IRLS673 Managing the Digital Information Environment

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COURSE NAME, NUMBER AND PREREQUISITES:

IRLS 673  Managing in the Digital Information Environment

Prerequisite: There is no prerequisite for DigIn students. For SIRLS M.A. students, the sole prerequisite is IRLS 504 or consent of the instructor.

Instructor: Tyler Walters

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This three-credit course is one of six required for completion of the Certificate in Digital Information Management (DigIn) and is available as an elective in the SIRLS master’s degree program. This course introduces students to theoretical and practical approaches to planning for the digital information environment, which includes managing technology, people, and information resources in organizational settings. Large-scale information environments will be focused upon and reviewed, such as: cyberinfrastructure for the sciences, humanities, and social sciences; institutional-level digital asset management; life-cycle and archival management of electronic records; and sophisticated electronic resource management and digital libraries/archives programs in research libraries. Students will learn about applying modern approaches to managing people and organizations, leading through change, and strategic planning. Major organizational processes and issues relevant to large-scale digital information environments will be explored as well, such as managing programs, forming consortia and cooperatives, managing rights and privacy issues, conducting needs assessments, and looking at open source software development processes.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Successful completion of this course will help students achieve the A1, A3, B5, B6, B7, C9 competencies outlined at http://sirls.arizona.edu/about/studentCompetencies. More specifically, by the end of the semester, students will be able to:

a) Orient students to the broad discipline of management as its applied to digital information environments and their rapidly evolving landscapes and challenges.

b) Explore the varying kinds of modern, early 21st century information-intensive organizational environments that are digital in form.

c) Familiarize students with current library and other information service institutions organizational strategies and approaches to managing large amounts of digital information.

d) Gain an understanding of the major processes used in digital information service organizations such as strategic planning, program management, needs assessment, user studies, establishment of inter-institutional organizations, software development, and managing intellectual property rights.

e) Learn how to create comprehensive business management plans and policies for IS organizations.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

All readings for this course are available online. The majority can be accessed as freely available content on the Web.
Other readings will be posted in the Content Module for each class unit in D2L. The materials listed under —Other Readings— can be accessed through the UA Library e-journal databases, UA Library catalog, and some are available as few content on the web. Some of these items may be posted in unit Content Module as well.

This course has a relatively large number of assigned readings. Students will be expected to grasp the key ideas in each reading and demonstrate their understanding of them via the discussion forums and unit brief essays. Frequently, these key ideas are reflected in the lectures as well. At the beginning of each unit, the instructor may give the students more specific guidance so they can elicit key concepts and ideas from the readings.

All readings listed under "Other Readings" are meant to be an extended bibliography of materials related to the unit. There is no expectation on the student to read or incorporate this material in the course. Rather, this section provides students with additional material to consult during and after the course as they may face challenging digital information management issues in the workplace.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

IRLS 673 will be comprise of the following activities to learning activities--lectures, readings, brief essay writing assignments, and a semester project. Class discussion will be carried out via the discussion forum available for each unit using the D2L platform (http://d2l.arizona.edu).

The course will be taught asynchronously, so you will not be required to log in at any specific time. But this is not a self-paced course, so students will be expected to keep up with the weekly schedule in the syllabus. Also, as this is a new course, students should expect some minor changes to the syllabus as we go along. Students should plan to log in to D2L more than once a week, check their email regularly, and participate in each weekly unit’s discussion forum multiple times per week.

The course content is divided into three sections totaling 13 units, with each unit lasting one week. At the start of each unit, the instructor will post a lecture on that week’s topic as well as notes giving feedback and updated information about the course. As a guideline, the lecture and accompanying readings for each unit should be read within four days, giving you three days to complete the unit’s two mandatory assignments (contribute to class discussions via the online discussion forum, and the brief essay writing assignment).

*The total amount of readings per unit may change or be pared down as the course progresses to best facilitate the students’ learning of each unit topic. Students should check the D2L introductory notes for each unit for any changes made or additional instruction given.

The assignment for each unit is class participation through the online discussion forum set up for each weekly unit. Students are expected to vigorously discuss the unit’s subject matter during the week. The lead-off discussion topic supplied by the instructor is meant only as a devise to initiate the class discussion.

The next group of assignments is comprised of three section-based essays. These will consist of several essay questions drawn primarily from the units’ readings in each section and applying what we have learned to IS organizational settings. Essays are anticipated to be 2,000 – 4,000 words in length, however, there is no strict maximum amount. Completed essays must be posted to the D2L dropbox by deadline posted in the syllabus. Any essays turned in after the posted deadlines will be considered late.

The section essays are especially important because they will form the backbone of the Semester Project, as you will see in the project’s description.

The third assignment students will complete is the semester project. This is meant to be a creative planning project. Students will assume the role of creator of a: 1) new information service organization; and 2) federation of information service (IS) organizations. Both will be managing large amounts of digital information. The IS organization can be the same one students use in many of the brief essay assignments. In fact, the brief essays will help students complete most components to the project. The federation is created in unit 8 on Trust, or can be another one that the student creates for this project. Students have the freedom of determining exactly what kind of information or data, and what kind of services (preservation, access, etc.) the IS organization and the federation provide. The course units are the components to the plan created as the Semester Project. More information can be found in a separate project description document. The project is
due in its D2L dropbox on Sunday, May 8th for the Spring 2011 semester.

Extra credit is possible in this course and must be worked out with the instructor on a case by case basis.

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

All assignments will have a specific due date; this means that the submission date recorded by D2L must be no later than the deadline specified for the assignment. Late assignments will carry a penalty of 1 point per day, with a maximum penalty of three points. Also, late Section #3 essays will not be accepted after their due date (Sunday, May 1st for Spring semester 2011). Exceptions to this policy will be made if (a) a legitimate emergency arises—and which must be documented, or (b) if the students emails the instructor before the deadline (that is, before the assignment is late) and ask for an extension. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests are generally approved one or two extensions per student per semester.

Normally, the instructor will not approve an extension if it is not requested in advance of the due date. This is because planning is regarded as an essential factor in online learning—including planning for those times when the student’s schedule is likely to make it difficult to keep up with the syllabus. Thus, as we move forward through the semester, students are strongly urged to contact the instructor as soon as possible if a student finds him or herself falling behind for any reason. The instructor is willing to consider adjustments to the weekly schedule to accommodate students’ individual needs, if the instructor is informed of the need for such changes in a timely manner.

This semester, each weekly unit will begin on Monday (except the first unit starting on Wednesday January 12).

Incompletes

The current Catalog reads

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

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

GRADING:

Section Essays (2)
In general, the section essays should be: concise; free of spelling and grammatical errors; provide a clear, explicit answer to the question; and include enough supporting details and/or examples to make your answer compelling while
demonstrating your effort to master the readings and lecture. To meet these criteria, you should expect your answers to be about 2,000 – 4,000 words (single spaced) in length, though this is not a rigid requirement. In some cases a shorter answer will suffice, and nor will you be penalized for a longer answer if it is well written and compelling in content.

Class Participation
Vigorous, frequent, and active discussion in the forums is expected. In grading the discussion forum, the main concern is that posts should make a substantive contribution to the discussion. This means that students need to do more than state an opinion, or respond to another’s position. Students need to put forth a position or argument and provide a context for their argument including supporting details and concrete examples. In terms of length and frequency, it is recommended that students contribute a minimum of two posts of at least 200 words per unit. Shorter posts and comments on other postings are expected and highly encouraged, and will be taken into account positively when grading the discussion forums. In addition to contributing substantive contributions to the discussion, the overall goal is to generate a lively, iterative, and intellectual dialog between classmates and the instructor to maximize the students’ learning experience.

Semester Project
The semester project will be divided into two separate assignments. The First Report will include vision and mission statements for the student’s IS organization and federation that they choose as well as descriptions of both their services, intended audience, and benefits to that audience. Students will also describe the innovativeness of their services and their significance to other organizations in the field. In the remainder of the project, students will develop management plan components that follow the unit topics in the course. A key feature of the project will be to demonstrate comprehension of the units’ topical matter and to apply them in creative and innovative ways to the two organizations the students create. Detailed guidelines are elsewhere in this syllabus and in the Semester Project description document in D2L.

Grading Scale
The final grade for the course will be based on the following elements:

Section Essays: 200 points
(Two essays worth 100 points each)

Class Participation: 350 points
(13 weeks, each worth 35 points, with the top 10 discussion forums included in the grade. For the last week (unit 13), no discussion is required; the student’s lowest two discussion forum grades also will be dropped from Class Participation grading).

Note: If a student fails to contribute to a unit discussion forum, that forum will be counted as zero points.

Semester Project: 350 points
1st Report: (100 points) (due Sunday, April 3, 2011)
Final Project Document: (250 points) (due at the end of the semester, Sunday May 8, 2011)

Course Total: 900 points

INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT ADDRESSES:

Tyler O. Walters

For questions that may be of general interest to the class, please use the instructor’s discussion forum in D2L. For more specific questions or to discuss matters that are personal in any way, please use my Georgia Tech email account or my Google email account:

Tyler@gatech.edu / TyWalters1@gmail.com

While rare, its possible that I may be in a city or at a conference that may make meeting face-to-face possible. I will keep students abreast of my travel schedule and would welcome meeting if the opportunity presents itself. Other contact points such as telephone numbers (office, cell, Skype, GoogleTalk) will be included in D2L.

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