IRLS613-010 Decision Making for Library and Information Professionals

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COURSE NAME, NUMBER AND PREREQUISITES:

Decision Making for Library and Information Professionals
IRLS613 Section -010

Instructor: Don Fallis

This course satisfies the Management distribution requirement for the SIRLS Masters degree.

This course addresses several of the SIRLS Student Competencies (especially A1, B6, and C9).

Prerequisite: IRLS 504 or consent of the instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

"Introduction to quantitative methods for analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of the various systems that make up an information service such as a library."

Like any other professional, library and information professionals are decision-makers. Whether working the reference desk or running the library, library and information professionals need to be able to make good decisions. As a result, such professionals should be aware of the basic rules of good decision making.

There is a fairly standard procedure for making good decisions. It has been successfully applied to all sorts of decisions, such as locating nuclear power plants, developing environmental policies, deciding on medical treatments, etc. This procedure is commonly known as decision analysis. The first half of this course will introduce the basic principles of decision analysis, such as:

- Determining the objectives of information services.
- Resolving conflicts between such objectives.
- Predicting the consequences of library policies.
- Dealing with uncertainty about such consequences.

Predicting the consequences of library policies often requires the use of mathematical models. Economic theory is one of the most important and powerful mathematical models that can be applied to the management of information services. The second half of this course will introduce the basic principles of the economics of information, such as:
Supply and Demand
Market Equilibria
Public Goods
Pricing of Information Goods

Technical Prerequisites:

Students taking this course will need to satisfy the standard SIRLS technical requirements. In addition, as the course description suggests, this course will involve a certain amount of mathematics. But familiarity with basic algebra will be sufficient mathematical background. Also, some assignments in this course will make use of Microsoft Excel. As a result, some prior experience with Microsoft Excel would be helpful, but is not strictly necessary. Finally, at least one assignment requires students to create a web page and post it on the web. Tips for doing this will be posted in D2L. Please contact the instructor if you have questions about these prerequisites.

Course Format:

This course will be taught virtually using a D2L course on the Web. Enrolled students will be given accounts by the start of the semester.

Note: Information about using D2L is available at http://www.sir.arizona.edu/resources/computing.html#d2l. If you have trouble with D2L, you can contact the D2L Support Staff (d2l@email.arizona.edu). (In addition, you can contact the SIRLS "D2L GAT" for the semester.) Send the D2L staff an email message explaining exactly what is happening.

Note: When I have taught this course in the past, it has always had some on-campus component (e.g., a weekend meeting in the middle of the semester). This component was a good opportunity for students to ask questions and it is often easier to explain mathematics face-to-face. Since it will be a completely virtual course this semester, you will have to take very seriously the responsibility to make sure that you understand the content of the course and to ask questions when you do not.

I plan to post one lecture per week. I plan to post these lectures on Wednesday afternoon or evening. So, you should find them posted in the "Content" area of the D2L course by the following morning.

I will set up a discussion forum for each lecture. Online discussions of the content of the course will take place in these forums. The participation requirement for this course requires active participation in these discussions. You should have something thoughtful to say (a question, a comment, a reply, etc.) every week or so. But in order to stay up-to-date on discussions and announcements, you should check into D2L every day or so.

Note: The last day of classes this semester is May 4th. This will be the last official day for participation. However, D2L should still be accessible for at least a couple of weeks after that point. I will still be checking in on the discussions and you are free to continue posting to the discussion forums.

Note: I do not always post announcements on the D2L Course Home page. I often post announcements in the Main discussion forum. That way, people can reply to the announcement if they have questions or need clarification. So, please be sure to check any postings to the "Main" discussion forum (or the other Administrative discussion forums, for that matter).

I have a couple of small requests with regard to the discussion forums. These forums will be our main mode of communication in this course. In order to keep this communication more or less organized, I will set up different forums for different purposes. For example, in addition to a forum for each lecture, I will also set up a "Greetings" forum for you to describe who you are and why you are taking this particular course. So, my first request is that you try to direct your comments to the appropriate forum. My second request is that you use D2L email, instead of the forums, for any personal correspondence.

Note: If I need to communicate with you directly, I will typically send you a D2L email message. So, in addition to regularly checking the discussion forums, you need to regularly check your D2L email account (or you need to have your D2L email forwarded to your regular email account).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
By the end of this course, students will:

- understand the basic principles of strategic decision making.
- know how to apply these principles to decisions about the use and control of information.
- understand the basics principles of the economics of information.
- know how to these principles affect decisions about the use and control of information.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:**

There are two required texts for this course:


Additional readings will be available electronically. Some readings will be on the web. Other readings will be in journals that can be accessed online through [UA Library](http://tech.sbs.arizona.edu/fallis613). You will need a CatCard number to access these readings.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

There are five components that go into the final course grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam One</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Two</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participation** is discussed above under Course Format.

The two **Exams** will consist of several questions (similar to those that you will see on the short assignments) that cover the lectures, readings, and discussions. These exams will be posted on D2L. Your answers will be due one week later.

**Note:** All of the assignments in this course (including these exams) will be due at 11:59pm Tucson time. I don't plan to start grading them at midnight; I just want to be sure that I have them in my hands when I get up the following morning. By the way, Tucson is always on Mountain Standard Time (MST).

The **Group Presentation** requires each of you to participate in creating an online presentation that analyzes a decision faced by an information service. These presentations will take place during the last few weeks of the semester. Each group will sign up for a specific date to put their presentation online. We will treat the presentations like any other virtual lecture. For instance, I will set up a forum for each presentation, presentations will be required reading, etc.

**Note:** I do understand that group presentations, especially in a virtual course, present certain difficulties. Please let me know if you are having any problems.

Further details about these assignments (including due dates) will be provided in D2L. All assignments must be submitted as HTML or PDF files. Information about creating HTML documents is available at: [http://www.sir.arizona.edu/resources/computing.html#html](http://www.sir.arizona.edu/resources/computing.html#html).
COURSE, SCHOOL, AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Academic Code of Integrity

Students are expected to abide by The University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity. ‘The guiding principle of academic integrity is that a student's submitted work must be the student's own.’ If you have any questions regarding what is acceptable practice under this Code, please ask an Instructor.

Accommodating Disabilities

The University has a Disability Resource Center. If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Disability Resource Center and request that the DRC send me, the Instructor, official notification of your accommodation needs as soon as possible. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Assignment Policies

Further details about turning in assignments will be posted in D2L.

Incompletes

The 1997-8 University of Arizona General Academic Manual, p.23 reads

The grade of I may be awarded only at the end of a semester, when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. The grade of I is not to be awarded when the student is expected to repeat the course; in such a case the grade of E must be assigned. Students should make arrangements with the instructor to receive an incompete grade before the end of the semester ...

If the incomplete is not removed by the instructor within one year the I grade will revert to a failing grade.

GRADING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Overall Percentage Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% to 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% to 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% to 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each assignment will be graded on a point system. For example, you might receive 17 out of a possible 20 points on your Individual Project. At the end of the course, the points received on each of the five components will be aggregated (using the percentages given above under Course Requirements) to yield an overall percentage score. Students with scores of 90% and above will receive an A, those with scores between 80% and 89% will receive a B, those with scores between 70% and 79% will receive a C, etc. Further details about the grading of assignments will be posted in D2L.

INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT ADDRESSES:
Office: SIRLS 14  
Office Hours: Thursdays from 1:30 to 3:00 and by appointment  
Telephone: 621-3565  
D2L email: fallis at d2l dot arizona dot edu  
Regular email: fallis at email dot arizona dot edu

If you have questions for me about the course, post a message to the D2L discussion forums or send a message to my D2L email account. (I prefer that you not use my regular email account for questions about the course.) In addition, if you are going to be in Tucson, you can come to my office hours or set up an appointment.
Guided exploration

Click a term to initiate a search.

Audience
- for Students (92)
- for Faculty (28)
- for Alums (24)
- for Staff (17)
- for Prospective Students (7)
- more...

Course
- IRLS417 (2)
- IRLS418 (1)
- IRLS432 (1)
- IRLS470 (2)
- IRLS488 (6)
- more...

People
- Adjunct Faculty (152)
- Faculty (150)
- Staff (17)
- Friends (6)