MBA 662 – Management of Information Technology – Fall 2013
Thursday 4:30 – 7:10 PM; Innovation Hall, Rm 208

Instructor: Dr. Jon W. Beard
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Office: Enterprise Hall 137
Phone: 703.993.1829
Office Hours: Th 3:30 – 4:30 PM
Th 7:10 – 8:00 PM and by appointment

Course Website: http://mymason.gmu.edu → Courses tab → MBA 662

Course Description
The objective of this course is to provide an understanding of the tasks that managers undertake regarding information technology within an organizational context. The course is not about the technologies underlying the IT, instead it is about how managers can make informed decisions about the application of IT toward organizational problems and decision making, regardless of their level of comfort with technology. Therefore, this course deals with strategic and managerially relevant issues pertaining to the use of information technology in an organization.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how IT influences the business environment
- Analyzing and assessing the impact of IT on business performance
- Identifying key challenges to managing security of and risk to IT infrastructure
- Understanding practices and challenges in software development and implementation projects
- Supporting executive decision making with business intelligence

Readings
Please read the chapters, cases, and/or articles listed in the schedule (on the last page of this document) prior to each class session. (Note that the schedule is subject to change/modification, but any changes will be announced and communicated electronically.) Questions, and often a written assignment, related to the readings will be posted in Blackboard as needed.

Many of the articles/case studies can be downloaded from the GMU library website (http://library.gmu.edu) or they can often be found on the Internet through an Internet search. To access the articles from the GMU library website, go to http://library.gmu.edu. Select the Databases tab, then select the letter that starts the name of the database you wish to use. You should be able to find all of the articles in either ABI/Inform or JSTOR; other databases can also be used. (For example, if you want to use ABI/Inform, select Databases, then select “a”, then select ABI/Inform from the list.) Type in the author name—typically last name, first initial—and/or document title in the search engine, selecting the appropriate drop-down option (e.g., author, title, subject words, etc.) and click on the search button. Select the article from the search results and it can then be printed (at no additional cost to you).

If searching for an article/case on the Internet, you can often find the material by typing in the author(s)’ last name(s) along with several key words from the title.

Some cases will come from the Harvard Business School Publishing website. The link for materials related to this course is: https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/20651184. Typically, cases from the HBSP website will cost $3.95 for you to download/print/read. (Note: Two different versions of the iPremiere case are provided – one is a typical case format, the second is as a graphic novel. You may pick either version, i.e., you do NOT need to acquire both versions.)
Textbook
Sambamurthy, V. & Zmud, R. (2012). Guiding the Digital Transformation of Organizations. Legrity Press. You may purchase the specific chapters that will be needed for $3.50 each (the chapters are identified in the Schedule at the end of this document), or you can purchase the entire book for $35 (rather than buying individual chapters). Once downloaded (as .pdf), you can view the materials on-screen and/or print them. The materials can be purchased and downloaded from www.ldpress.com – click on the blue “Publications” on the top-right of the screen, then select either “Purchase Digital Book” or “Selected Digital Chapters” on the left side of the screen (about halfway down the page). (There is contact info on the website should you have difficulty with the purchase and download process.)

Course Deliverables and Evaluation

Deliverable 1: Case/Article write-ups (Individual Work; 40% of course grade)
Each student is responsible for turning in write-ups on the cases and/or articles identified in the course schedule. Questions/Tasks will be posted in the Assignments section in Blackboard. Write-ups typically address (one or more of) the questions posted for a case. The write-ups are due at the beginning of the class when the cases(s) will be discussed.

Specific requirements details on questions may be provided for specific questions. Please pay attention to the instructions. Lacking specifics, each answer should be appx a half-page in length (when single-spaced).

You may quote short passages/phrases from the case studies or articles when answering questions if you feel it will help you to present your answer(s). However, please make sure you give attribution when you do this, i.e., put quoted materials in quote marks and cite the page number where the passage can be found. (Otherwise, quoted materials without attribution can be considered plagiarism.) Please do not rely too much on verbatim passages, i.e., I am interested in your thinking and explanations.

Unless otherwise noted, please turn in a printed copy of your answers at the front of the classroom by the start of class. Make sure you put your name and the title of the article/case at the top of the first page. Follow specific instructions (such as length, format, focus, etc.) for each question/assignment. Answers will be evaluated on coverage and completeness in response to the question (so brevity is not necessarily a goal; of course, padding for length is not, either). (Note: A solid performance on individual and group assignments, as well as the Final Exam, will typically be assessed in the “A-”/”B+” range. To get an “A,” an assignment must stand out in terms of quality, i.e., it must go beyond a restatement of ideas by providing additional analysis/insight. The broad criteria for judging assignments are usually noted in each assignment description.)

Deliverable 2: Contribution to case(s), class, and online discussions (Individual Contribution; 15% of course grade)
This evaluation is based on “class contribution,” and not your presence in class or even simple “class participation.” What matters is the quality of inputs; not number of comments. Comments that are vague, unrelated to discussion, repetitive, disrespectful of others, made without sufficient foundation, etc. will be viewed negatively. Note that being present is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for contribution. This grade is an accumulated grade from throughout the semester; e.g., making contributions in half the classes will yield appx half of the points possible. Note that attendance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for contribution. Your presence in class is important, but your presence by itself does not guarantee any contribution points.

Deliverable 3: IT Talk and Discussion Moderated by Students (Discussion Moderated by Group; 10% of grade)
(You will be asked to create groups of 3-4 people in the first class session to accomplish this deliverable.)
Groups pick one of two formats: NewsReel or Tech Talk. NewsReel refers to a recent article about an IT product/service or company. Scan recent issues of industry and professional magazines including the WSJ, InformationWeek, and Fast Company, among others, to find such articles. The group should talk about the main points in the article, offer the group’s insights, and further discussion about the article by asking pertinent questions to the class. Articles chosen should reflect managerial and organizational challenges of IT or IT companies.
Tech Talk refers to a short introduction about a current or new technology to the class. This technology may be something that you are currently using at work, or something that has intrigued you, but you have not learned about yet. The group will provide a brief overview that addresses: a business issue that the technology addresses or can address, the various product/service offerings in the market, and behavioral and managerial challenges of implementing or using the technology.

Groups should notify me on your topic by noon on the day of the presentation. While it is not necessary for the group to prepare a PowerPoint presentation, this is often a useful approach. All group members should contribute to the presentation. A talk should not exceed 10-12 minutes (a penalty may be assessed if the ‘talk’ goes too long), and we will allow at least 5 minutes for class discussion/Q&A moderated by the group.

Required: Once completed, please provide me with a list of your source material(s)/references and, if you use a PowerPoint presentation, please e-mail me the file by the time of your presentation.

Deliverable 4: Final (Individual, take-home; 35% of course grade) – The Final Exam will be posted online or distributed in class, and is due a week after it is handed out (typically, the day of the Final Exam). (Additional details will be provided when the assignment is made.)

Grading for the course will be based on total points earned and will be as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95% - 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92% - 94.99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89% - 91.99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83% - 88.99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80% - 82.99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77% - 79.99%</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 75.99%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>64% - 69.99%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Below 64%</td>
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Note (again): A solid performance on individual and group assignments, as well as the Final Exam, will typically be assessed in the “A-”/”B+” range. To get an “A,” an assignment must stand out in terms of quality. The broad criteria for judging assignments are usually noted in each assignment description.

Make up Exams/Quizzes

Barring medical circumstances, no exceptions will be made for absence. If you have any work-related conflict, you need to inform me in advance. I will try (but cannot guarantee that I will be able) to work with you with advance notice, especially for work-related travel. The Final Exam due date/time will not be rescheduled. Should weather (or earthquakes! 😁) affect a class session, we will reschedule based on University guidance. Note that missing classes will affect your Contribution grade.

Disability

All academic accommodations due to disability must be arranged through the Disability Resource Center (DRC). If you are a student with a disability and you require academic accommodations, please contact the DRC at 993-2474. I will cooperate fully with the DRC to accommodate special needs.

Honor Code

MBA students are expected to be familiar with the Honor Code of George Mason University and its specific application to exams, assignments, and class work as required by faculty in the program. If you are in doubt about how the honor system applies to a particular assignment or class, it is your responsibility to clarify the requirements with the professor. Concerns about breaches of the honor system may be discussed with the MBA director, with the professor, or with the Senior Associate Dean of the School of Management.
Inclement Weather

While it is unlikely that inclement weather will cause us to miss a class session, bad weather (hurricanes) does occur in our area during the Fall. If the university is open, class will be held; if weather or adverse conditions cause the university to close, we will not meet and will make up the class session according to the university’s revised schedule. If I am unable to make it to class, I will pass the word via e-mail as early as possible (typically at least an hour prior to the start of class). Use your best judgment on travel conditions to/from class.

References for Articles Used

Items are listed in the order in which they are encountered in the course … see schedule below … additional items (i.e., cases/articles/readings) may be added, as needed, during the course:

- Mata, F.J., Fuerst, W.L., & Barney, J.B. (1995). “Information Technology and Sustained Competitive Advantage: A Resource-Based Analysis,” *MIS Quarterly*, 19(4), (Dec.), 487-505. [You may be able to find this article online, but you can easily retrieve it through the JSTOR database in the GMU library. You can find it with a search of the Internet using the authors’ last names.]
- Wixom, B.H., Watson, H.J., & Werner, T. (2011). “Developing an Enterprise Business Intelligence Capability: The Norfolk Southern Journey.” *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 10(2) 61-71. [You should be able to get to this article by doing an Internet search for the author’s last name plus the first five words of the article title.]
- Austin, R.D., Leibrock, L., & Murray, A. (2007). “The iPremier Company (A): Denial of Service Attack.” Harvard Business School Publishing. (Available through Harvard Business School Publishing website… see link above.) [Note that two versions of this case have been provided at the HBSP website … you may pick either version – the normal form case study or the graphic novel.]
- “The Vasa Capsizes.” This can be found through an Internet search of the title. The first website that pops up in my (Google) search is located at the University of Albany. This site has the full case study/article – appx 11 pages when printed. Other sites also have the full case study if this one does not work; be a bit cautious – some sites have more abbreviated versions of the case study that lack some of the details.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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| Week 1     | Course Introduction               | Ch 1 – Enhancing Competitiveness through IT  
|            | IT & Strategy                      | Article – Carr, N. “IT Doesn’t Matter.” *HBR* (see full cite above)  
| Aug 29     |                                    | Article – Mata, Fuerst, & Barney, “IT and … Competitive Advantage.” *MISQ* (see full cite above) …  
|            |                                    | Questions will be posted in Blackboard… note that some questions are for discussion; one, or more, questions may be as an assignment to turn in |
| Week 2     | Business Intelligence             | Ch 7 – The Digitized Enterprise  
| Sept 5     |                                    | Article – Wixom, et al. “… The Norfolk Southern Journey.” *MIS Quarterly Executive*  
|            |                                    | Article – Rohwedder, “No. 1 Retailer in Britain … Tesco.” *WSJ* (see full cite above) …  
|            |                                    | Questions will be posted in Blackboard                                                                                                   |
| Week 3     | IT Infrastructure                 | Ch 5 – IT Investment Value Pathways  
| Sept 12    | Business Value of IT              | Ch 6 – Building Business Cases for IT Investment Proposals  
|            |                                    | *Case Study* – “Successfully Navigating the Turbulent Skies of a Large-Scale ERP Implementation”                                         |
| Week 4     | Project Development               | Ch 11 – IT Risk Management  
| Sept 19    | & Managing Risk                   | *Case Study* – “The iPremier Company (A): Denial of Service Attack”                                                                      |
| Week 5     |                                    | Continue above topics …  
| Sept 26    |                                    | *Case Study* – “The Vasa Capsizes”                                                                                                       |
| Week 6     | Governance                         | Ch 12 – IT Governance                                                                                                                      |
| Oct 3      |                                    |                                                                                                                                              |
| Week 7     | IT Impacts on Org Design          | Ch 9 – Implementation and Change Management  
| Oct 10     |                                    | *Case Study* – “We Gave Them A Tool, but Hardly Anyone’s Using It! Untangling the Knowledge Management Dilemma at TPA”                    |
| Final Exam | Final Exam Answers Due            | Submit via Blackboard … instructions will be provided                                                                                      |