Evening MBA Program

ITM 522 Course

Spring 2008 Managing Information Technology L. Mohan

Course syllabus

Course Description:

This course is, simply stated, about managing IT to realize the full potential of IT investments. The advent of the Personal Computer in the early eighties ushered the Information Age. Today the Net is fundamentally changing the way companies operate not just in the U.S. and other developed economies in the world, but in Latin America and Asia as well. It is, hence, imperative for managers to get a good grasp of the role of IT as a key enabler to achieve business objectives. Much has happened in the arena of how IT is transforming business, and new developments border on the astonishing.

The goal of this course is to cover major topics rather than be encyclopedic, so that a foundation is laid for learning as the field unfolds in the future. The course will examine strategic as well as operational issues of IT management. Real-world case examples illustrating best practices of what works, and failures to highlight what does not work, and why, will provide a balance of theory and practice.

Learning Objectives:

1. To understand the differences between Operational Systems for transaction processing and Information Support Systems for decision-making, and their impact on setting IT priorities and the IT organization

2. To understand how IT can improve, or even transform, the management process through access to better information

3. To apply the principles of effective change management in re-engineering business processes

4. To learn how IT can drive innovative business strategies by analyzing the common threads in the best practices of Frito-Lay, FedEx vs. UPS, Wal-Mart and Jet Blue

5. To learn the value of Enterprise Systems in providing a seamless flow of information within the organization

6. To synthesize the management imperatives to make IT business-smart based on lessons learned from spectacular IT failures like Nike and success stories like Cemex, the Mexican cement company that has become the most profitable multinational in the cement industry

7. To examine the impact of the Net for enabling companies to become leaner, smarter and closer to the customer
Assessment:

The learning outcomes of this course will be assessed through an eclectic mix of individual homework assignments on analysis of mini-cases for applying classroom theory to the real-world; an in-class test to review understanding of concepts and principles covered in the class and assigned readings; and, a final group project presentation on an overarching topic on the central theme of this course: Managing IT.

Class Format:

Two principal modes of teaching will be used: “executive briefing” style presentations by me, and class discussion of questions from the presentations and cases. Class participation is critical for getting the best learning experience from the course. The PowerPoint presentations will be made available the week before the lecture on Blackboard.

Text:

Selected articles and cases have been compiled and will be distributed via Blackboard. Supplementary articles will be posted as needed on the webpage. Several articles in the required readings are from the Harvard Business Review. Due to copyright restrictions, articles from the Harvard Business Review are only available through the University’s eRes (electronic reserves) system.

You will be prompted for a password prior to downloading an article. The password for all articles on eRes for this course will be provided in the first class.

Faculty Contact Information:

Office Hours: 5 PM – 5:45 PM on class days in BA 361C and by appointment
Telephone: 442-4927; e-mail: l.mohan@albany.edu

Course Policies:

Students are expected to arrive on time, and stay for the duration of each of the 12 classes. The last class is for Group Project Presentations for which attendance is mandatory. Note that one class accounts for about 8% of the time spent in the 12 lectures. If you must miss a class, you should talk to us about the problem and resolve how you would make up for that absence. The use of cell phones in class is prohibited since it affects the learning of other students. Class participation is critical to get the best value from the lectures, and will be used to upgrade or downgrade performances at the margin.

Students are expected to be familiar with the University’s “Community Rights and Responsibilities” document (www.albany.edu/judicial_affairs/standardsofconduct.html) and to conduct themselves accordingly.
Evaluation:

The final grade for this course will be based on three components: Written Individual Analysis of three Mini-Cases, one In-Class Test and a Final Group Project Presentation. Due dates for all the assignments are given in the Lecture Schedule.

1. Three Mini-Case Assignments: (35% weight)

The following cases are truly “mini” in length, and yet contain enough substance for learning the key implementation issues. Your paper should address the questions given for each case and include all the relevant evidence in the case, as is expected in any written analysis in a business setting. Use font size 12, single spacing; number the pages; avoid long sentences; spell check is a MUST; and, address the specific questions for each case.

- **Porsche Case (10% weight – Max 3 pages)**
  
  a) Outline the root causes of the problems faced by Porsche. What was the CEO’s solution to address these problems? Why did the CEO go through with his solution against his Board’s advice?
  
  b) Outline the process that brought about change in the Porsche Company, transforming it from a company near bankruptcy in 1993 to a profitable company in 1996.

- **Fields Cookies Case (15% weight – Max 5 pages)**
  
  a) How was IT used in this company to “manage by wire”?
  
  b) How did the company benefit from this IT Strategy?
  
  c) Are there any potential dangers in this strategy?
  
  d) Is there any potential for using “expert systems” such as the ones used in Mrs. Fields Cookies in your Company or Division or Unit? If so, in which areas? If not, explain why?

- **Elf Atochem Case (10% weight – Max 3 pages)**
  
  a) The real source of Elf Atochem’s problems was the “fragmentation of its organization”. Outline these problems.
  
  b) What was the single objective of the ERP system? Why did Elf Atochem select this objective?
  
  c) What steps did Elf Atochem take to ensure the successful implementation of the ERP system?

2. Comprehensive Class Test (30% weight) on April 28

You can bring a “crib sheet” of up to THREE typed pages of notes containing key takeaways from the lectures and case discussions for reference during the test. Please DO NOT MISS THE TEST since no make-up tests will be given, with the exception of cases of a documented medical or other emergency.
3. Final Group Project Presentation (35% weight)

3.1 Formation of Teams

I have left the composition of the Teams to the students in view of the problems of organizing
team meetings outside class hours. Since the class consists of about 30 students, I would like
you to form six teams of about five members per team. A Team Coordinator should be
selected, who should provide me a typed list of the members of his/her Team along with the
email addresses (with the Coordinator’s name and contact telephone number(s) at the top) on

3.2 Topic for Group Project

I will assign three Projects to the six Teams on March 17, two Teams per Project. The
Project Brief and Background Articles will be given to each team on this day.

3.3 Project Presentations

Each presentation should be timed for 20 minutes, with 5 minutes for Q&A.

All the Teams should submit a handout of the slides, one-slide per page, with Notes at the
bottom of each slide. The Notes should explain the points on the slide that would be made in
the oral presentation so that I do not have to take notes during the presentation. The content
of the Notes would be factored in the grading. You are encouraged to include as much
evidence in the Notes as necessary to buttress the points in the slides.

The handout should be given to me at the start of the presentation. The presentations
may be made by selected members of the Team – due to the shortness of time, the
presentation may be limited to three members of the Team, although all members should be
available to answer questions.

The Agenda for the presentation should list the names of the Team members who
played the major role for each topic listed in the Agenda so that individual
contributions to the project can be recognized in the grade for the project. If no names
are mentioned in the Agenda, all the Team members will get the SAME grade.

The Team Coordinators should arrive at the lecture room at 5:30 PM on the day of the
presentations to load the PPTs on the PC in the lecture room AHEAD of the start of the
presentation at 5:45 PM SHARP – ALL students should make it a point to be on time
for the presentations.

NOTE ON GRADING

The following scores will be used for converting letter grades given for assignments in this
course. Please note that grades on the margin between, say, a B+ (3.33) and A- (3.67) will be
graded as a B+/A- with the score of 3.5. This scheme makes the grading reflect the quality of
the assignment more accurately.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM YOU BY FEB. 4

It would be very helpful for me to get information on your background and professional experience to help orient the lectures and class discussions in a meaningful manner to each of you.

Brief biodata of my background and experience is attached for your information.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Please email before February 4 to l.mohan@albany.edu

Name:  Organization:
Your Unit within the Organization:  Your Function:

1 What types of information systems does your division / unit / department currently have? Are your Information Systems limited to Accounting Systems for transacting processing? Do you have systems to help you do your function more effectively?

2 Is the Net used in your Unit for any applications other than email and webpage of the Unit? If so, what are the areas where the Net is used – briefly outline the major areas?

3 How big is your IT group? Who does the IT Head report to?

4 What exposure to IT or experience in using IT have you had in your education and / or work experience?

5 What aspects of IT are you most interested in learning about in this course?
Lakshmi Mohan began her doctoral studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and received her Ph. D. degree in Mathematical Statistics from Columbia University. She began her career in Unilever and headed up their Operations Research group in India. She left Unilever to teach at the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, and the Sloan School of Management, M.I.T.

At SUNY, she has played a major role in the development of the ITM Specialization in the MBA Program and directed the program for the first ten years after its launch. She teaches the required course on Managing IT and elective courses on E-Business, CRM and Business Intelligence in the Full-time and Evening MBA Programs as well as the Weekend Executive MBA Program. She is also a member of the Senior Program Faculty of the University’s interdisciplinary doctoral program in Information Science, and has chaired several dissertations. She has also lectured and consulted worldwide including Argentina, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, and United Arab Emirates.

She is a visiting professor at the Nanyang Business School, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, since 2002 and teaches the MBA courses on Customer Relationship Management and Business Intelligence. She has also taught at the Graduate School of Business Administration, Zurich, where she received the Best MBA Workshop Awards for her courses on E-Business in October 2003 and Customer Relationship Management in 2005. She was also a visiting professor at the Duxx Graduate School of Business Leadership in Monterrey, Mexico, during 1996-2004, and the Universidad del Salvador in Buenos Aires, Argentina, during 2000-2001.

Dr. Mohan has been active in conducting executive development programs worldwide including an invitation from the World Bank to conduct a four-week program in Fudan University, Shanghai for a group of 50 faculty members selected from various Chinese universities. Her highly acclaimed Executive Workshops on CRM and Business Intelligence have been presented in several countries including Dubai, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Kuala Lumpur, Mumbai, Shanghai, Singapore and Zurich.

Dr. Mohan brings to her teaching and research an analytical approach fostered by her mathematical education, combined with pragmatism in putting theory into practice that she has gained from her business experience. Her empirical research on Decision Support Systems, Business Intelligence, Customer Relationship Management and E-Business has been supported by over $2 million in grants from Fortune 100 firms and government agencies. Her clients include: Colgate-Palmolive, Dannon, Deutsche Bank, General Electric, Pepsi-Cola and Pfizer in the U.S.; the Dharmala Group, a large conglomerate in Indonesia, Hotel Millenium Group in Monterrey, Mexico, Singapore Airlines and Unilever.

Dr. Mohan received the Dean Warren Hayes Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award in 1986, and the Outstanding Faculty Service Award in 1999.