I may not be allowed to take the Exam that day.
  – The decision on whether I may take the Exam after a late arrival will be up to the Instructor/TA.
  – If I am allowed to proceed with an Exam after arriving late, I may not have the full hour for the Exam; I will have only the time remaining until the Exam becomes unavailable in SimNet.
• As noted on the Syllabus schedule, I can make my two attempts for both the exams. The sessions for each Exam are listed in the Syllabus.