SYLLABUS

I. Focus of Course

This course will examine information systems management in the public sector. Attention will be paid to specific applications along with a focus on the broader questions of how public organizations can equip themselves to utilize information technology and meeting the challenges associated with information systems.

The emphasis in this course is not on teaching individuals how to use the computer. Rather, the course will prepare current and future public managers with capabilities and strategies to manage information technology in the public sector.

The primary goal of this course is twofold. First, the course will develop student competencies in:

- Oral communication via regular participation in class discussion and project team presentations;
- Working together in ad-hoc project teams via the principal group project and in-class case studies;
- Written communication via both written assignments and on-line discussions; and,
- Research and problem solving via reviewing current literature and its application to understanding the challenges of information systems.

Second, the course expands upon the student’s knowledge of issues surrounding management of information systems. Upon completing the course, the student will have a good understanding of the subject matter including:

- The basic building blocks of information systems (i.e., their planning, acquisition, organization and project management);
- The application of this technology to meet a public organization’s operational needs;
- Insights into information system best practices; and,
- Be able to understand information systems within their broader organizational, societal and ethical contexts.

No specific computer skills or knowledge are required for this course, although it is assumed that students are acquainted with basic computer applications, including word processing, spreadsheet use, and the Windows environment. Since this course includes a significant on-line component, student should be comfortable using the Internet as well as the University’s Blackboard system.

This course attempts to survey a wide range of topics and therefore does not cover any particular topic in great depth. The emphasis is on exposing students to a broad spectrum of materials, raising a variety of questions, and indicating how students can pursue specific subjects in more detail. The written assignments for the course are structured to allow students to focus their attention on topics of greatest interest and relevance to them.
This course is designed for students in the MPA program, but it may be suitable for other graduate or advanced undergraduate students with a strong interest in the subject matter of the course. Those not in the MPA program who wish to enroll in the course should consult the instructor.

II. Format of the Course

This is a “blended” course. By this we mean that roughly half the course will occur in a classroom setting while the remainder of the class will be taught on-line.

The on-line portion of the course will be housed in the class website. You must access this website through Blackboard.

Much of the on-line portion of the course will take the form a blog/discussion board. Students will be expected to participate in this on-line discussion. At a minimum, students are required to make five posts over the course of the week. Three of the posts must be submitted by the Thursday with two more posts submitted by Monday evening. I encourage you to monitor the discussion and make you posts throughout the week. However, please make sure that you have met the post count thresholds on Thursday and Monday.
III. Readings

For purchase at the bookstore or alternative sources:


Additional required readings have been assigned from the following books and periodicals (all on library e-reserve):


Additional optional readings that relate to our discussions are available from the following books and periodicals (all on library e-reserve):

- Bishop, “Building Programmatic Capacity at the Grassroots Level: The Reactions of Local Nonprofit Organizations to Public Participation Geographic Information Systems”, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 39(6)
IV. Assignments and Grading

Your grade in the course will be based on the following:

1. An information systems management paper that examines some aspect of managing the delivery of information technology. Details on this assignment will be distributed separately. This paper is due June 18th. Papers will be submitted electronically via the course website.

2. A group project that includes the submission of a collaborative paper and class presentation discussing a current topic in information system management (topics to be provided by the instructor unless otherwise determined). Details on this assignment will be distributed separately. The paper and classroom presentations are due throughout the course as noted in the course outline. Both the paper and the presentation will be submitted electronically via the course website.

3. A series of informal group assignments that will explore case studies relevant to that evening’s topic. Typically, each group will be assigned a different case study. The case study for each group will be posted to the course website. Group members are expected to read the case study prior to class. Then, either on-line or in the classroom, groups will review what they have learned from the case study, make an informal presentation to the class and lead the subsequent discussion on the case study.

4. Participation comes in two forms:
   a. Course website based on-line discussion forums will supplement the readings and classroom discussion. Like classroom discussion, the forums will promote the exchange of ideas and experiences among students. However, unlike the classroom, the forums allow for in depth reflection upon the readings and the resulting on-line dialog. Discussion topics may be initiated by either the instructor or students based on the assigned readings for that week. Students will be graded upon the content (not the number) of their posts; and,
   b. Traditional class participation also will be an important component of this course. You will be expected to discuss the assigned readings and your experiences as they relate to the subject matter.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information technology management paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class informal group assignments</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group paper and presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class and on-line participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research sources:

Your paper and group project will require you to use diverse research sources. You should use the required readings as a starting point. They should give you important background information. You undoubtedly will have to rely on recent articles, which could be located in any number of publications and periodicals. I assume that all of you are familiar with the electronic search options available through the Jackson Library web site and are comfortable in using them; if not, you should consult with one of the reference librarians. In some cases you can get the full text of an article, but in other cases only titles or abstracts are available. Additionally, you should consider interviewing experts in the local area for information, especially if your research topic is a case study involving a local government or agency. Undoubtedly, your research will include Internet based sources. Care should be given when evaluating the accuracy of these sources. For example, Wikipedia is not a scholarly source for research.
Criteria for Grading Papers:

When grading the two papers (one individual and one group) I base my evaluation on a number of factors. First and foremost, papers should be written with an audience in mind. In crafting your papers presume that this report is going to be delivered to the manager of a public agency who needs to be more informed on your topic. Assume that your reader is faced with a policy issue or possible application of the technology and is relying on your research to guide his decision. Be sure to adhere to this requirement. If your paper is not clear, concise and informative for this audience, then it is not a good paper.

More specifically, I evaluate each paper on five characteristics:

- **Appropriate Topic (20%).** The topic/issue discussed in the paper should be consistent with the scope of the assignment. To get the full 20 points, the paper must be on target with the assignment. If you are unsure if your topic meets this requirement please see me.
- **Depth (20%).** The paper should do more than simply regurgitate what you read. I am not looking for a book report. To get the full 20 points, the paper should display originality of thought, depth of analysis and/or synthesis of competing ideas.
- **Organization (20%).** The paper should have a clear introduction that alerts the reader to what is coming, a body that communicates the material and a summary that wraps up the paper's contents.
- **Readability (20%).** The paper should be concise, flow logically between topics and hold the reader's interest.
- **References (20%).** The paper should draw from a range of quality references that support the message of the paper.

Papers should be 4-6 pages in length (6 pages maximum) double spaced. Footnoting should follow the style that you are comfortable using and appropriate for academic research. Please include a title page with room for comments.

Papers are due on time. Unless you have made prior arrangements with me regarding alternate due dates, late papers will be penalized for tardiness.
V. Outline of Topics and Reading Assignments

This class will meet every other Tuesday evening from 6:30 to 9:30, on the following dates: May 14 and 28, June 11 and 25, and July 9. Note that I have arranged for local guest speakers on relevant topics for many class sessions. On the alternating on-line weeks, the course will conclude on the Monday before class.

In Class #1: Course Overview, Background Information, Role of IT (5/14)

Modules:

  Course Introduction
  Module 1 - Why IT Matters Top Ten
  Module 2 - Technology Trends

Required reading: None
Guest Speaker: None
Group Presentation: None
Assignments Due: None
Informal Group Presentations: None

On-Line #2: Information Systems Management (5/21)

Modules:

  Module 3 - Public vs. Private Information Systems
  Module 4 - Planning for IT

Required reading:

  Rocheleau, Public & Private Information Systems: Similar/Different (Chpt 1)
  Rocheleau, Planning for IT in the Public Sector (Chpt 2)

Guest Speaker: None
Group Presentation: None
Assignments Due: None
Informal Group Presentations: On-Line -- Strategic Planning case studies
In Class #3: Information Systems Management (5/28)

Modules:

Module 05 - Procurement
Module 06 - Outsourcing
Module 07 - Open Source

Required reading:

Rocheleau, “Procuring IT for Government” (Chpt 3)
White and Korosec, “Issues in Contracting and Outsourcing Information Technology”

Guest Speaker: Ron Goodwin, Purchasing Manager, City of Greensboro
Group Presentation: None
Assignments Due: None
Informal Group Presentations: None

On-Line #4: eGovernment (6/4)

Modules:

Module 08 - eGovt
Module 09 - eGovt GA Consumer Srvcs

Required reading:

Rocheleau, “Electronic Government” (Chpt 5)
Streib and Willoughby, “Exploring Internet Options: The Case of Georgia’s Consumer Services”

Guest Speaker: None
Group Presentation: None
Assignments Due: None
Informal Group Presentations: None
In Class #5: Organization and Decision Support (6/11)

Modules:

- Module 10 - Decision Support Overview
- Module 11 - Results Based Management
- Module 12 - GIS

Required reading:

Swiss, “Information Technology as a Facilitator of Results-Based Management in Government”
Carr, “Geographic Information Systems in the Public Sector”

Guest Speaker: Larry Davis, Director of Budget and Evaluation, COG
Group Presentation: Group #1
Assignments Due: None
Informal Group Presentations: None

On-Line #6: Implementing Information Technology (6/18)

Modules:

- Module 13 - Implementation Failures
- Module 14 - Prescriptions for IT in Government
- Module 15 - Computer Security

Required reading:

Rocheleau, “Prescriptions for IT in Government: How Do We Know What Works Best?” (Chpt 4)
Nelson, “Understanding Large-Scale IT Project Failure: Escalating and De-escalating Commitment”
Irvine, “Cybersecurity: Considerations for Information Systems (optional reading)

Guest Speaker: None
Group Presentation: None
Assignments Due: Information Systems Management paper
Informal Group Presentations: None
In-Class #7: Project Management (6/25)

Modules:

Module 16 - Project Management

Required reading:

Perrin, "Real World Project Management," Chapter 3, "The 31.5 Minute Project Manager"
Implementation Case Studies

Guest Speaker: Chryste Hofer, Deputy CIO, City of Greensboro
Group Presentation: Group #2
Assignments Due: None
Informal Group Presentations: Implementation Failures (continued from previous week's topic)

On-Line #8: Legal Issues of Information Systems (7/2)

Modules:

Module 17 - Electronic Mail Privacy
Module 18 - NC Public Records Law
Module 19 - Copyright Law and Software

Required reading:

TBD Copyright Law and Software
TBD NC Public Records Law

Guest Speaker: None
Group Presentation: None
Assignments Due: None
Informal Group Presentations: None
In Class #9: Ethical and Social Issues of Information Systems (7/9)

Modules:

Module 20 – Information Systems Ethics

Required reading:

Rocheleau “Information Mgmt & Ethical Issues in Government (Chpt 8)
Ethical case studies

Guest Speaker: None
Group Presentation: Group #4
Group #5
Assignments Due: None
Informal Group Presentations: Ethical Issues

On-Line #10: Information Technology’s Role and Impact in Organizations (7/16)

Modules:

Module 21 - Governments and IT Sharing
Module 22 - Evaluation of IT
Module 23 - Politics, Leadership and IT

Required reading:

Carr, “IT Doesn't Matter”
Rocheleau, Politics, Leadership and IT (Chpt 6)
Rocheleau, Governments & IT Sharing (Chpt 10)

Guest Speaker: None
Group Presentation: None
Assignments Due: None
Informal Group Presentations: IT Doesn't Matter
Top Five “Take Away” Items