IST 499 – 10110

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Blackboard: 2123-IIST-499W-10110: Spring 2012-Senior Seminar in Information Science

Course Description
Development of professional skills in information science. This course focuses on the development of student presentation skills including written reports, interviewing, resume, and oral presentation. IST 499 meets the University at Albany's Oral Discourse Requirement and upper level Writing Intensive Requirement. This course will require extensive reading and writing.

Prerequisite: Information Science Major, senior.

The format for IST 499 is based on a method of teaching and learning referred to as "Problem-based Learning", or simply PBL. PBL is a term first used in the 1960s in a Canadian medical school. PBL entails students working on loosely structured problems, discovering on their own what they need to learn to solve it, and applying what they learn to the problem. In short, you are placed in a situation where you need to take charge of your learning. This process is meant to not only reflect, but to actually "be" the type of process that you will find in the work world.

Outside of class, in addition to working on post-doctoral research, I am an IT manager. I will treat you and your projects as if they were occurring as formal projects in my office. Therefore, I expect a collegial environment where everyone contributes to the success of their teammates.

For this course, the loosely structured problem is this: you and your teammates are partners in a new company. You will perform research and make IT and telecommunications recommendations in light of a changing environment. Each team will consist of four members.

Goals
At the end of this course, you will be able to:
- Identify, question and assess different perspectives on topics related to information science
- Track themes through diverse topics
- Define, support, and defend opinions on these topics
- Present and support those opinions verbally, in writing, and with visuals
- Evaluate the writing and presentations of others and suggest methods for improvement
- Cooperate and interact effectively and appropriately with a team

Research Notice
As part of an on-going effort to improve the design and implementation of the courses I teach, included in the weekly feedback form, you will be asked to provide reflections that may address questions related to the design of the course. Your responses to these inquiries will not have any impact on your final grade. Your responses will be used to improve the design of the course, and may be used as the basis of future journal articles and other publications. Neither your name nor any other
identifiable information about you will be included in any such publications. Only I will have access to your responses. You may choose at any time to have your responses excluded from my research. Such a request will not have a negative impact on your grade.

Readings
**The Facebook Effect** by David Kirkpatrick

There will be additional readings throughout the semester. Some will be made on Blackboard. At other times, the assignment will be to locate and read articles of your own choosing.

Everyone is expected to participate in every class. Positive participation requires that you come prepared for class. This means distilling the terminology and concepts within the assigned readings; having points of personal interest in mind for discussion; having questions in mind for ideas that are unclear; knowing what the day’s topics will be and when assignments are due.

Teams
While all grades will be based upon your own work, your team’s projects will share a common backstory using the company formed by you and your teammates. Teams will be formed during the first class meeting. Since your teammates will be the ones most familiar with your company, I would encourage you to use them to brainstorm your IT solutions and recommendations. In addition, peer reviews of your writing assignments will be performed by teammates.

Papers
Good writing is the result of iterative revisions. Your papers will typically follow the following life-cycle:
- Initial Draft
- Peer Review Feedback
- Second Draft
- Instructor Feedback
- Final Draft

This cycle does not preclude you from asking for feedback from friends or family at any point prior to the submission of the final draft. In fact, I would encourage you to get additional feedback on your writing.

All assignments are to be typed, double spaced, with one inch margins in 12 point Times New Roman. Page counts exclude cover pages, references, and attachments. Ideas which are not your own need to be cited. Any text taken verbatim from another source must be placed in quotes and cited. Citations should be noted in-text with a reference list placed at the end of the paper.

Grading
Everything counts. Some items, such as quizzes, peer reviews, and papers, are graded and will be used to calculate you base average. Other items, such as attendance, weekly feedback forms, and on-time submissions, are required expectations; not meeting expectations will reduce your base average.

Papers: 50% of your grade will be based upon your final drafts. Each paper assignment will include a length range (e.g., 2-4 pages). Over the course of the semester you will need to submit at least 20
pages of final drafts. The length of each of your submitted final drafts will be used to weigh how much they count towards the 50% (i.e., a four page paper will count twice as much as a two page paper).

In-class assignments, homework, and Quizzes: 20% of your grade. Each item will count equally towards the 20%

Class participation and presentations: 30% of your grade.

Policies
Your participation is the learning experience and is key to your success in this course. This is not a passive experience. You are being invited to design, shape, and pursue a learning experience that meets your needs and benefits your classmates and me. To that end, there are some things that would quickly erode our community and thus must be avoided. These will be sufficient reason for you to fail the course immediately.

- Missing 2 or more classes without **prior** permission from me or the dean of undergraduate studies
- Tardiness without **prior** permission from me
- Abusiveness toward instructors, classmates, or anyone else in our learning community
- Use of mobile phones, instant messenger, email, or other technology resources during discussions or quizzes; non-class related use at other times.

Attendance: Attendance, itself, is not graded but is required. If you know that it will be difficult for you to get to class on time and stay for the entire period, you should take this course at a time that better fits your schedule. Missing class results in an automatic zero for the activities or in-class assignments missed. Missing an assignment or activity that happened before you arrive or after you leave also earns a zero No make-up opportunities will be available.

Our in-class time is very limited and your engagement with the class is critical to your success. Be on time, be in the room, and be ready to teach (yes, teach!) and learn. We are a learning community-- if you know something, and can respectfully help others learn it, do so. If you need or want suggestions on how to teach, talk with me.

Make-up Policy: There are generally no make-up opportunities for missed assignments except in extenuating circumstances.

Since there will be occasions in your life when missing a class meeting is simply unavoidable, this course has two safety valves.

Safety valve 1: You may miss ONE class and its associated **in-class** assignment grade. So, if you must miss class for any reason, it will be possible to drop the zero you would automatically receive for missing the in-class assignment. Be careful not to waste this on frivolous things early in the semester, since you may need it if you catch a cold later in the semester. If you do not use your safety valve for missed classes, you will be able to use your safety valve to improve your grade, by dropping your lowest score.
Safety valve 2: If you become seriously ill during the semester, or become derailed by unforeseeable life problems, and have to miss so many assignments that it will ruin your grade, you should schedule a meeting with me in order to make arrangements for you to drop the course to save your grade point average. Do not wait until it is too late to see me if you get into trouble.

Late assignments: Assignments are due by 5:45pm on the due date. Second and final drafts are to be submitted on Blackboard. All other assignments are to be printed out and brought to class. Late assignments will be accepted, but at the cost of a full letter grade for being late, with an additional letter grade deducted for each additional 24 hours late. In-class assignments, such as peer reviews, will only be accepted at that class session.

Policies from Undergraduate Bulletin:
http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty: Students are expected to understand and abide by the Penalties and Procedures for Violations of Academic, which can be found at:
http://www.albany.edu/content_images/Academic_Dishonesty.pdf

Special needs policy: Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.