Management Information Systems Syllabi

2018

620-01 Information Systems and Global

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Xavier University

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INFO 620 INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND GLOBAL (3CR)  
COURSE SYLLABUS (SPRING 2018)

CLASS LOCATION AND TIME: ONLINE

INSTRUCTOR:

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Office Location: Room 207 Smith Hall  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Telephone: 513 745 3052 (office)

Course Description

This course focuses on social implications of information systems (IS) from global perspectives. This course primarily examines economic and organizational dimensions, cooperative and knowledge work, productivity, marketing, work life, electronic communities, privacy, safety, ethics and professionalism, IT and education, gender issues in IT, democracy and empowerment and other related topics. The course also explores the interaction of race, gender, and class in structuring the consumption and production of information systems in a variety of domains. The course is designed for graduate students with interest in (1) the development, implementation and management of information systems in diverse environments (2) contemporary diverse organizational environment and (3) how Information and communication technology shape and are shaped by organizations. The course expands the issues of domestic business operations to include global issues like time, standards, regulations, identity and culture. The course extensively covers social issues in information systems especially as they affect productivity, marketing, online community, social media, e-commerce and cross-cultural IS projects. These issues will be discussed through assigned readings, case examples (discussions) and assignments.

Information systems are increasingly playing an important role in organizations and in society’s ability to produce, access, adapt and apply information. They are being heralded as the tools for the post-industrial age, and the foundations for a knowledge economy, due to their ability to facilitate the transfer and acquisition of knowledge. These views seem to be shared globally, irrespective of geographical location and difference in income level and wealth of the nation. Information systems is one of the primary influences on globalization; and with little knowledge of the significance and consequences of ICT within the whole processes of globalization, it has been suggested that we consider the social processes through which information systems acquires significance. Furthermore, there is a need to consider how these social processes are applied for economic and social purposes, and how they affect our thinking about global, societal and organizational boundaries.

The readings, assignments and discussions in this course will show how the world is highly diverse in terms of human characteristics such as gender, race, religion and culture, and that this diversity is something to be celebrated and to learn from. That globalization does not mean imposing homogenous solutions in a pluralistic world but it instead mean giving a global vision and strategy, but it also means cultivating roots and individual identities. It means nourishing local insights, but it also means re-employing communicable ideas in new geographies around the world. The wide gap in the availability and use of information systems across the world, and the influences information systems exerts on globalizations, raise questions about whether globalization entails homogeneity for organizations and societies in global world. It also raises questions about the feasibility and desirability of efforts to implement the development of information systems through the transfer of best
practices from Western industrialized countries to developing countries, and whether organizations can utilize information systems in accordance with the socio-cultural requirements of the contexts.

Many issues in information systems’ design, implementation and usage and their social implications have not yet been resolved, and these issues change over time. In the 1960's and 1970’s, many of the debates about computerization were framed in terms of large isolated computer systems while today they focus on computer networks (cyberspace), Internet, social media and networking. Even so, key values often remain important while the social and technical terrain changes. For example, the tensions between allowing people maximal privacy and enabling sufficient police access to personal records and documents to insure public safety was relevant to the design of a giant "National Databank" as well as to debates about data encryption. Post Sept. 11 brought PATRIOT acts and issues about the Total Information Awareness (TIA) and its implications for privacy. Specialists sometimes disagree about how to characterize key problems and how best to find solutions. The way they are framed often reflects the interests of groups with conflicting social or economic interests. In contemporary world, research on information systems innovation has studies only a narrow range of organizations, and even narrower range of aspects of change. By far the largest research effort has been dedicated to professionally managed business organizations in a free market context. Whereas, in most countries, professionally managed business organizations coexist with a variety of other types of organizations, such as family-run enterprises, state-controlled organizations, voluntary organizations, partnerships of business and public service agencies (which are of significant interest to our Jesuit identity). If we take a global perspective and if we include organizations other than professionally managed competitive business companies, the overall picture, blurred and fragmented for lack of systematic research, seems to be quite different. Without considering the diversity of organizations, many of the current knowledge and assumptions about IS innovation and organizational change are misleading. This course includes different points of view to enable students to read and understand different approaches to the same set of issues.

MISSION

At Williams College of Business, “we educate students of business, enabling them to improve organizations and society, consistent with the Jesuit tradition”. In this course, we provide students with an understanding of the social implications of Information Systems to individual, group, organization and society”. Our discussion of the social, ethical and legal implications of each topic provides students with broader perspectives that transcend conventional business goals and prepares the students to apply this knowledge for greater goods of others, by being able to address social issues in information systems in diverse organizational environment and in society at large.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students should be able to

• Describe major social issues involving the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in contemporary society, especially as it affects organizations.
• Examine how ICT shape and are shaped by organizations (including worklife, productivity and communication)
• Understand how diversity and controversies are represented: identify major concepts that authors use to frame their arguments (technological utopianism, etc.); identify specific arguments which are based on these concepts; show how some "sides" of controversies may be incompletely represented.
• Compare and contrast alternative points of view on major issues (globalization, diversity, social, economics, power etc) in information systems.
• Identify key elements of major ethical theories or value systems used to build viewpoints related to ICT use in the workplace and society in general.
• Determine the impacts of specific personal and professional work activities (including systems design) on co-workers, employers, clients, system users, and society in general.
• Work effectively in teams (of colleagues, clients, supervisors, etc.) that may be diverse in composition—in nationality, ethnic origin, gender, language, religious and ethical viewpoints, and other characteristics (affective, organization level).
• Analyze the implications of the usage of electronic communications and social media by individuals, groups and organizations.
• Describe how the usage of ICT affects invasion or personal privacy
• Analyze ICT on the dimensions of security, reliability and ease of use.

Reading Materials

Texts

Some journal articles from
• The Information Society http://www.indiana.edu/~tisj/
• Computers and Society http://www.acm.org/sigs/sigcas/
• Journal of Social Informatics http://www.ris.uvt.ro/

Please note that the required articles and chapters from the texts will be made available on Canvas. You are not required to purchase any of the textbook except for your personal use and library.

Canvas

Canvas class web site - https://canvas.xavier.edu/courses/32984

The course will be completely delivered online using Canvas as the Network Learning Environment.

Grading Criteria

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i.e. 300pts/2 = 100pts

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1 The book remains a classic on the topics of interest to the course and some dated cases shall be replaced with more recent cases from the journals.
Failure to complete any of the above categories will result in either a grade of incomplete (see university catalog for when this is appropriate) or a fail. A brief description of these assignments is given below; we will discuss them further during our first class meeting.

CLASS POLICIES
1. Regular logins in the online class sessions is expected.
2. Canvas will be the primary conduit for distribution of class materials and general communication. All materials will be delivered electronically except otherwise stated.
3. All project work MUST be appropriately submitted through Canvas.
4. Assignment grades will be available in Canvas.
5. You are expected to check the Canvas site and your Xavier email on a regular basis for announcements and other extended information.

Research Project Write-up
You will work throughout the course on one of the project topics (see page 7). You will select a topic which directly relates to the content of the course or from the list presented. The paper should generally address the topic and specifically answer the questions (if applicable). You are responsible for choosing a research project; if a topic is selected outside the suggested topics, the topic must be related to the economic and organization dimensions of Information Systems, work life and productivity, ethics and professional organizations, issue of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, socio-economic class, religion, physical/mental abilities, and information systems and you should get approval from the instructor before continuing with the topic. More information on the project is available in the relevant modules.

Plagiarism:
Research projects should represent the students’ best effort in academic and business research and writing. Plagiarism is illegal and not tolerated so be careful to correctly cite and provide references for the sources you use. Plagiarism will cause the grade on any written assignment to be zero (0). Generally speaking, plagiarism should be considered the copying of more than three words in succession from the material being used, without placing the words in quotation marks. Since the written projects in this course include summarizing and discussing other peoples’ materials, the assignments should include very few exact quotes.
Info 620 Spring 2018 Tentative Schedule


This introductory module and discussion will show how the world is highly diverse in terms of human characteristics such as gender, race, religion and culture, and that this diversity is something to be celebrated and to learn from. That globalization does not mean imposing homogenous solutions in a pluralistic world but it instead mean giving a global vision and strategy, but it also means cultivating roots and individual identities. It means nourishing local insights, but it also means re-employing communicable ideas in new geographies around the world. The wide gap in the availability and use of information systems across the world, and the influences information systems exerts on globalizations, raise questions about whether globalization entails homogeneity for organizations and societies in global world. It also raises questions about the feasibility and desirability of efforts to implement the development of information systems through the transfer of best practices from Western industrialized countries to developing countries, and whether organizations can utilize information systems in accordance with the socio-cultural requirements of the contexts.

Topics to be discussed include:

- The institutional nature of ICT and Organizational Change
- Reflexive Modernization
- Globalization and Diversity
- The Information Age
- Improvisation and Appropriation
- Power and Politics

Readings establish a frame of reference and the terminology (such as globalization, diversity, information, modernization, utopianism and anti-utopianism) that will be used throughout the course.

**Weeks 3: The Economic And Organizational Dimensions Of Computerization**

In this unit we will examine how computer technologies shape and are shaped by organizations. Several organizations are the vendors of computing equipment and it is difficult to understand the behavior of the computer industry without some insight into the internal dynamics of organizational life. Organizations are still the primary consumers of computer-based products, and it is also difficult to understand computerization without some insight into the dynamics of organizational life. We will examine principles of organizational behavior, and then examine computerization in light of them. Our discussion will extend beyond the professionally managed competitive organizations to public sectors and small and family-owned enterprises and not for profit organizations.
Week 4: Security, Safety and Reliability

Can the systems be both secure and accessible/easy to use? How much reliability can we build into systems? and how much MUST we build in especially now that our lives mostly depend on information systems.

Weeks 5: Electronic communities and Social Media

Does the use of electronic communication and social media improve the sense of community which people experience, or does it leave them feeling alienated. For whom do which kinds of changes take place, and under what conditions.

Weeks 6: Marketing, Privacy and Social Control

Does the use of computerized communication and information systems often lead to invasion of personal privacy? What is the definition of Privacy in contemporary knowledge society? Could we balance the benefits of information systems with the perceived invasion of privacy? PATRIOT Acts, TIA (Total Information Awareness) etc

Weeks 7: Organizations, Work life and Productivity

This unit examines productivity issues in organization. The challenges of balancing work life and productivity in ever dynamic business environment is of paramount importance to organization, especially now in the turbulent global business environment.

Weeks 8: Ethics and Professional Responsibilities

While most people may feel that they know what is right and what is wrong, few will have worked out a systematic ethical theory. Are ethical rules, including codes of professional practice absolute? When there are ethical conflicts between what is good for your family or company and what is good for your clients and the society at large, how do you resolve them? This I unit will help students to think carefully about some important issues they will face in the working and professional life. The discussion will reflects the semester's work--and to point out that the entire course has dealt with professional and ethical issues from the first day of class.
Project Topics (Suggested)

1. **Worklife.** Is adoption and utilization of Information Systems likely to improve or degrade the quality of jobs for managers, professionals and clerks? How do different approaches to designing computer systems and their social environments alter the character and quality of jobs? Can computer and telecommunications systems improve the flexibility of work by enabling employed people to work at home part or full time? Information and communication technologies have been strongly implicated in profound changes in the nature of work in contemporary society. The identity of individual workers, and their identification with particular occupational and professional groups, is affected by, and affects, the nature of work they carry out, and how the conceptualize themselves and their work role.

2. **Power and Control.** What approaches are attempted to increase surveillance and control through IT in the globalized world, but also what opportunities exist for resistance?

3. **Social-Cultural Context.** It is often assumed that the impact and implementation of ICTs will or should be the same in all situations with little regard to the particular social cultural context and the nature of organizational diversity in which ICT innovation takes place. While IT makes a world of difference in the sense that it is important in the contemporary world, IT could also be used to support a world of difference in which diversity is respected. Could IT design and implementation reflect local aspirations, concerns and action as well as the multiple institutional influences of globalization?

4. **Class Divisions in Society.** To what extent is our increasingly computerized society fostering an underclass of functionally illiterate and disenfranchised people -- as jobs require new skills, and using computerized services requires expertise in negotiating with complex organizational procedures when things go wrong? Are there plausible ways of structuring extensions to our National Information Infrastructure which will more effectively enable more people to participate in the mainstream of society? To what extent do electronic publications and digital libraries enhance or diminish the tendency of our society to foster an underclass of functionally illiterate and disenfranchised people -- as information-related tasks require new skills, and using computerized services requires expertise in negotiating with complex organizational procedures when things go wrong?

5. **Human Safety and Critical Computer Systems.** How safe are people who rely on computer systems such as those which help manage air traffic control or calculate radiation treatment plans for cancer patients? Should computer systems designers who work on such systems be licensed, much like the professional engineers who design bridges and elevators in skyscrapers?

6. **Democratization.** To what extent do computer and telecommunication systems offer new opportunities to strengthen democracy through on-line access to the records and reports of government agencies? To what extent does computerization undermine democratic processes in work and public life because the costs and
expertise of large computerization projects may lead to centralized control and
domination by groups who can control the selection of equipment and expertise.

7. **Employment.** How does computerization alter the structure of labor markets and
occupations? What kinds of understanding of computer systems are really critical
for people who wish to develop different kinds of careers? Do the skill mixes for
computer-oriented work help create a lower class with fewer jobs and more
barriers for improving their situations? Is computerization creating a "hollow
economy" with fewer jobs overall?

8. **Education.** To what extent can interesting computer-based programs give
students the intellectual and motivational advantages of one-on-one tutoring in a
way that is economically affordable? Will access to the Internet transform K-12
schools into more effective learning places? And what drawbacks might there be
in the widespread introduction of computers into the curriculum?

9. **Gender Biases.** Why are women more likely to be found feeding data into
computer systems, while men are more likely to be in the position of specifying
the requirements for, and designing, computer-based systems? Is there any special
reason why professional positions held largely by women (i.e. librarians and K-12
educators) are more likely to be eliminated by the introduction of electronic
approaches to information management and education, while men are more likely
to be in the professional positions of specifying the requirements for, and
designing, computer-based electronic publishing systems?

10. **Military Security.** To what extent do swift hi-tech weapons and complex
computerized command and control systems amplify the risk of accidental nuclear
war by shortening the response time for people to decide whether a perceived
attack is real? To what extent does the public overestimate the ease and safety of
electronic warfare?

11. **Health.** To what extent do computer systems pose health hazards through low
level radiation, noise and repetitive strain injuries? To what extent do computer
related jobs have special health hazards when they require people to work
intensively at keyboards for grueling time periods? Are eye-strain or crippling
muscular injuries necessary occupational hazards for people who spend long
hours at terminals -- programmers and professionals, as well as clerks? If there are
serious health problems associated with computer equipment or computer-related
jobs, should there be tough regulation of equipment or workplaces to enhance
people's health and well-being?

12. **Computer Literacy.** Must all effectively educated citizens have any special
knowledge of computer systems? If so, what kinds of insights and skills are most
critical -- those that are akin to computer programming or those that are akin to
understanding how organizational information systems function?

13. **Privacy and Encryption.** To what extent do powerful encryption algorithms
provide people with exceptional privacy in protecting their communications?
Should the public, including career criminals and potential terrorists, be able to
communicate in ways that make it impossible for police agencies to monitor?

14. **Scholarship.** How easily can electronic publishing give scholars more rapid
access to wider audiences? Does it help scholars if readers can access a wider
variety of materials which are more up to-date? Can the quality of information be
adequately maintained as academic publications transition to electronic formats? To what extent are electronic libraries and electronic publications most usable by faculty and students with funds to buy services and/or adjunct computer equipment? Is electronic publishing likely to modify the criteria for academic career advancement and its tie to publication in paper-based journals?

15. **Climate Change.** There is a general belief that information systems can contribute to combating climate change and its consequences by playing an important role in environmental protection. For instance, besides working to reduce its own emissions, which are estimated to be around 2 – 2.5 per cent of the total of GHG emissions, information systems could help indirectly to reduce GHG emissions belonging to other sectors. Information systems could help in climate monitoring, farming, helping to avoid further deforestation and setting up the necessary communications networks in the major emergencies and disasters around the world. What is the impact of the products and services of the information systems sector in developing countries on climate change? How could information systems help reduce emissions in other sectors such as transport and power in developing countries? What are the challenges facing developing countries in combating climate change induced by information systems products and services?