Exploring the Digital Economy
MBA 655

Course Description

There are very few businesses or walks of life that in this day and age do not make considerable use of Information Systems (IS). IS helps us, amongst other things to:

- Communicate – via telecommunications networks, enabling us to talk with people thousands of miles away, exchange e-mail and instant messages and increasingly use videoconferencing from our desktops.

- Share knowledge – by communicating and making information and ideas available over corporate networks, intranets, extranets and the web in general.

- Sell – IS and IT (information technology) facilitates selling in many ways, perhaps most obviously via e-commerce over the web, but also for example providing point of sale information to help sales staff make the sale.

- Manage operations – using IS to gather, monitor, analyse and act upon data about what is happening in the business whether it’s monitoring a factory production line, tracking sales data from the checkout in a retail store, or tracking the activities of maintenance teams out in the field.

The challenge for everyone in business is figuring out how best to use information systems, a challenge both exacerbated and facilitated by the steady stream of new technologies that offer new, better (sometimes!) and different options for getting things done. And of course hardly a day goes by without the latest study or article bemoaning how we are being swamped by e-mail or exposed to privacy and security risks by our use of the web and other information technologies.

And this is the paradox of IS - the more it enables us to do, the more it pervades our business and personal lives and leaves us feeling like slaves to the technology.

So how do we manage this paradox? How can business professionals make sense of the latest cool “technologies” such as Twitter, blogs, VOIP and podcasts and what do they mean for the alphabet soup of technologies we’ve grappled with in recent years – ERP, CRM, EAI etc.? How can business professionals continue to add value the people and organizations they serve?

Tom Friedman noted that we are a period in which the “IT Revolution is being turbocharged”. This class will help you understand what’s going on, and how you can be a part of it. If you’re a techno-phobe, be comforted that we won’t be using techno-geek language. If you’re techno-geek, this class will help you speak technology using the language of business. If you’re somewhere in the middle – we’ve got both sides covered!
A few things to think about as you consider this course:

There is no book to buy (everything is online, as it should be!). You will have the option of submitting your final “paper” as a movie. This has become a popular option for students, and I thoroughly recommend exploring this as a medium if you have not done this before. There will be plenty of class discussion to participate in or listen to. There are several hands-on experiences to get us out of the classroom and trying things out.

We will have two guests come and talk to us about things that are going on right now, in areas such as Cloud Computing and Search Engine Optimization.

**Course Requirements and Expectations**

The course will consist of pre-course readings, lectures, in-class activities, and a post-course paper/video.

**Lectures**
The majority of the course content will be delivered via lectures. The slides available are customized to the lectures in this class, and they provide a good starting point for students to take notes while attending lectures.

**In-Class Discussions**
Students are expected to read the assigned material or perform the assigned activities prior to coming to class. These activities and exercises are designed to reinforce the lecture material. Therefore, failure to do so will severely hamper your understanding of the lecture and, ultimately, your class participation grade.

**Required Reading**

You really should

1. *It’s A Flat World After All*, by Thomas Friedman from the NY Times, April 3, 2005 (unless you’ve already read the book – but this is a good refresher summary). We won’t actually be covering this in class, but it is a good underpinning for a lot of what we discuss.

2. *The Evolving Role of IT Managers and CIOs*, IBM Institute for Business Value, 2010

3. *Atoms are the new bits*, by Chris Anderson, Wired Magazine Feb 2010
4. *6 questions every executive should ask about Cloud Computing*, Accenture, Jan 2010

It’d be GREAT if you did

5. *GIS supports marketing*, by ESRI
   We’ll be covering GIS in class

6. *Why the World Isn’t Flat*, by Ghemawat, Foreign Policy
   A really nice counterpoint to Friedman’s arguments

**Grading**

Final grades will be based on an overall weighted average as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper (individual)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70%</td>
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It is important to recognize that grading necessarily reflects the instructor’s judgment regarding the quality of your work. Although an objective criterion for grading exists, all grading is somewhat subjective. If you have a question about a grade, please see me. However, requests for re-grading are likely to meet with skepticism unless an obvious grading mistake or unfairness is presented. If you request a re-grading of an assignment, please know that the entire assignment will be regraded. This could result in the loss of points in other areas of the assignment.

Grades will be conferred on a ± basis and comply with the ranges shown below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pct &gt;= 93%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93% &gt; pct &gt;= 90%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% &gt; pct &gt;= 87%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87% &gt; pct &gt;= 83%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>83% &gt; pct &gt;= 80%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>80% &gt; pct &gt;= 77%</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>67% &gt; pct &gt;= 60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60% &lt; pct</td>
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Mission of the UM School of Business Administration

The University of Montana’s School of Business Administration is a collegial learning community dedicated to the teaching, exploration, and application of the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a competitive marketplace.

School of Business Administration/Assessment and Assurance of Learning
As part of our assessment process and assurance-of-learning standards, the School of Business Administration has adopted five learning goals for our undergraduate students:

Learning Goal 1: SoBA graduates will possess fundamental business knowledge.
Objectives:
- Students will demonstrate fundamental business knowledge on a nationally normed test or a locally prepared test.
- Students will demonstrate fundamental business knowledge of business concepts while working in an internship.

Learning Goal 2: SoBA graduates will be able to integrate business knowledge.
Objectives:
- In a business plan and/or business simulation game, students will integrate concepts from several of the functional areas of business.

Learning Goal 3: SoBA graduates will be effective communicators.
Objectives:
- Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively.
- Students will deliver professional quality oral presentations.
- Students will demonstrate writing skills in internships.

Learning Goal 4: SoBA graduates will possess problem solving skills.
Objectives:
- Students will use appropriate tools to identify the root cause of a business problem.
- Students will use brainstorming tools to identify relevant alternatives for solving a business problem.
- Students will effectively analyze alternatives using quantitative tools.
- Students will effectively analyze alternatives using qualitative tools.
- Students will use appropriate tools to select a solution from competing alternatives.
- Students will identify metrics that will indicate the success or failure of the implemented solution.
- Students will demonstrate problem solving skills in internships.

Learning Goal 5: SoBA graduates will have an ethical awareness.
Objectives:
- Students will demonstrate moral reasoning on a nationally normed test.
• In a case, students will recognize potential ethical dilemmas in a business situation.
• In a case, students will identify the consequences of different ethical perspectives when applied to an ethical dilemma in a business situation.
• Students will recognize potential ethical dilemmas in internship situations.

Learning Goal 6: SoBA graduates will be proficient users of technology.
Objectives:
• Students will understand the role of technology in creating business innovations and in obtaining competitive advantage.
• Students will make appropriate use of spreadsheets (formulas, tables, and graphs).
• Students will effectively use spreadsheets and other technology in an internship situation.
• Students will design and construct a web page.

Learning Goal 7: SoBA graduates will understand the global business environment in which they operate.
Objectives:
• Students will understand how globalization impacts U.S. economic conditions and workforce dynamics (e.g., employment opportunities, etc.)
• Students will understand how different operating and cultural conditions affect the general conduct of business in different areas of the world.
• Students will demonstrate global business knowledge on a nationally normed test.

Academic Integrity

Integrity and honesty are hallmarks of the consulting profession. It is your duty to abide by the University’s academic policies, and it is the instructor’s duty to enforce those policies. Cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Cheating, failure to follow instructions, and/or failure to follow course policies may result in a reduced grade or a failing grade at the instructor’s option. The following message about academic integrity comes from the Provost’s office: “All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.”
According to University policy, faculty may only communicate with students regarding academic issues via official UM email accounts. Accordingly, students must use their GrizMail accounts (netid@grizmail.umt.edu or fname.lname@umontana.edu). Email from non-UM accounts will likely be flagged as spam and deleted without further response. To avoid violating the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, confidential information (including grades and course performance) will not be discussed via phone or email.