

**Syllabus - MIS 380N.3 Business Process Excellence**  
**Spring 2007**  
*Tu&Th 2:00–3:30pm, UTC 1.130*  
**Unique Number: 03690**

**PROFESSOR**

Alina Chircu, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, IROM Department  
Office: CBA 5.250  
Phone: (512) 232-9162 Fax: (512) 471-0587  
IROM address: CBA 5.202, Mail code B6500  
Email: [alina.chircu@mcombs.utexas.edu](mailto:alina.chircu@mcombs.utexas.edu)

**Office hours:** Tuesdays 3:30-4:30pm, and by appointment (subject to availability; email notice required at least 1 business day in advance – plan accordingly during weekends and scheduled breaks). You are also encouraged to email me with any questions. Any changes to this schedule will be announced in advance.

**TAs**

None.

**OVERVIEW**

Today, information technology (IT) permeates every aspect of a company's operations, creating unparalleled opportunities for driving the customer experience, understanding, analyzing and improving business processes, delivering financially validated savings, driving bottom-line improvements and achieving competitive advantage through business process excellence.

Business process excellence projects today include a variety of IT-supported business process transformation and management initiatives known as business process improvement (BPI), business process reengineering (BPR), and business process management (BPM). This course focuses on understanding how firms can achieve operational and strategic business excellence by using IT in support of a firm's major business processes, such as order-to-cash and purchase-to-pay. The course will present a business perspective (rather than a technical perspective) on the information flow design for critical business processes, the variety of IT systems used to support these business processes (including ERP, SCM, CRM, EDI and XML), and their business value and risk. The students will learn how IT impacts core business processes in companies today, how to document, analyze, and improve business processes with IT by applying current BPI and BPR methodology, how to design business process and IT controls, and how to justify and manage the implementation of new or improved processes and IT systems. The course will highlight best practices as well as classic mistakes in IT-supported BPM, BPI and BPR.

Despite the existence of many business process and IT design and change methodologies, managing IT-supported change is more an art than an exact science. Therefore, understanding how to manage and change business processes with IT should be grounded in practice. Consequently, the students will obtain hands-on experience using case studies and exercises designed to expose them to real-life IT-supported business process change issues.

I carefully selected the course topics to address the needs of course students as well as those of their future employers, based on input from business and IT leaders from companies such as General Motors, Procter and Gamble, Samsung, EDS, Shell, AMD, Whole Foods, Dell, National Instruments, Pfizer and

others, as well as the generous advice of my IROM colleagues and fellow faculty at other institutions. Their feedback and help is graciously acknowledged.

**The course will consist mainly of case study analyses and in-class discussions, as well as several lectures, student team presentations, and guest speakers (subject to availability). Students are expected to participate in instructor-led class discussions, provide evaluations of their peers' contributions to the class, and work in student teams consistently over the course of the semester.**

### **PREREQUISITES**

None. Students are expected to be familiar with basic IT (IS, MIS, computer science, or similar) and business concepts as presented in introductory undergraduate classes on these topics.

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

- *MIS 380N.3 Business Process Excellence Course Packet* (available from the Speedway Copying, Dobie Mall, 2025 Guadelupe, Suite 140).

### **CLASS WEBSITE:**

The class website is accessible on Blackboard (<http://courses.utexas.edu/>; log in using your UT EID). Available the first day of class.

***Privacy notice:** Password-protected class sites will be available for all accredited courses taught at The University. Syllabi, handouts, assignments and other resources are types of information that may be available within these sites. Site activities could include exchanging e-mail, engaging in class discussions and chats, and exchanging files. In addition, class e-mail rosters will be a component of the sites. Students who do not want their names included in these electronic class rosters must restrict their directory information in the Office of the Registrar, Main Building, Room 1. For information on restricting directory information see: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi06-07/app/appc09.html>.*

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

Classes meet Tu & Th, from 2:00 to 3:30pm in UTC 1.130.

The syllabus and schedule will be handed out on the first day of class and are also available from the instructor in case of late registration. Announcement regarding schedule changes or reminders, additional readings, assignments, discussion questions, and other specific information for each class will be handed out in class and/or posted on Blackboard. Any changes to the schedule due to guest speaker scheduling conflicts or unforeseen events will be announced in advance in class (if applicable) and/or on Blackboard and/or by email.

## GRADING

Assignment	Type	Points	Notes
Class Participation	Individual	10	Class attendance and contributions to case discussions
Virtual Discussions Contributions	Individual	10	Online contributions to virtual discussions set up for select cases and course topics
Case Study Write-ups	Individual	20	4 write-ups (1-2 pages), 5 points each
Case Study Analyses and Presentations	Team	20	2 analyses (5 pages max each) and brief in-class presentation, 10 points each
Quizzes	Individual	20	4 quizzes, 5 points each
Final	Individual	20	Final report (case analysis)
TOTAL		100	

All assignments (except class participation) will be available and should be submitted through Blackboard (unless otherwise announced by the instructor). Assignments are usually due **before class** on their due date, and the Blackboard link to each assignment expires (i.e. becomes inaccessible by students) after this time. It is your responsibility to check the due dates and times for each assignment and submit your work before the deadline. In the unlikely event that Blackboard is down email or paper submissions are accepted as well.

Late assignments will not be accepted. In case of valid excuses (such as a documented illness or accident, religious holy day, school-sponsored academic trips, and similar situations) you can complete an alternate assignment (such as, but not limited to, a write-up for an unassigned upcoming case). Please inform me as soon as possible (preferably in advance) about the missed assignment so I can assign you the alternate assignment. You can also request to complete an alternate assignment in case you miss one assignment during the semester for any reason. You cannot use this option for more than one missed assignment, and you should request this option within a week from the due date of the missed assignment.

All assignment scores will be posted in the Gradebook available on Blackboard, and individual feedback (if appropriate) will be provided through Blackboard, email or on paper. It is your responsibility to check your scores after each assignment and contact the instructor with any questions. Any score can be appealed, provided the request is made in writing to the instructor within one week from receipt of the grade. Scores cannot be changed after the last day of class

The final score will be computed by adding all the scores you receive in this class. Final letter grades will be based upon the following guidelines for assigning letter grades. There will be no curve / grade distribution enforcement.

Please note that one assignment for this course requires team work. Students will be asked to form their own teams, with 4-5 students per team, **within the first two weeks of the semester**. Each team will have to prepare two case study analyses (see below). All team members are expected to contribute an equal amount of effort to the team work. Each student will have the opportunity to evaluate his/her team members' effort and performance for the team assignment. Any problematic situations (dysfunctional teams or team members shirking from work) should be reported to the instructor as soon as possible.

### CLASS PARTICIPATION

You are expected to participate in class discussions consistently over the course of the semester. The case study nature of the course makes this participation important not only for individual learning, but for

group learning as well. We can all learn from each other as we share our opinions and analyses of each case or example, and our past experiences as they relate to the course topics.

Class participation scores will be assigned based on:

- The quality of voluntary comments made during class discussions in response to my questions and other students' comments
- The quality of answers to cold-calls (case overview, in-depth answers to pre-assigned discussion questions, summarizing case discussion so far, etc.)

Class participation scores will be assigned based on the following general guidelines:

- No class attendance: 0 points
- Attends class but does not participate: 1 point
- Infrequent participation with low quality contributions: 2.5 points
- Moderate participation, with good quality contributions: 5 points
- Frequent, consistent contributions, sometimes of high quality: 7.5 points
- Very consistent, high-quality, varied contributions: 10 points
- Outstanding contributions: 10 points plus up to 5 bonus points

A quality contribution presents the case facts in a concise manner, applies theories, frameworks and insights from readings, lectures and other case discussions to the current case, analyzes similarities and differences between the case situation and one's own experiences, builds on or criticizes constructively others' contributions, generalizes from case facts and makes managerial recommendations for similar situations, and poses pertinent questions to the class. Speaking too much without adding value to the discussion will not improve your participation grade.

If you are shy, uncomfortable speaking in public, or find it difficult to organize your thoughts while other people speak in class, it may help to prepare short written answers for the assigned discussion questions for each class meeting and use them in class. I will do my best to find other participation strategies that may work best for you – just ask (as early in the semester as possible).

Class participation will be evaluated after each class by me and after the team presentations (see below) by your peers. An average score for all peer evaluations will be computed, and the professor and peer evaluation average score will be averaged to obtain the participation score. All students will receive (by email / on Blackboard) a preliminary class participation score based on the first half of the semester. The final class participation score will be determined after the last meeting of the semester taking into account participation over the entire semester. Students who consistently do not attend class or do not contribute much will be individually contacted as applicable in order to understand the underlying causes and possible remedies.

I will make every attempt to enable consistent participation from all students enrolled in the class. Depending on class size, overall participation patterns, specific case discussion requirements and time constraints, and individual participation levels, I may elect to encourage comments from students with low participation scores while students with high participation scores are also volunteering to contribute. This will not hurt the final participation scores of the latter, while giving the former a chance to improve as well.

**If you are unsure about your participation level, would like to find ways of improving it, or have any other questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at any time during the semester** (but keep in mind improvements in participation scores are not possible if you delay asking for feedback). **It is the**

**responsibility of each individual student to check their participation levels with me early in the semester in order to ensure they are receiving the maximum possible points for participation.**

**To enable accurate recording of participation, students are required to:**

- a) **display name cards during every class meeting, and**
- b) **select and keep the same seat in the classroom over the course of the semester.**

**Failure to do so may result in your contribution not being counted appropriately or at all.**

### VIRTUAL DISCUSSIONS CONTRIBUTIONS

You are expected to participate in virtual discussions I will set up on Blackboard on several occasions over the course of the semester. Instructions will be provided on Blackboard. The virtual discussion contributions will be evaluated using the class participation criteria (see above). These virtual discussions offer another option for class participation, enabling students to contribute to class learning in a different way than speaking up in class. The virtual discussions will also be used to accommodate the McCombs Global Connections MBA trips in mid-March (per Associate Dean's message, 12/15/2006) by providing a flexible assignment option for those students taking the trips.

### CASE STUDY WRITE-UPS

You are required to hand in individual, short case study write-ups, answering the assigned questions for the write-up. **The write-ups should be submitted electronically through Blackboard (as Blackboard assignments using the corresponding assignment link)**. Details on specific assignment questions will be provided in class / on Blackboard. The case write-ups are due before the beginning of the class meeting in which we discuss the corresponding case. The write-ups should be about 1 page in length, typed using a 10-12-point font, single-spaced, and include your name and UT EID in the header/title. Good write-ups answer the assigned questions concisely but thoroughly, apply theories, frameworks and insights from readings, lectures and other case discussions to the current case, identify similarities and differences between the case situation and one's own personal experiences, and provide general managerial recommendations for similar situations based on the case analysis.

### CASE STUDY TEAM ANALYSES AND PRESENTATIONS

Each team is required to conduct two in-depth case analyses for cases selected from a list provided by the instructor (to be determined during the semester based on the number of teams in the class) and prepare brief presentations of the analysis (to be presented and discussed in class). The same guidelines as for the case study write-ups apply for the analysis. The team should be ready to briefly discuss the results of their case analysis in class on the date assigned in class schedule for the selected case study. The written analysis will be worth 5 points, and the class presentation 5 points.

The class presentation will be evaluated based on presentation content and presentation style. Good presentations provide a concise but thorough analysis of the case facts and related materials (from web sites, articles, company press releases, reports, etc.), apply the class readings to the case analysis, and draw parallels between the case to be analyzed and other cases previously discussed in class. It is a good idea to rehearse the presentation a few times before class, make sure every team member presents the information in a clear, easy to follow manner, and make sure all team members are professional in both presentation style and appearance.

Any problematic situations (dysfunctional teams or team members shirking from work) should be reported to the instructor as soon as possible. Each student will also be required to evaluate the performance of his/her team members, as well as the presentation quality of the other student teams. Evaluation forms will be provided in class during the presentation, and average peer evaluations for each presentation will be combined with the instructor score to obtain a total score for each presentation.

## QUIZZES

Several quizzes will be administered on Blackboard and will be due before the beginning of the corresponding class meeting (see class schedule). The quizzes are individual. The quizzes will consist of true/false, multiple choice, matching and essay questions (at the instructor's discretion) about topics covered in the class readings (including book chapters, articles, case studies, and guest speaker appearances). Each quiz will be worth 5 points, and will have between 5 and 20 questions, depending on question difficulty.

## FINAL REPORT

You are required to complete an individual report in lieu of the final exam. The report will require you to analyze a real-world problem (as describe din a case study or similar materials) by applying the concepts learned in this class. You will receive more details about the report topic and requirements in class and on Blackboard.

## EXAMS

Because assignments, quizzes, and team work are scheduled frequently during the semester, there will be no midterms or final exams.

## **SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY**

*By teaching this course, I have agreed to observe all of the faculty responsibilities described in the policy statement on scholastic dishonesty. By enrolling in this class, you have agreed to observe all of the student responsibilities described in the policy statement on scholastic dishonesty. If the application of that Policy Statement to this class and its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your responsibility to ask me for clarification.*

*Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course an/or dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. You should refer to the Student Judicial Services website at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/> or the General Information Catalog to access the official University policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty as well as further elaboration on what constitutes scholastic dishonesty.*

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

*The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.*