Businesses today are utterly reliant on information technology; even brief interruptions in service can cost a business millions of dollars or even threaten its survival. It is essential that business professionals have 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 weekly).
- Stay on schedule with the material covered, and complete all assignments on time.
- Check your Mason Live email (or, if you forward your mail, the forwarding location) daily.
- Dedicate ten to twelve hours per week, on average, to the class.
- Contact me promptly in case of a problem or question that is interfering with your performance in the class.

Learning Resources

Required Course Materials
Our textbook is *M: Information Systems, 2nd Edition*, by Paige Baltzan. McGraw-Hill, © 2013. It is available from the GMU bookstore and from various online sellers, and as an e-book (from McGraw-Hill). The text has an Online Learning Center with short quizzes, key terms lists, and other resources for each chapter, which is freely available; see the course website for a link.

You will also need a subscription to McGraw-Hill’s Connect homework/quiz manager. The bookstore sells a package including the textbook and a Connect access code; you can also purchase the book and the access code separately. See the course website for more information on Connect and a link to the Connect site for our class.

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 MSOM302-B01 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.

Study Guide and Weekly Folders
Each week, your assignments and activities can be found in that week’s folder on the course website. Each weekly folder contains a detailed list of readings, activities, and other assignments, and also provides perspective on the material. You may read through this information online or download a weekly study guide in PDF form. In addition, you can get the “big picture” of the course, with topics and major due dates, from the weekly course schedule on the last page of this syllabus.

Availability of Learning Tools
This course is offered completely online (except for your textbook, if you choose a hard copy version). Live online sessions may be offered at specific times; however, they will be optional.

Weeks begin on Monday and end on Sunday. Weekly folders will be available one week in advance, so that you can work a week ahead of schedule if you want or need to (although you must participate in discussions during the week in which they are assigned).

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 to post comments later in the week.
Communication

Announcements and Course Updates
I will use the Blackboard Announcements feature as the primary means of communicating with the class, and will email all announcements to your Mason Live account. You will receive an email every Monday providing an overview of the week’s activities, as well as other reminders/announcements.

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).

You need either a headset with a built-in microphone or a microphone plus headphones in order to participate in sessions using audio features. You can run it 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/Ask Questions
We have vastly different technology backgrounds in the class, and I expect that you may require one-on-one help from time to time. Please don’t sit alone and frustrated if you’re struggling with something. Asking for help isn’t a failure—but giving up because you didn’t seek help is.

But this 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.

If you need help or have a question, you may contact me through:

- **Email:** I check email frequently. I will respond in 24 hours or less Monday through Friday, and usually on weekends as well.
- **Ask the Professor forum:** The course website includes an “Ask the Professor” discussion forum. You are welcome to post questions there, and I will answer them—in most cases, with the same turnaround time as for email.
- **Virtual office hours:** Virtual office hours using Blackboard Collaborate will take the place of traditional office hours. I will announce a schedule at the start of each week. These sessions are optional; if you have a question or problem, you are welcome to “drop by.”
- **Live tutorials:** For some topics (mostly those related to Microsoft Office), I may hold optional live tutorials as the need arises.
- **One-on-one sessions:** If you need individual help, please contact me to schedule an online meeting. We can meet on Blackboard Collaborate, Skype, or the phone, whatever works best for you.
- **Telephone:** If an emergency arises and you need to reach me right away, my phone number is at the top of Page 1 of the syllabus.
Grading and Assignments

The assignments in the class will earn the following point values (each type of assignment is described in the sections that follow):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (2 exams, 200 points each)</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework (5 assignments, 60-80 points each)</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Startup activities (10 points each)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect quizzes (10 points each, 2 lowest scores dropped)</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing assignments and discussions (20 points each)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>900-1,000</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>600-699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>800-899</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>700-799</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the Class Schedule at the end of this syllabus for specific due dates.

Exams

There will be two exams during the semester. Exams are non-cumulative, except in the sense that later material builds on early material. Exams will be “closed book” with one exception. You may use one sheet of letter-sized paper (measuring 8.5 x 11 inches) during the exam, with whatever you like written or printed on both sides. See Blackboard for more information on exam format and content.

You will take exams online at a time of your choosing within a one- to two-week time range, using a service called Respondus Monitor. You need to install a special browser, the Respondus Lockdown Browser, and you must have a webcam and microphone (they are used to record you while you take the exam). See “Technology Requirements” below for specific hardware and software requirements.

If you have a conflict with an exam period that makes it impossible for you to take it by the deadline, contact me at least two weeks in advance to discuss it. Please note that personal travel plans are not an acceptable reason for a schedule change. Otherwise, failure to complete an exam by the deadline will result in a score of zero, except in case of a documented emergency.

Homework

You will complete a series of homework assignments using Microsoft Excel and Access to organize data and create reports. The course includes a series of tutorial videos, readings, and practice exercises designed to help you to learn the skills needed to complete the assignments. Assignments will be submitted on Blackboard.

You may work alone or with a partner on each of the homework assignments; however, both partners are expected to be able to demonstrate any skill required to complete the assignment.

You may take an extension of up to 48 hours (2 days) on one homework deadline without a penalty. Aside from this “free extension,” late homework will be subject to the following penalties:
How late? | Penalty (points)
---|---
Up to 12 hours | 2
12-24 hours (1 day) | 5
24-48 hours (2 days) | 10

Homework submitted over 48 hours late will not be accepted and will receive a score of zero points. Falling behind on homework is dangerous; you have a homework assignment every week except for Week 1 and the week of Exam 1.

### Quizzes and Activities

Without the discipline imposed by regular class meetings, it’s easy to drift away from an online course. Missing assignments and cramming for exams will compromise your learning and hurt your grade. Successful online students allocate regular time slots to the class.

In order to help you to stay involved and up to date with the course material, and to give you opportunities to practice new skills, each week you will have small assignments to complete. Some will be graded; others will be ungraded practice activities with solutions provided so you can check your work. These activities fall into the following categories:

#### Startup Activities

The Start Here! folder contains a combined quiz/survey designed both to test your understanding of “how things work” in the class, and also to help me to learn more about you. In addition, you will be asked to post an introduction to the class. Each of these activities is worth ten points.

#### Connect Quizzes

Most weeks, you will take a quiz on McGraw-Hill’s Connect website summarizing the textbook material for the week. After completing the quiz, you may take it once more to improve your score. As long as you score at least 90%, you will earn the full value (ten points); lower scores will earn partial credit. Your two lowest scores will be dropped; this means you can skip two quizzes without a penalty. For this reason, there are no extensions offered on quizzes.

Occasionally, a Connect activity will be offered for five extra credit points. These will be announced in the weekly study guide and on the course schedule.

#### “Reflect” and Practice Activities

In addition to the graded activities listed above, the weekly folders also contain ungraded practice activities. These are short exercises that help you to check your understanding of concepts by applying them to a specific situation. Sample solutions will be provided. They are of three types:

1. Short “Reflect” exercises asking you to use course concepts to evaluate a business situation or to provide examples of a concept in action.
2. Interactive practice activities on Connect asking questions about a concept.
3. Microsoft Excel and Access practice activities.

Sometimes students are tempted to skip these activities since they aren’t graded; however, unless you are already competent in the concepts or skills covered by the activities, I recommend that you complete them. They allow you to practice skills in isolation, helping you to prepare for exams and homework where you must apply several skills to more complex examples.
Written Assignments and Discussions

Written Assignment
Once during the semester, you will be asked to submit a short paper in which you apply course material to a specific business situation. This assignment is worth 20 points.

Group Discussions
You will be assigned to a group of 10-12 students for three online discussions related to the course material. For each discussion, you will be required to make your initial post by Thursday of the given week, followed by at least two comments on others' posts before the end of the week. Each discussion is worth 20 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 XP/Vista/7/8, 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).
- Computer speakers or headphones to listen to recorded content.
- A headset with microphone, or an integrated 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.
- A webcam (internal or external) and a microphone, for use during exams

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)
- The Respondus Lockdown Browser (downloadable from the “Exams” area of the course website).

These links are also available in the “Start Here!” section of the course website.

To complete the homework assignments, you will need access to this additional software:
- Microsoft Excel 2007, 2010, or 2013 (Windows); Microsoft Excel 2011 (Mac)
- Microsoft Access 2007, 2010, or 2013 (runs on Windows only; available on GMU’s Virtual Computing Lab)

The “Microsoft Excel and Access” area on the course website offers several no-cost/low-cost options for updating, acquiring, or accessing Microsoft Office (including ways for Mac users to work with Microsoft Access remotely).

Employer-provided Computers
If you are planning to use an employer-provided computer for class activities, please verify with the system administrator that you will be able to install the necessarily software and access course materials. Corporate firewalls may restrict access to some websites and media types.
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:

- You may use one sheet of letter-sized paper (8.5x11 inches) as a reference during exams. Both sides of this page may contain anything you choose, hand written or created on a printer. You may use no other information sources during the exam, whether hard copy, electronic, or human. Your answers on exams must be entirely your work, with no assistance given or received.
- 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 (or, if you work with a partner on the homework, yours and your partner’s), with no assistance specific to the assignment given or received (with one exception: you are encouraged to seek assignment-specific help from the instructor if you need it).

Violations of these policies may result in a score of zero on the relevant assignment and/or the filing of charges with the Honor Committee. Consult the Office of Academic Integrity website for more information.

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.

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 (e.g., Counseling and Psychological Services, Learning Services, University Career Services, Writing Center). If you need assistance, please consider taking advantage of these services.

Weekly Schedule
See the next page.
# Weekly Course Schedule – Summer, 2014

Weeks start on Mondays and end on Sundays. All assignments for the week are due before midnight on Sunday except for initial discussion posts (due on Thursday, and highlighted in red text below). See the weekly folders on Blackboard for more specifics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Chapter (Text)</th>
<th>MIS Topic(s)</th>
<th>Excel/Access/RDB topic(s)</th>
<th>Discussions and Written Assignments (20 points each)</th>
<th>Connect Activities (Quizzes: 10 points each, Extra Credit: 5 points each)</th>
<th>Homework, Exams, Startup Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/26-6/1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 1 quiz</td>
<td>Course Quiz/Survey, Personal Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/2-6/8</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MIS Overview</td>
<td>Excel Part 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 2 quiz B, FedEx Video case (XC)*</td>
<td>Homework #1 (Excel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/2-6/8</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Decision Support</td>
<td>Excel Part 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 2 quiz A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/9-6/15</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business Processes</td>
<td>Excel Part 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 4 quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/9-6/15</td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Information Security</td>
<td>Excel Part 4</td>
<td>Discussion #1</td>
<td>Ch 4 quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/16-6/22</td>
<td>3a</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Excel Part 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 5 quiz A</td>
<td>Homework #2 (Excel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/16-6/22</td>
<td>3b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Infrastructure (cont.)</td>
<td>Access Part 1, RDB Part 2</td>
<td>Discussion #2</td>
<td>Ch 5 quiz B, RDB quiz 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/23-6/29</td>
<td>4a</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Data Warehouses</td>
<td>Access Part 1, RDB Part 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 6 quiz, Info Quality Activity (XC)*</td>
<td>Exam #1 (weeks 1-3) (You can take the exam starting June 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/23-6/29</td>
<td>4b</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Data Warehouses</td>
<td>Access Part 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/30-7/6</td>
<td>5a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Business Networks</td>
<td>RDB Part 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 7 quiz A</td>
<td>Homework #3 (Access)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/30-7/6</td>
<td>5b</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Enjoy the July 4 weekend!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/7-7/13</td>
<td>6a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mobile Networks</td>
<td>RDB Part 4</td>
<td>Discussion #3</td>
<td>Ch 7 quiz B, RDB quiz 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/7-7/13</td>
<td>6b</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Enterprise Apps (cont.)</td>
<td>Access Part 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 8 quiz A, Food Safety Video (XC)*</td>
<td>Homework #4 (Access)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/14-7/20</td>
<td>7a</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Enterprise Apps (cont.)</td>
<td>Access Part 4</td>
<td>Flavors Minicase</td>
<td>Ch 8 quiz B, CRM Activity (XC)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/14-7/20</td>
<td>7b</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>System Development, Project Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch 9 quiz</td>
<td>Homework #5 (Access)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/14-7/22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* XC = Extra Credit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>