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## INFO 490 Contemporary Issues in Information Systems

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**Contemporary Issues in Information Systems**  
**INFO 490**  
**Spring 2001**  
**Mondays, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

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**Course Description:**

Current issues, developments and future trends in the advancement of information systems in business. The aim of this course is to make students aware of the main issues of information systems currently of concern to IS practitioners. The course will assist students in relating developments in information systems theory to current trends in practice as well as recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of current practices in information systems development. Focus is on the analysis, origins, and current status of the issues.

**Required Text:**

There is no textbook required for this course. Students will be asked to read one book and a number of articles. These can be obtained from the library or purchased.

**Exit Competencies:**

By the completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- \*\*Demonstrate an awareness of information systems issues and current problems.
- \*\*Express personal opinions regarding the current issues in information systems through an exploration of the issues.
- \*\*Recognize and evaluate the future challenges of information systems.
- \*\*Interact with colleagues, debate the issues and reach consensus.
- \*\*Communicate a sense of perspective regarding the issues of the profession historically, culturally, and socially.
- \*\*Demonstrate team skills through working with fellow students on class projects.
- \*\*Demonstrate preparation, research, organization, and presentation skills.
- \*\*Produce stimulating material in the completion of all assignments.

**Deliverables at a Glance:**

- Participation (online and in class)
- Topic List
- Current IS Issues Research and Sharing (3 article abstracts)
- Group Research Project and Presentation
- Book Review and Presentation
- Summary of Edupage Developments
- \*\*\*Extra Credit: Summary of Discussion List Developments

### **Deliverables in Detail:**

*Participation:* Class participation is important in this type of course. You must be prepared to participate in every class session. Part of participation is completing any assigned reading or research before the start of class. Participation in each group case presentation will also contribute to the in-class participation requirement. Share your knowledge.

Another way to earn participation credit is to participate on the class discussion list. You will be sent an invitation to join the list within the first two weeks of the term. Follow the instructions on the invitation. The discussion list will allow us to track fast-breaking developments and to share URLs for interesting sites. Open discussions are invited. Students are encouraged and expected to participate on a weekly basis.

*Topic List:* After the first class when we explore the environment, students will prepare a list of topics that address the current issues of information systems. These topics will be selected from a review of current newspapers, journals, the Internet and other sources (a list of potential sources will be provided). The list must include at least 10 topics with VERY brief explanations of their importance.

*Current IS Issues Research and Sharing:* In order to become more involved with the literature and issues of information systems, three articles will be required on current IS issues dealing with the strategic use of technology and information systems and how technology is impacting business or society in general. A copy of the article along with a one-page abstract of the article are to be submitted. The due dates can be found on the attached class schedule. The selected articles must be at least three pages of text. Article abstract guidelines are provided below. In addition to submitting the article abstracts to me in print, each abstract must be posted as an attachment on the class discussion list. In this way, you can share your research with your fellow students.

Abstracts must be one-page, single-spaced.

Abstract articles of your choice on any topic related current issues in the world of information technology. Sources include general business periodicals (*Business Week, Fortune, Forbes, Inc., CIO Magazine, Industry Week, etc.*), technology periodicals (*PC Week, BYTE, Datamation, Online, Computerworld, Internet World, Internet Magazine, etc.*), industry periodicals (*Modern Materials Handling, ABA Banking Journal, Restaurant Business, Insurance & Technology, etc.*) academic journals (*Harvard Business Review, etc.*) Articles may be found on the Internet but must be the equivalent of three printed pages of text and must be credible, reliable sources. If you are uncertain of the credibility of an Internet source, please clear it first by sending an email to me with the URL. I will let you know if it measures up. *All articles must be published within the six months.* Include a copy of the article stapled behind the abstract. The abstract should highlight the main point of the article and discuss the key issues and conclusions. The last paragraph should be your own reaction to the article including its value and relation to your own organization or to society. You must relate the implications of the article to current practice.

Article abstracts will be graded on **content, clarity, grammar, spelling, and readability**. The selection of the article to abstract will also be considered in grading. These articles and abstracts will not be returned, so please make a copy for yourself if you wish to retain the article or abstract.

*Group Research Project and Presentation:* The research project is to be done with a partner and presented in class at the end of the semester. Groups and presentation due dates will be determined in the second class session.

Each group will select a topic of importance to the class (these will be outlined in the second class session). During class sessions, the partners will explore the issue, decide on a research plan, and develop some background knowledge of the problem. Then, each partner will explore the issue in depth from a varying viewpoint. Each partner must take an opposite view of the problem. The deliverable has three components:

A. Topic Outline—Each group will prepare a brief outline of their selected topic. This should include some evidence of research performed so far with citations to the literature. The outline can be presented jointly or each student may prepare their own section. The outline should be **NO MORE THAN** one page, single spaced. I will review the outline to make sure you are on track. Please do not proceed with your project until you have received approval for the idea.

B. Class Presentation—Each group will prepare a class presentation that explores their issue and fairly presents both opinions. Each partner should present their own side. At least 10 minutes should be devoted to each side of the argument. The group should prepare the presentation in a way that will encourage class discussion and participation (questions for discussion, other issues to explore, class exercise).

C. Issue Paper—One week after the class presentation, each group will prepare a paper on their topic. This will allow you to include information obtained during the class discussion. The paper should be a summary of the class presentation. Additional materials may be included. The paper must be documented with citations to the literature. In order to adequately cover the material, I predict that your issue paper should be approximately 6 pages long, double-spaced with appropriate margins. Your work will be graded on **content, clarity, grammar, spelling, and readability**, so make sure you spell check the final submission and work together to improve the grammar and readability of the work. Your paper should address both sides of your selected issue and reach some consensus. Creativity in approach is always good. Remember that this is *RESEARCH*, so you are expected to research your topic in the literature, discuss the implications of that research, and draw your own conclusions based upon the research.

*Book Review and Presentation:* You will read one book that deals with current issues in information systems. After reading the book, you will prepare a two page review that is due by the end of the term. In addition to the review, you will prepare a 15 minute class presentation that highlights the main issues of the book and presents the issues for discussion by the class. Extra credit will be given for creative methods of inspiring class discussion (detailed questions, class exercise, handouts, food!). Suggestions for books will be provided in class. If you select a book that is not on the list provided, please seek approval from the instructor. The publication date of the book must be 1998 or later (exceptions will be made only after first reviewing them with the instructor).

*Summary of Edupage Developments:* An important element of this course is developing your awareness of technological issues facing businesses today. One of the best sources of information on late-breaking developments in technology are Internet discussion lists. Within a week of the first class session, subscribe to the discussion list *Edupage*. *Edupage* provides a summary of news on information technology. After you subscribe, *Edupage* will be delivered to your mailbox three times each week. Read the issues as they come out, then briefly summarize one of the important developments each week and be prepared to discuss the issue in class. In order to

subscribe to *Edupage*, please go to this URL and follow the instructions on the screen: <http://listserv.educause.edu/cgi-bin/wa.exe?SUBED1=edupage&A=1> . Keep a copy of this URL so that you can use it at the end of the course (unless you decide to become a lifelong reader!).

*Extra Credit:* If you know of other discussion lists on technology and current issues that serve a different audience, you may subscribe for extra credit, just provide me with the address so that I may also subscribe. At the conclusion of the term, submit a one page summary of developments from the list and how they apply to the discussions in class.

### Grading:

Point totals will be distributed as follows:

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Participation (in class and online)                          | 10 points      |
| Topic List   | 5 points       |
| Current IS Issues Research and Sharing (3 article abstracts) | 15 points      |
| Group Research Project and Presentation                      | 25 points      |
| Book Review and Presentation                                 | 20 points      |
| Summary of Edupage Developments                              | 10 points      |
| Final Examination  | 15 points      |
| ***Extra Credit Assignment                                   | Up to 5 points |

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| A | 90 to 100 points |
| B | 80 to 89 points  |
| C | 70 to 79 points  |
| D | 60 to 69 points  |
| F | 59 and Below     |

Note--Attendance is expected. More than one absence will result in an automatic lowering of your grade. If you must miss a class for any reason, you should let me know *in advance* so that some arrangement can be made to make up the work.

**INFO 490 - Tentative Schedule  
(As of January 21, 2001)**

| <u>Class</u>            | <u>Topic</u>   | <u>Readings and Assignments Due</u>  |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| January 22              | Introduction to Course/Review of Syllabus<br>Introductions/Discussion of Expectations<br>Information Systems Environment |  |
| January 29              | Current Problems—Review of Topics<br>Group Selection/Initial Group Discussions   | <b>Topic List Due</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b>  |
| February 5              | Historical Perspective (“The Past”)<br>Group Project Planning  | <b>IS Issues Research #1 Due</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b>   |
| February 12             | Current Situation (“The Present”)<br>Group Project Planning<br>Group/Faculty Appointments                                | <b>Group Research Outline Due</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b>  |
| February 19             | Emerging and Potential Problems (“The Future”)<br>Group Project Work   | <b>IS Issues Research #2 Due</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b>   |
| February 26             | Video (?) and Class Discussion   | <b>Edupage Summary Due</b>   |
| March 5                 | SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS  |  |
| March 12                | Issues of Other Professions<br>Book Reports  | <b>IS Issues Research #3 Due</b><br><b>[Book Reports Due (1/3)]</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b>                              |
| March 19                | Miscellaneous Topics<br>Book Reports   | <b>[Book Reports Due (1/3)]</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b>  |
| March 26                | Video (?) and Class Discussion<br>Book Reports   | <b>[Book Reports Due (1/3)]</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b>  |
| April 2                 | Topic Discussion One and Two   | <b>[Team One &amp; Two Presentations Due]</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b>  |
| April 9                 | Topic Discussion Three and Four  | <b>[Team Three &amp; Four Presentations Due]</b><br><b>[Team One &amp; Two Issue Paper Due]</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b>  |
| April 16                | (EASTER BREAK—NO CLASS)  |  |
| April 23                | Topic Discussion Five and Six  | <b>[Team Five &amp; Six Presentations Due]</b><br><b>[Team Three &amp; Four Issue Paper Due]</b><br><b>Edupage Summary Due</b> |
| April 30<br><b>Due]</b> | Conclusions and Wrap-Up  | <b>[Team Five &amp; Six Issue Paper</b><br><br><b>Extra Credit Due</b><br><b>Concluding Case Analyses Due</b>                  |
| May 7                   | Final Examination  |  |

*Supplementary reading may be assigned at any time. Please come to class prepared to discuss the material in the reading and in Edupage that week.*

*All deliverables are due on the scheduled date at the beginning of the class. Work submitted late will lose credit. Feel free to submit your work early by fax, mail, or email.*