Instructor: Surinder Kahai
Office hours: Academic A, Room 310, 4:30 – 5:45 pm, TTh or by appointment
Phone: 777-2410
Fax: 777-4422
e-mail: kahai@binghamton.edu (preferred mode of communication)

Course Description
In this course, teams of students are assigned real-world projects at local “client” organizations. The students carry out the project under the joint supervision of a supervisor from the client organization, and the faculty member responsible for the course. The students may work in the offices of the client organization using facilities provided by the client organization. Students will also have access to University computing and library facilities to complement those provided by the client organization. Project teams will typically meet with their faculty supervisor regularly during the class periods to discuss their progress in the project. They will also meet as a class on occasions indicated in the schedule.

This course provides students with an opportunity to apply an array of MIS/IT concepts and techniques in the context of real-world environments, while providing valuable assistance to sponsoring organizations. Since students will work as members of project teams, they will also have an opportunity to enhance their interpersonal (including communication) skills. Furthermore, students will often have an opportunity to work with high-level managers in the local community. Students will often be challenged to bring structure to loosely formulated business/organizational problems and to translate computer concepts into a language that is meaningful to the managers of the organizations for whom they are consulting. Good technical skills and/or the ability to learn technical skills are often very important for successful project completion in this course.
**Objectives**

Objectives of the course include (but are not limited to), providing students with valuable experience in the following areas:

1. Translating the problem or opportunity faced by a business/organization into an information system based solution (where appropriate)
2. Defining the scope of an information systems project
3. Communicating with clients of an information systems project
4. Working as a team with members whose expertise is different from yours
5. Developing an information system
6. Applying their MIS/IT knowledge to a problem or opportunity faced by a business/organization
7. Software/hardware required for the project
8. Writing information systems project reports
9. Starting and finishing an information systems project
10. Serving the local community

**Group Project Approach**

A team will work on its project for about 12-13 weeks (about 125-150 person-hours/person). Ideally, the scope should permit the team to analyze the problem, formulate alternative solutions, specify requirements on approval, and construct a computer-based solution. At the end of the project, the student team will produce a complete documentation of its product. The general approach for this course is as follows.

1. Your first task in this course is to pick a team for yourself. Each team will consist of 3 members each. I may consider a two-member or a four-member team depending on the total number of students we have in the class.

2. After you pick a team, you will work with other members of your team to bid on a project. To bid on a project, send me an email (one per team) no later than 5 pm on Wed, Jan 28, 2014, with the following information:
   a. The two projects that you would like to bid for.
   b. Why you think that your team is appropriate for each of the projects that it has bid on.

3. I will then assign teams to projects.

4. Once your team is assigned a project, you will set up an initial meeting with the client organization. In this meeting, you will try to obtain an understanding of the problem faced by the client organization using the following methods:
a. You will interview the client (use guidelines available online on Blackboard at [http://blackboard.binghamton.edu/](http://blackboard.binghamton.edu/) in the Course Documents section to help you interview the client).

b. Where appropriate, you will observe operations, see relevant records and reports, and discuss the project with members of any affected functions or departments.

5. You will use the first two weeks of the course to perform a preliminary analysis of your project. At the end of this analysis you will submit a project proposal. This project proposal should include the following (see a sample proposal available on Blackboard):

   a. Team's understanding of the business problem
   
   b. Schedule of activities and milestones required for completing the project or part of the project (if you are assigned a long-term project) over the next ten weeks.

6. In addition to submitting a project proposal, you will submit a team compact for your team. You can learn about what is a team compact and how to create it at [http://www.leadingvirtually.com/?page_id=63](http://www.leadingvirtually.com/?page_id=63).

   Note that your team compact will contain a section describing roles of team members. Each team will select a team lead and designate members within their team as “area” experts. For instance, someone may be designated as the “database” lead. The team would turn to the database lead to resolve any database programming, design, or security issues. Another member of the team may be designated as the “interface/usability” lead. Obviously, the exact nature of the leads will depend on the nature of the project. The team lead will have the final word on issues that come up and will provide general project leadership by way of planning and assigning the work. This person will keep an eye on the project schedule and make changes in the assignment of work if necessary. This person will engage the team members so that each team member gives her/his best performance.

   The team lead will also be responsible for keeping and sharing (with team members) a weekly log of the work performed by her/him and team members to help the team resolve any conflicts that may arise about the level of contribution made by each team member. If the team lead wishes, s/he can share the weekly log maintenance work with others in the team. But the weekly log should be agreed upon by all members of the team. The weekly log will have to be submitted no later than 5 pm on Friday.

7. During the first eight weeks following your proposal submission, you will meet with me at least three times to update me on your progress. Note the following:
a. I expect you to perform an after action review (AAR) before your meeting with me. Description of what is an AAR and how to do one is available at http://www.leadingvirtually.com/?page_id=51. Please bring your AAR with you when you come to see me.

b. Use the discussion board on Blackboard to schedule a meeting time with me.

c. Your “progress update” meetings should be spaced out uniformly (I expect a gap of at least two weeks between consecutive meetings). Please don’t wait until the last moment to plan this out. Ideally, you will include your meetings with me in your project proposal.

8. You will apply closure to your project at the end of about 11 weeks after your proposal submission (or about 13 weeks into the semester). The following things should be completed by this time:
   a. Final presentation(s) to the client.
   b. Client training, if appropriate.
   c. Documentation (system and user), if appropriate.
   d. Request to client to send in your evaluations within 48 hours of your final presentation.

9. You will use the remaining time during the semester to do the following:
   a. Prepare and submit your final report to me. You will need to set up a meeting time for this. Details for what the final report should contain are available on Blackboard.
   b. Evaluate other members of your team. Specifically, I want the team lead to evaluate each member of the team and each member of the team in turn will evaluate the leader and other members of the team. I will try my best to summarize the evaluations and give feedback to each student in the class without identifying who said what. There will be two types of evaluations – quantitative and qualitative. In the quantitative evaluation, a team member will allocate 100 points to other team members depending on the level and quality of contribution made by each of the other members of the team. In the qualitative evaluation, the evaluator will provide developmental feedback. The evaluator will focus on what the individual being evaluated did well and what are the areas where the individual needs to improve and if possible how.

Working Relationship with the Participating Organization
The working relationships between the project team and the organization will vary. For each team, the procedure followed will depend upon the nature of the problem and the wishes of the management for whom they are working.
**Composition of Course Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading item</th>
<th>Course-weight</th>
<th>Method of evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project (including system &amp; user documentation if project involves building of a system)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Client, Instructor, &amp; Peer evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Proposal (including presentation to the class)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Client &amp; Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report (including presentation to the class)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Compact</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly log</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AARs &amp; Peer evaluations</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Computing Skills Requirement (Very Important)**
I expect you to be a competent computer user with an ability to quickly learn new software, hardware, or a new area of computers on your own.

**Academic Dishonesty Policy**
Dishonest academic behaviors are subject to punishment under the School of Management's published *Procedures for Handling Cases of Suspected Academic Misconduct*. Academic misconduct includes (but is not limited to) failure to participate fully and equitably in the team project and/or dishonestly presenting collaborative work as representing a "fair share" contribution by all team members.