MIS 102 – Business Spreadsheets (Self-Study) – in Innovation Hall 223  
Fall 2015 Course Syllabus

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

Instructional Team:
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Teaching Assistants: Mr. Vattikuti Manoj Chowdary (vmanojch@gmu.edu) and Mr. Nitin Reddy Pannala (npannala@gmu.edu)

Course 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).

Class Sessions:
All class sessions are in Innovation Hall 223. The first class is intended to briefly introduce the course, course content, and course expectations, and to familiarize you with the lab setup and lab rules for taking the exams; it is the only formal ‘lecture’ session. All other classes are exam-taking sessions in the lab.

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. You must pass Exam 1 in order to be eligible to take Exam 2. If you fail Exam 1 two times, you cannot take Exam 2 and will receive a “No Credit” grade for the course. If you pass Exam 1, but are not successful in passing Exam 2 after two attempts you will receive a “No Credit” grade for the course.
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 223 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 2010 proficiency from Chapters/Labs/Exercises 1, 2 and 3 in the textbook. You must pass Exam 1 to be allowed to take Exam 2. Exam 2 involves the completion of 20 hands-on exercises in an Excel 2010 simulated environment; material for Exam 2 comes from Chapters/Labs/Exercises 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6. 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.

Required Materials:

– **SimNet** (on-line) Single Application Module (Excel 2010) Registration Card – card is available (1) packaged with the book or (2) individually at the GMU bookstore cash registers. All students must get this card (which contains an access code) to take the Exams. Each student must have their own card. (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, it should still work after you re-register for a section this semester. An access code for Excel 2007 or Excel 2013 will not work for Exam 2; i.e., you cannot take the exams and complete the course unless you have an Excel 2010 code.)


You can find data and image files for the exercises at the above website. Note: In the O’Leary text, Exercises 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 cover the required topics for the exams and the suggested topics listed below. The book’s website contains data files that can be used with these labs. As noted above, Exam 1 covers Exercises 1, 2, & 3; Exam 2 covers Exercises 1, 2, 3, 5, & 6.

– The Library section in SimNet contains some additional textbook materials. Note that this is not the required textbook and is arranged differently from the primary textbook.

– The SimSearch section of the SimNet software. (This option is free with SimNet registration.)

– The Help section of Microsoft Excel 2010. (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.

– Note: Within SimNet is an on-line book in the Library section of the software. It is organized differently from the primary textbook, but is a good supplement.
SimNet:

Each individual MUST buy the SimNet registration card (https://gmu.simnetonline.com) for Excel 2010 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 2010 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 223 computer lab during your designated times on the appropriate dates. Note that you do not come to the classrooms to practice; you MUST come to the classroom to take exams. And, you do not need to come to class on days in which you are not taking an exam.

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.
- Note that 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, 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.
- 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.)

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. 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.)

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. (Since we are only a 7-week class, all accommodations must be arranged through the DRC and should be made during the first week of the semester class!)

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:**

- The difference between relative and absolute references while entering/copying formulas in the worksheet
- How to use formulas involving arithmetic operators +, -, *, and /
- The proper use of parentheses and percentage calculations
- The difference 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
- The testing conditions (involving =, <, >, <=, >=, AND, OR, etc.) to write “IF” statements, including Nested-IFs
- 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
- How to work with data in tables, sort into ascending/descending order, and filter selected table data
- How to group/separate data in a table, generate subtotals, create summaries
- Using, designing, building, adding to PivotTables
- The Excel 2010 environment for saving, printing, and changing page layouts
- How to write formulas linking data in multiple sheets in a workbook
- LOOKUP, VLOOKUP, HLOOKUP
- List of built-in functions (some of which are listed above) found on p. EX1.41, including what the functions do and how to use them

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 or phone. 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.
As a courtesy, your Exam scores will typically be posted in Blackboard within 24-48 hours of your exam attempt. An indication of “Pass,” “Retry,” or “NC” will also be posted in a summary column for Exam 1 or Exam 2. “Pass” indicates that you have passed the exam; “Retry” means you did not pass your first attempt, but have an attempt remaining; “NC” means you did not pass either attempt at the exam, or your only attempt if you waited until the third week for the exam to make your attempt, and you will not pass the class. (Note that your score is ultimately the important value, not the label of “Pass,” “Retry,” or “NC.”) Also note that there will be a column labelled MOU in Blackboard; an “M” in this column will indicate that I have received a copy of your required Memo of Understanding (MOU) (see the last page of this document).

Exams are given in Innovation Hall 223 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 a 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.

**IMPORTANT Note:** Please read, print, sign, and bring the Memo of Understanding on the following page with you to the first class session. A printed and signed copy MUST be on file with the Course Instructor and/or TAs for you to be allowed to take the exams and to receive credit for the course.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE: THIS SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/1-9/3</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9/8-9/10</td>
<td>Exam 1, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/15-9/17</td>
<td>Exam 1, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/22-9/24</td>
<td>Exam 1, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID Last chance to take Exam #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/29-10/1</td>
<td>Exam 2, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/6-10/8</td>
<td>Exam 2, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7 | 10/13-10/15 | Exam 2, Arrive on time w/ GMU ID
Last chance to take Exam #2
(You need to let me know of any conflict in advance) |
MIS 102 – Memo of Understanding

*** This form must be completed before you take any Exams. ***

Please print, sign, and date this Memo of Understanding and bring it with you for the first class session. Any Exams taken prior to signing and turning in this form will NOT count toward your grade for this course without permission from the Instructor/TA. (Note that you do not receive any additional Exam sessions if you take an Exam prior to turning in this form.)

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.

I, ___________________________________ have read the MIS 102 Syllabus. I understand that:

• 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 2010 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.
• 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 have three weeks in which to make my two attempts for Exam 1, and I have three weeks in which to make my two attempts for Exam 2. The sessions for each Exam are listed in the Syllabus.

Signature ___________________________________________ Date __________________________

G # _______________________________________________ MIS 102 – __________________________

Section #

MIS 102, Fall 2015, Abhijit Dutt