HCDE 520: Design & Management of Complex Information & Communication Systems

Instructor: Mark Haselkorn
Quarter/Year: Spring 2012
Course Schedule: Thursdays, 6 – 9:50PM

Course Description
Key Questions:

1. What makes a work system (that includes an information and communication component) complex?
2. How can you best design and implement improvements to the information and communication component of a work system?
3. If you intervene in a complex work system by modifying the information and communication system, how do you know if you have improved the work system?

Course Objectives
Student Class Goal (your primary work output):

A presentation and paper that (1) introduces a complex work system with emphasis on the information and communication system (ICS) that supports that work system, (2) presents a problem with the work system that could be addressed through an improved ICS, (3) recommends a strategy for improving the ICS that supports the work system, and (4) presents a plan for assessing the impact of your intervention/improvement on the work system.

Grading and Assignments

Attendance
You must contribute to class discussions regularly to successfully complete this course. In class, we will discuss readings that will help you complete the major assignments for this class. You may not make up in-class activities from missed class sessions later in the quarter. However, you should notify the instructor that you will be missing from class prior to your absence.

Late Assignments
You should not turn in your assignments late. If you do not turn in your assignments by the dates and times indicated in the class schedule and on assignment sheets, they are late. For every half day an assignment is late, it is worth ten percent less than the original total point value. Work more than 5 days late will receive zero credit.
Note: This syllabus may represent a past offering of this course and future course offerings may differ.

**Participation**

On several occasions you will be responsible for making a presentation, leading salons, and reporting information to the class. Active participation in class discussions will help you develop the knowledge you will need to successfully complete this course.

**Assignment**

As a graduate student, you should produce polished documents that reflect the highest standards of professional writing.

For major class assignments (final paper and response papers), you should produce final documents with few errors (grammar, mechanics, etc.). The standard for the final version of major assignments in this class is no more than one error per 100 words.

**Reading**

You are responsible for reading all of the material identified on the course schedule plus the additional readings assigned during the quarter. Record questions you have about the material and discuss them with the instructor or the class as needed. There is also a section of the website for posting suggested questions and issues for in-class discussion.

**Collaboration**

This quarter, you will be asked to contribute to the success of your colleagues’ projects by commenting on their presentations and response papers, and providing them with feedback on their works-in-progress. Some of this will occur through postings on the class bulletin board. This is an important part of your class participation.

**Final Paper Assignment – 50% of final grade**

Your final paper should:

1. introduce a complex work system with emphasis on the information and communication system (ICS) that supports that work system,

2. present a problem with the work system that could be addressed through an improved ICS,

3. recommend a strategy for improving the ICS that supports the work system, and

4. present a plan for assessing the impact of your intervention/improvement on the work system.

Start by selecting a complex work system that you know well (or for which you have an informant who can provide you insight into how the system works). Then:
Focus on what you see to be a key problem or issue to be addressed within the system.

Review your response papers for concepts that will help you address (2), (3) and (4).

Review and incorporate other relevant response papers and comments from the online discussion board.

Review and incorporate relevant conclusions from the in-class salon.

Add relevant references from both class readings and additional outside sources.

Add graphics (e.g. models of the work system) as appropriate, and

Write an 8 – 12 page paper that describes the work system, a pain point within that work system, a strategy for addressing that pain point, and a plan for evaluating the success of that strategy.

Be sure that your paper demonstrates how an HCDE perspective can be used in the design and management of complex information and communication systems.

Response Paper Assignment

The goal of the response paper is to provide a summary and response to the readings scheduled for that day. When you sign up to do a response paper, you are agreeing to take responsibility for focusing a portion of the class discussion on that reading. The paper is an opportunity to highlight your perspective and critical knowledge.

Papers should have a provocative title, be between 1-2 pages long, and should accomplish two tasks. First, they should distill the argument of the reading in question. This summary should highlight important points and the scope of the argument. Second, the response paper should extract from the reading several questions or issues that are appropriate for class discussion. To be successful, questions should be open-ended and thought provoking. They can focus on one or several issues in the reading, and the questions should be substantive enough to generate extended discussion. Papers should also be well-written. Post your paper to the discussion board for comments and discussion. Start a new conversation for each paper.

In your paper, you may choose to highlight strengths and/or weaknesses in the reading. You may also choose to draw connections between readings and discussion from previous weeks. Alternatively, your response paper may also connect to material outside of class that you can introduce in the scope of class discussion. As you write your papers, keep in mind the focus of the class and the issues under discussion. While I have a fairly broad view of the course material, there are also specific questions we are confronting, and your paper should help us advance our consideration of these issues.

If you have any questions about the assignment or the reading for which you are responsible, please feel free to contact me.
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Your Responsibilities:
- You will sign up for and post two response papers over the course of the quarter. Papers must be posted to the online Commonview discussion board by 6 pm Tuesday before the Thursday class.
- You will read all response papers before Thursday’s class.
- You will post a comment on one (or more) of the response papers before class each week (unless you are responsible for a response paper that week). Post to the Discussion Board under the appropriate “conversation.” All comments must be posted by noon Thursday and read before class.

Grading for the response papers will follow this rubric:
- 3.0: For a paper that fulfills minimum requirements: Title, summary, reaction, questions; up to two pages/500 words; Bibliography includes the required reading(s)
- 3.5: For a paper that goes a bit beyond: Extension of the minimum requirements by adding an information graphic and additional references.
- 4.0: Wow: Essay is insightful, provocative, really cuts to the heart of the matter, embraces the issues, has excellent questions, etc.

Each response paper is worth 10% of the final grade. Comments over the entire quarter are worth 10%.

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