Course Syllabus (Info, Resources, and Outline)

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1. **Course Information**

1.1. **Introduction**

Information Technology (IT) projects are now everywhere in almost every single industry. However, none of these projects can be accomplished if the focus is solely on technology. Furthermore, non-technological aspects of any project sometime play a more important role when it comes to failure or success. Maintaining a good balance between these two can guarantee that certain ‘risks’ are ‘mitigated’, although a project success is tied to many other technical and non-technical factors. The rapidness and ever-changing manner of the digital environment makes it even harder to deal with IT project challenges, and requires not only technical knowledge, but also a great deal of managerial and social skills.

“INF 305 Digital Project Management” is the one-stop course designed to give an overview of a spectrum of skills in which an IT project manager should be knowledgeable. The course is a designed less in depth and more in extent to cover majority of what a project manager should take care of in an IT environment. It introduces the main concepts, concerns, tools and techniques, that an IT project manager should be equipped with; and leaves the in-depth extensive learning of them to other courses and professional trainings and certificates. The topics are mainly one of the following:

- Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK);
- Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC); and
- Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL).

1.2. **What to Expect**

INF 305 is like no other course in the typical informatics and information science major and thus, it is quite normal if the topics covered in this course are absolutely new to the student and if the student does not have any prior knowledge of at least some of them. Due to the nature of IT project management, a wide range of topics are covered in this course. While the whole course is designed around the project management (PM) concepts in the IT industry, each session contains some new topics to learn – which might seem a disjoint from the previous topic(s) in the first place. Thus, handling the course load can be more difficult, compared to some other INF 300 level courses, especially in case the weekly readings and assignments are not followed on time. Thus, the students must put enough time and dedication to appropriately go through the assigned readings and other course materials, as well as accomplishing all assigned tasks which are designed to give the students a solid understanding of the various concepts and core philosophies.
1.3. What NOT to Expect

The INF 305 course brings together an excessive number of topics all important to an IT project manager, some of which titles for one or more semester long courses. Thus, while students will learn a little about almost everything an IT project manager should be aware of, this knowledge alone will not be sufficient for leading a large-scale project, and must be complemented with some other training. However, students will learn most of the language and the concepts throughout the course, and will also learn what and how to look up for more information.

1.4. Prerequisites and Background

- INF 201: Intro to Web Technologies
- INF 202: Intro to Data & Databases

Knowledge of programming (especially in teams) and familiarity with atmosphere of an IT project team and work environment can help the student in following the course easier and connecting the topics where appropriate.

1.5. Expected Student Outcomes

During the course, students will:

- Develop management skills in the context of a project, especially IT project;
- Refine analytical skills through the review and analysis of PM topics; and
- Practice critical thinking skills through the review and critique of readings, homework assignment, and tests.

Upon successful completion of this course, students:

- Are knowledgeable about the longer lifecycle of projects, from business needs to product/service management after the project results were delivered;
- Understand IT PM concepts, techniques, tools and methodologies;
- Can apply Knowledge Areas and Process Groups to the project activities;
- Can monitor and control the project progress against the targeted goals of the project, and the described capabilities of the project results;
- Can effectively communicate with all project stakeholders;
- Can think critically about success factors in each stage of an IT project;
- Can identify and suggest effective strategies to respond to major project risks;
- Can analyze the dynamics of a problem in an IT project and give insights on how to drill down to possible causes, and how they might be aligned or fixed;
Can have a balanced approach to IT projects in terms of technical/non-technical aspects of the project environment;

Can effectively approach to rescue a troubled project (after some experience!);

Can setup project environment in which knowledge from the experience is maintained, utilized, and reused properly;

Can pick the most appropriate tools and techniques – due to a specific set of circumstances in an IT project – from a wide variety of best practices; and

Can use key features of a state-of-the art project management software tool to facilitate their project management.

1.6. Textbooks and PM Software

Selected readings from existing texts and online sources will be assigned throughout the semester and provided via University’s Blackboard website. No textbook purchase is necessary, though most of the readings and some problem sets will be based on:

อำนวยความสะดวก


Students can use a 60-day trial-version of Microsoft Project software as our PM tool for free, from Microsoft “TechNet” website – for Microsoft Windows users. We will use an alternative online (browser-based) software with similar interface for Mac users.

1.7. Course Design

A detailed daily schedule has been provided in the “Course Info” directory (where you can find this syllabus) which contains all the information about each session: date, topics, assigned readings and their page count, deliverables, possible quizzes, and etc.
1.8. Electronic Resources and Technology

Blackboard will be used throughout the semester to provide essential course materials, readings, and instructions, and also to collect assignments. Please remember that all provided documents are protected under the copyright act should only be used for the purpose of this course. Any redistribution of the copyrighted material is prohibited by law.

In the minimal situation, students will need a workstation, a web browser, connection to the Internet, a word processor, and a storage. More directions will be provided later. Although all the tutorials for Microsoft Project (MSP) as our PM tool will be provided to the students and one assignment is designated to working with MSP, actual hands-on working on the concepts learned on the MSP software is left to the students.

This version of the course has been customized for best performance as a solely online course. Group works, final project, and a few homework assignments have been eliminated. Instead, to motivate the students in reading material on time, more weight is designated to commentaries from assigned readings.
2. Course Requirements and Recommendations

2.1. Readings (and other sources)

You are expected to read the assigned materials before each class (as dated in the detailed schedule). Readings will become available to students via Blackboard on a weekly basis. The readings come in forms of mandatory and optional assigned text regarding the topics (mostly book chapters or a subset of book chapters), and slides. Please note that the slides are NOT a summary of the most important topics and thus skipping the assigned text and only going through the slides and also skipping the slides and just sticking with the readings can result in some knowledge gaps and can hurt student’s performance. However, for studying for the exams – as you have already gone through the details of assigned text – slides become a very helpful resource for reviewing all the materials you have already learned about. The same logic applies to the assigned videos in some of the topics.

On the other hand, sometime slides contain something that is not very clear in the text. My strong advice to the students is to try to read both the assigned reading(s) and the slides.

The optional readings are recommended in case you found yourself interested to the topic and want to add to the extent and/or depth of your knowledge in that specific area. They will not be a source of quiz and exam assessments, but their content can leverage students’ abilities to better understand the questions and to better address what is asked.

Due to the nature of project management, some concepts may be revisited throughout the course from a different perspective. Of course, the students who have done their work for the revisited topics previously would better understand it.

Also, sometimes I have written a keyword or expression in the slides about a topic, but have not added any explanation. In these cases, I just want to point out that there are more concepts to learn, and in case the you are interested, you can find more by simply looking the keyword or expression up in the Internet.

2.2. Homework Assignments

Homework assignments are intended to provide you with an opportunity to:

- Gain first-hand experience working with key project management concepts, documents, and tools;
- Reflect upon your understanding of assignments and discussions; and
- Reinforce your capability to perform tasks and take approaches typical to ITPM.
In addition to readings (text + lecture slides), there will be assigned homework that include:

- Commentaries (short written assignments) in course’s online discussion forum;
- Short researches and reports;
- Creation of PM documents;
- Problem solving (prep for the exams); and
- Working with project management software tool.

You should complete each assignment independently and submit the work on time on Blackboard, as directed. All your submitted assignments must have proper formatting. You can find acceptable formatting guidelines in section 5.1: Style Manuals and Guidelines.

2.3. Quizzes and Exams

There will be a total of five quizzes throughout the semester, each of which focusing on certain topics of the course. Quizzes are designed to evaluate your depth of understanding about the concepts in recent readings and lecture slides, prior to each quiz. Quizzes can roughly be answered in 10-20 minutes.

A mid-term and a final exam (each 45-90 minutes) will be administered during the course.

2.4. Things to Do and Things to Avoid

The concepts in the course are built over each other as the semester proceeds. You should consider reading all the assigned readings and slides or otherwise find an alternative way to catch the concepts for each session or otherwise, you may lack a foundational knowledge in the future sessions.

Due to the nature of the course, it is easy to fall behind the schedule. Once a student is behind the schedule, a disconnect between the student and the rest of the course will be very likely. If you feel you do not understand a vast majority of the assigned readings and slides and you are doing very poorly on all assignments, don’t wait until it is too late... contact me and ask your questions or will arrange an in-person appointment.

In any situation, don’t panic! Although some students have had difficulties in the course in the beginning of the semester, the classes nearly unanimously have passed the course in the previous semesters, except for students who stopped turning in their assignments at some point in the semester, or plagiarized and thus penalized.

Remember that many of the skills taught here are not solely for an IT PM, but they can also leverage your capabilities in several other aspects of your professional and personal life.
3. Grading and Student Performance Evaluation

3.1. Individual Efforts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Max # Graded</th>
<th>Minimum Requirement</th>
<th>Grade (per submission)</th>
<th>Non-submit. Penalty</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Participation</td>
<td>10 (of 12)</td>
<td>7 submissions</td>
<td>2 pts. ea.</td>
<td>-0.5 pt. ea.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Commentaries)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>5 (of 6)</td>
<td>4 submissions</td>
<td>4 pts. ea.</td>
<td>-1 pt. ea.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>4 (of 5)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5 pts. ea.</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term and Final Exam</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15% out of 40%</td>
<td>20 pts. ea.</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**
- Un-submitted deliverables will be penalized with NEGATIVE POINTS.
- These percentages are subject to change in the per-semester syllabus.

3.2. Bonus

There might be some opportunities for bonus points as follows:

- Course Syllabus Quiz
- Course Reflection Feedback
- Community Engagement (PMI Upstate New York chapter meetings)
- Creating a relevant poster for events such as the INF Mini-showcase, etc.
- SIRF Evaluation above 85% Participation

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** To be eligible to earn ANY of the bonus points above, student MUST meet the MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS in the table 3.1.

3.3. Letter Grade Scale

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numeric Range</td>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>94-100+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Course Policies

4.1. Academic Integrity

Academic honesty and integrity at all levels are essential to maintaining an environment of trust in the University community. Students are on their honor to be ethical and honest in carrying out all the assignments and requirements of this course. It is every student’s responsibility to become familiar with the standards of academic integrity at the University. Claims of ignorance, of unintentional error, or of academic or personal pressures are not sufficient reasons for violations of academic integrity.

Every piece of homework is expected to be done individually unless mentioned otherwise. Course work and examinations are considered individual exercises. Copying the work of others is a violation of university rules on academic integrity. Individual course work is also key to your being prepared and performing well on tests and exams. Forming study groups and discussing assignments and techniques in general terms is encouraged, but the final work must be your own work. For example, two or more people may not create an assignment together and submit it for credit.

Any violations of this code, such as cheating, copying, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of one’s work, will meet with the appropriate penalties and disciplined as outlined in the University at Albany Standards of Academic Integrity, which can be found at:

http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html

The following is a list of the types of behaviors that are defined as examples of academic dishonesty and are therefore unacceptable. Attempts to commit such acts also fall under the term academic dishonesty and are subject to penalty. No set of guidelines can, of course, define all possible types or degrees of academic dishonesty; thus, the following descriptions should be understood as examples of infractions rather than an exhaustive list:

- Allowing other students to see or copy your assignments or exams;
- Examining or copying another student’s assignments or exams;
- Lying to the professor about issues of academic integrity;
- Submitting the same work for multiple assignments/classes without prior consent from the instructor(s);
- Getting answers or help from people, or other sources (e.g. research papers, web sites) without acknowledging them; and
- Plagiarism, forgery, or falsification.
The University at Albany Libraries provides a good tutorial about plagiarism policies at the University as well as a guide to avoiding plagiarism:

http://library.albany.edu/infolit/plagiarism1

If you are not certain what constitutes plagiarism for any given assignment, please ask me or your advisor for clarification before submitting your work.

ANY incident of academic dishonesty in this course, no matter how "minor" will result in:

1. A written report sent to the appropriate University authorities (e.g. the Dean of Undergraduate Studies)
2. Either of the following:
   - A final mark reduction by at least one-half letter grade (e.g. B → B-, C- → D+),
   - A Failing mark (E) in the course, and referral of the matter to the University Judicial System for disposition.

4.2. Late Assignments and Safety Valves

Late Assignments

Late assignment submissions are only accepted for 3 days after the original deadline, at the cost of one full letter grade (10%) – per day – of delay. You can submit assignments after this time only to prevent receiving a negative point (see table 3.1), for a fair amount of effort. There are generally no make-up opportunities for the lost credits of missed assignments. For the problem sets, the answer key will be available to students and thus, no submission will be accepted afterwards. No negative points are given for un-submitted problem sets.

Safety valve 1 – Lowest two grade of commentaries will be dropped

From the total opportunities to contribute to the discussions in the discussion board, you are supposed to have posts for only 10 topics. You can submit additional posts and only the top 10 will be counted toward your commentaries grade.

Safety valve 2 – Lowest grade of homework assignments will be dropped

The lowest grade in your individual homework will be dropped automatically.

Safety valve 3 – Lowest grade of quizzes will be dropped

The lowest grade in your quizzes will be dropped automatically.

You can find the details in table 3.1.
4.3. Incompletes

As per the Undergraduate Bulletin, the grade of Incomplete (I) will be given “only when the student has nearly completed the course requirements but because of circumstances beyond the student's control the work is not completed.” A student granted an incomplete will make an agreement specifying what material must be made up, and a date for its completion. The incomplete will be converted to a normal grade on the agreed upon completion date based upon whatever material is submitted by that time.

Important: Incompletes will NOT be given to students who have not fulfilled their classwork obligations, and who, at the end of the semester, are looking to avoid failing the course. This is asking for special treatment. However, if you think you will not make it to pass the course, you can drop the course with a “W” assignment up to the deadline which is announced by the Office of the Registrar for every semester.

4.4. 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 Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 130; 518-442-5490; drc@albany.edu). The DRC office will provide the course instructors with verification of student’s disability and will recommend appropriate accommodations. In general, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor at least one week before the relevant assignment to make appropriate arrangements. Additional information can be found at http://www.albany.edu/disability.
5. More Resources

5.1. Style Manuals and Guidelines

Written assignments and papers should be word-processed and double-spaced. Students are required to cite sources, if any are used in their written reports, using either of the following styles:


5.2. External Resources

Students are encouraged to use the various external resources for each of the topics. This can also help students to find resources for their final paper early in the course. To promote this, many of the topics in the course will use additional and optional readings, and assigned readings will not be limited to the suggested textbooks.

The following is – but not limited to – a list of external resources that student can look into for more in-depth explanations and discussions, and additional examples and case-studies:

- Project Management Institute (PMI)
- ProjectManagement
- Association for Project Management (APM)
- ProjectSmart
- ITIL and IT Service Management
- ITIL Open Guide

A list of more resources is easily accessible through online searching and also the following:

- [http://www.projectminds.com/usefulwebsite.html](http://www.projectminds.com/usefulwebsite.html)
- [http://quickbase.intuit.com/articles/online-resources-guide-to-project-management](http://quickbase.intuit.com/articles/online-resources-guide-to-project-management)
- [http://www.wrike.com/blog/20-online-training-resources-for-project-managers](http://www.wrike.com/blog/20-online-training-resources-for-project-managers)
- [http://www.careeracademy.com](http://www.careeracademy.com)

Also, you may be interested to know that there is a local PMI chapter in Albany:

- PMI Upstate New York chapter (PMIUNY)
6. **Course Outline**

   **Session 0. Course and teaching method overview**
   Session 1. Status of Projects in the IT Industry
   Session 2. Introduction to Project Management
   Session 3. Project Organization & Teams
   Session 4. Building a Business Case
   Session 5. Project Integration Management + Basics of Project Planning
   Session 6. Project Scope Management
   Session 7. Project Schedule Management
   Session 8. Get on with PM Software: Microsoft Project / Ganttter
   Session 9. Project Cost Management
   Session 10. PRACTICE Schedule and Cost Management

   **Preparing for the Exam**

   **Midterm Exam**
   Sessions 11 & 12. Project Quality Management
   Sessions 13 & 14. Project Risk Management
   Session 15. Project Stakeholder Management
   Session 16. Project Communications Management
   Session 17. Project Human Resource Management
   Session 18. Project Manager Soft Skills
   Session 19. SDLC – Agile Scrum
   Session 20. Selected Best Practices in IT Projects
   Session 21. Project Closure and Delivery
   Session 22. IT Service Management Framework (ITIL)
   Session 23. Project Procurement Management
   Session 24. ITPM Debrief and Course Wrap-up: Bringing it altogether
   Session 25. PTIONAL: Emergent and Special Topics in IT PM

   **Preparing for the Exam**

   **Final Exam**

   For the readings assigned and due assignments, please see the latest version of two-page ‘Detailed Daily Schedule’ available in the ‘Course Info’ folder on the Blackboard. For the detailed outline including the topics reviewed in each session, please see the ‘Outline Detailed (Study Guide)’ also available in the ‘Course Info’ folder. You must be enrolled in the course in order to see the contents of the course Blackboard portal.