UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS Rio Grande Valley

Online Course Syllabus

Please print a copy of this syllabus for handy reference.

Whenever there is a question about what assignments are due, please remember this syllabus is considered to be the ruling document.

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE NUMBER: INFS 6340

COURSE TITLE: Health Informatics

PREREQUISITE: None

COURSE START DATE: June 22, 2016

COURSE END DATE: August 10, 2016

REQUIRED READING: Students are required to read all materials available at the Blackboard Learn site for this course on mycourses.utrgv.edu


Software: You need to have Microsoft Office package installed on your own computer (it can be downloaded from “vSoftware” under my.utrgv.edu).

Facilitator Information

Name: Jun Sun, PhD
Title: Associate Professor of Information Systems
College: College of Business & Entrepreneurship, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Time Zone: U.S. Central
Email Address: jun.sun@utrgv.edu
Facilitator Availability

I am available from 9AM-9PM Central Time on most days, but attempt to reserve sometime during weekends for my family. During the week I am online most of the time during that timeframe. On Saturdays I tend to be online in the morning only, and on Sundays I tend to be online in the evening only. If these times are not convenient for you, please let me know and I will be happy to accommodate your schedule if at all possible. I provide you with these times to make it easier to communicate with me, not to limit our contact and want you to know that, should you need to contact me outside these time frames, you should not hesitate to do so.

Facilitator Bio

I am posting my online biography in a separate note in the course discussion forum to give you more information about me. I look forward to reading your biographies and getting to know you.

Words of Welcome

Greetings from the facilitator of this course. I joined the university in 2006 and am now an associate professor at the Department of Information Systems. I had 4 years of industry experience before getting my master’s and doctoral degrees at the Texas A&M University. Yes, I am aggie but not a huge football fan (I like tennis and swimming though). I am looking forward to working with you to explore the exciting field of health informatics. I know it is challenging but you are not alone: everyone here is on the same board to help and learn from each other.

Course Objectives

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course focuses on the key information requirements for effective health information management. We will discuss how to plan and develop the governance and oversight requirements of healthcare IT projects, understand the specification and selection process of healthcare projects, and apply these competencies to real-world problems.

In the next seven weeks, we will work on:

1. exploring key information requirements for effective health information management
2. cultivating IT skills to enhance healthcare services
3. planning and developing the governance and oversight requirements of healthcare IT projects
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
<th>Course Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prepare healthcare professionals for advanced leadership roles in the healthcare system.</td>
<td>Students will plan and develop the governance and oversight requirements of healthcare IT projects.</td>
<td>Successful completion of group project on IT project charter/proposal with the compilation of report, group presentation and peer evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide students with the advanced knowledge and skills needed to serve as leaders in the delivery of healthcare</td>
<td>Students will cultivate IT skills to enhance healthcare services</td>
<td>Successful completion of individual projects with hand-on exercises, and participation in class discussions on weekly topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prepare students for advancement in clinical, educational, research, and administrative arenas.</td>
<td>Students will explore key information requirements for effective health information management</td>
<td>Successful completion of unit quizzes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOPICS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Week 1: Healthcare Information Management**

In this week, we are going to get familiar with the basic concepts of healthcare information management. Over the years, the health industry has collected tons’ of patient data and most of them are meaningless until they are well organized. Through the discussion and hand-on project, we will explore the ways to make sense of patient data.

At the end of this week, you should be able to:

- Identify the roles that healthcare information plays in evidence-based medicine, and related data quality indicators and clinical practice guidelines with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz.
- Apply the spreadsheet to make sense of healthcare data with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.
- Appraise the meaningful use of health information technology in the context of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion.

**Week 2: Health Information Systems**

In this week, we are going to get familiar with the basic concepts of health information systems. Most health information systems are developed to collect, process, store, and transfer patient data to support decision-making for healthcare practitioners. Through the discussion and hand-on project, we will explore the use of information and communication technology for these purposes.

At the end of this week, you should be able to:
• Identify general functions, purposes and benefits of health information systems in various health care settings with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz.

• Apply pivot table/chart to support decision-making with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.

• Appraise the importance and use of health information systems for clinical and administrative purposes with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion.

**Week 3: System Implementation and Adoption**

In this week, we are going to discuss the implementation and adoption of health information systems. The success or failure of a system largely depends on how well its development takes user requirement and experiences into account. Therefore, potential users including clinicians and patients may play the critical role of system analysts to enhance the design of a system that they are likely to use.

At the end of this week, you should be able to:

• Identify the major considerations and activities in the implementation and adoption of health information systems with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz.

• Apply electronic health records (EHR) to keep track of service transactions with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.

• Appraise how to reduce user resistance to new health information systems at the implementation and adoption stages with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion.

**Week 4: Platforms and Standards**

In this week, we are going to discuss the platforms of health information systems and related standards. Nowadays, few systems are standalone; rather they need to communicate with each other for health information exchange. This requires the compatibility and interoperability among different systems, which relies on the use of common platforms and standards. In addition, security standards ensure the safety of individual systems as well as the whole environment.

At the end of this week, you should be able to:

• Identify major components of health information systems and data standards required for the interoperable exchange of health care data with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz.

• Apply database technology to organize health information with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.

• Appraise security risks and potential solutions for healthcare information management with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion.

**Week 5: Health IT Strategy**

In this week, we are going to discuss the organizational strategy for clinics and hospitals to adopt Health IT. Topics covered include enterprise architecture models, long-term
planning, evaluation of options, decision-making, employee training, system implementation, and so on.

At the end of this week, you should be able to:

- Identify the process of migration to an electronic health record (EHR) from the perspectives of organizational strategy, planning, analysis of EHR options, decision-making techniques, training, and implementation strategies with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz.
- Apply web technology for organizational presence online with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.
- Appraise the pros and cons as well as best practices of IT outsourcing with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion.

**Week 6: IT Project Management**

In this week, we are going to discuss how to plan and manage IT projects in health care organizations. In addition to the understanding of best practices, we will have hand-on experiences on project management, and discuss how to decide and control project scopes.

At the end of this week, you should be able to:

- Identify the factors that are critical to project success with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz.
- Conduct healthcare information system (HIS) project planning and scheduling with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.
- Appraise how to determine project scope that reflects stakeholder perspectives and project requirements with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion.

**Week 7: Health IT Leadership**

In this week, we are going to focus on the leadership role on health informatics. In specific, we will develop and present IT project proposals and appraise them in groups.

At the end of this week, you should be able to:

- Appraise health IT leadership cases with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion.
- Develop and present an IT project charter in a group with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.
- Appraise IT project charters with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion.
The Online Weekly Schedule

Electronic weeks begin on Wednesday and end on Tuesday.

Day 1 - Wednesday
Day 2 - Thursday
Day 3 - Friday
Day 4 - Saturday
Day 5 - Sunday
Day 6 – Monday
Day 7 - Tuesday

Where to Go to Class: Your Online Course Areas

General Help Forum: This is the discussion forum for the whole course where we share questions, answers and feedbacks related to the course. It has read-and-write access for everyone.

Unit Forum: This is discussion forum for each week where we will discuss the topics assigned. It has read-and-write access for everyone.

Chat Room: Please use this channel to communicate with your classmates or the facilitator on a one-to-one synchronous manner. Just select the one that you want to chat with from the list showing who are currently logged in, and start the chat by typing in a message.

Course Materials: This is a read-only board, which means you can read messages here but cannot send any. This is where I will post the course syllabus and materials.

Groups: You will be assigned to one of the groups to work on the group project in each week.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Computer Hardware

To participate in this online course, you should have easy access to a computer less than 5-years old with high-speed internet connection via cable modem, LAN or DSL. To ensure you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please refer to Supported Browsers, Plugins & Operating Systems for Blackboard Learn from Blackboards resource page.
Student Technical Skills

You are expected to be proficient with installing and using basic computer applications and have the ability to send and receive email attachments.

Software

- Browser: Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla’s Firefox, or Google’s Chrome
- Adobe’s Flash Player & Reader plug-in (latest version)
- Apple’s QuickTime plug-in (latest version)
- UTRGV Virtual Labs
- Virus protection
- Microsoft Office

Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can:

- Visit the Blackboard Student Help Site
- Submit a Blackboard Helpdesk Ticket
- COLTT Help Desk Contact Information (UTRGV’s Blackboard Support)
  Location: Education Building Room 2.202
  Phone: 956-665-5327
  Monday – Thursday 7:30AM – 7:00PM
  Friday: 7:30 AM – 6:00PM

COURSE ORGANIZATION & ONLINE TOOLS

Course Structure

This course will be delivered entirely online through the course management system Blackboard Learn. You will use your UTRGV account to login to the course from the My UTRGV site and under applications click on Blackboard Learn.

Learning Modules

The course is organized into modules of instruction by week, as outlined in the Course Schedule and Due Dates below. Each week is listed by its main topic and contains required readings, mini lectures, quizzes, discussion forum assignments, hand-on exercises, and collaborative assignments that you complete working in teams.

Note: Most materials used in conjunction with the course are subject to copyright protection.
Discussion Forums

You will find the following discussion forums in the course Blackboard site:

- General Help: Post any questions or comments you may have about course mechanics or technical issues to this forum.
- Forums related to collaborative and discussion assignments, as described in Learning Module sections

Forums versus Email

If you have a question about course content or mechanics, I encourage you to post it to the General Help discussion forums. Doing so gives students in the course an opportunity to help one another and allows everyone to benefit from the answers to your questions. Typically, I will answer a question posted within 24 hours unless someone else has already given a good answer. Of course, don’t hesitate to email me directly if your concern is of a personal nature.

My role in discussion forums is that of a facilitator. I will occasionally correct misconceptions and/or redirect conversations that need redirecting. I may also post comments following the completion of discussion indicating my general impressions of the comments and conclusions.

Assignments

Unless indicated otherwise in Weekly materials, you will submit an assignment (e.g. quiz, discussion, exercise, report etc.) to its respective assignments area. The due dates in Assignments match the due dates in the schedule below.

Collaborate

In addition to the learning activities noted above, I will also hold live sessions using Collaborate during the semester at dates and times to be announced (e.g. to demonstrate how to use computer applications for projects). For more information about Collaborate, visit Blackboards website Collaborate Handouts For Participants

TOPIC OUTLINE/SCHEDULE

Important Note: Activity and assignment details will be explained in detail within each week’s corresponding weekly content area. If you have any questions, please contact the facilitator.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Assignments/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;6/22 – 6/28</td>
<td>1.1 Identify the roles that healthcare information plays in evidence-based medicine, and related data quality indicators and clinical practice guidelines with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz. 1.2 Appraise the meaningful use of health information technology in the context of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion. 1.3 Apply the major processes of information gathering, analysis, and documentation used by clinicians to detect, understand, and prevent or treat diseases with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.</td>
<td>Review unit objectives Concepts: Read chapters and view slides Assessment: Take quiz Discussion: Migration path from a paper to an electronic health record Project: Develop Excel workbook of patient data and generate charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;6/29 – 7/5</td>
<td>2.1 Identify general functions, purposes and benefits of health information systems in various health care settings with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz. 2.2 Appraise the importance and use of health information systems for clinical and administrative purposes with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion. 2.3 Apply pivot table/chart to support decision-making with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.</td>
<td>Review unit objectives Concepts: Read chapters and view slides Assessment: Take quiz Discussion: Importance and use of health information systems for clinical and administrative purposes Project: Use pivot table/chart to support decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;7/6 – 7/12</td>
<td>3.1 Identify the major considerations and activities in the implementation and adoption of health information systems with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz. 3.2 Appraise how to reduce user resistance to new health information systems at the implementation and adoption stages with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion. 3.3 Apply electronic health records (EHR) to keep track of service transactions with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project.</td>
<td>Review unit objectives Concepts: Read chapters and view slides Assessment: Take quiz Discussion: User resistance to health information systems at the implementation and adoption stages Project: Use the front-end of an electronic health records (EHR) system to enter service transaction data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Module 4**<br>7/13 – 7/19 | 4.1 Identify major components of health information systems and data standards required for the interoperable exchange of health care data with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz | Review unit objectives Concepts: Read chapters and view slides Assessment: Take quiz Discussion: security issues,
| Standards | 4.2 Appraise security risks and potential solutions for healthcare information management with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion. |  | disaster preparedness and recovery  
Project: Develop an Access database of clinician-patient relationships and generate reports |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Module 5 7/20 – 7/26 | 5.1 Identify the process of migration to an electronic health record (EHR) from the perspectives of organizational strategy, planning, analysis of EHR options, decision-making techniques, training, and implementation strategies with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz. |  | Review unit objectives  
Concepts: Read chapters and view slides  
Assessment: Take quiz  
Discussion: Pros and cons of IT outsourcing  
Project: Develop web presence of health care organization |
| Theme | Health IT Strategy | 5.2 Appraise the pros and cons as well as best practices of IT outsourcing with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion. | |
| Reference: Chapters 12-14 | 5.3 Apply web technology for organizational presence online with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project. |  | |
| Module 6 7/27 – 8/2 | 6.1 Identify the factors that are critical to project success with at least 80% accuracy in unit quiz. |  | Review unit objectives  
Concepts: Read chapters and view slides  
Assessment: Take quiz  
Discussion: Project scope and requirements  
Project: HIS project planning and scheduling |
| Theme | IT Project Management | 6.2 Appraise how to determine project scope that reflects stakeholder perspectives and project requirements with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion. | |
| Reference: Chapters 15-17 | 6.3 Conduct HIS project planning and scheduling with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project. |  | |
| Module 7 8/3 – 8/10 | 7.1 Appraise health IT leadership cases with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion. |  | Review unit objectives  
Concepts: Read chapter Discussion: IT leadership cases  
Project: Develop, present and evaluate IT project charters in group |
| Theme | Health IT Leadership | 7.2 Develop and present an IT project charter in a group with at least 80% score according to project rubric in unit project. | |
| Reference: Chapter 18 Appendix B | 7.3 Appraise IT project charters with at least 80% score according to discussion rubric in unit forum discussion. |  | |
GRADING Policy

Graded Course Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self-introduction (due on Saturday midnight)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>$30 \times 5 + 20 = 170$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>$20 \times 6 = 120$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual Hand-on Project</td>
<td>$20 \times 6 = 120$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Group Case Discussion</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Project Report</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Project Presentation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Presentation Feedback</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the total points earned and are assigned as follows:

A = 450 or above  
B = 400-449  
C = 350-399  
F = Below 350

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades will not be awarded.

Late Assignments

Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines—there will be no make-up assignments or quizzes, or late work accepted without a serious and compelling reason and instructor approval.

Viewing Grades in Blackboard

Points you receive for graded activities will be posted to the Blackboard Grade Book. Click on the My Grades link on the left navigation to view your points.

Your instructor will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete—typically 3 days following the completion of an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Blackboard home page under the link to this course.
Naming and Submitting Documents

Before you submit a document, name your file according to the format below. Avoid special characters and spaces in file names. Use a single underline _ to separate words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The name of your…</th>
<th>should follow the format:</th>
<th>Example:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>LastNameFirstInitial_Report.doc</td>
<td>SmithJ_Report.doc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COURSE POLICIES

Questions and Answers

Please post all course-related questions on the General Help forum. To make it easy for others to find out whether a similar question has been previously raised and addressed, please use a brief but meaningful thread title. If a new question is not answered by the instructor and other classmates within 24 hours, you may remind the instructor by email.

Participation

Online courses require your active participation. Here are some tips for success:

- In discussion forums, you learn from one another by posing questions, justifying your comments, and providing multiple perspectives. When you prepare for discussions through thoughtful reflection, you contribute to your own successful learning experience as well as to the experience of your peers.
- Log in to the course frequently (at least several times per week for long semesters and daily for summer sessions) and check the announcements. This will keep you apprised of any course updates, progress in discussions, assignment information, and messages requiring immediate attention.
- Be aware of and keep up with the Course Schedule in the Syllabus.
- Participate in team activities to the best of your ability. How well your team does—and how well you do—depends on all the team members working cooperatively.

Build Rapport

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructor know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor when difficulties arise during the semester so that we can help you find a solution.
Complete Assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Blackboard unless otherwise instructed. Assignments and discussions must be submitted by the given deadline or special permission must be requested from instructor before the due date. Extensions will not be given beyond the next assignment except under extreme circumstances.

Communication Skills

All students must have adequate writing skills to communicate content in a professional and concise manner. Students must be proficient in their written presentations including strategies for developing ideas, citing scholarly references, writing style, wording, phrasing, and using language conventions. Students must follow APA guidelines, use non-racist and non-sexist language, and include sufficient references to support their thesis and ideas in the paper.

Time Commitment

Online courses are typically just as time intensive, and may be more rigorous than traditional courses. Many students claim that online courses require more time and commitment. As you begin this course, you would be wise to schedule 8 or more hours per week for studying materials and completing assignments.

Falling behind in this course is particularly problematic because the concepts we cover are cumulative. This means that not becoming proficient with information and objectives presented and assessed in a particular week can lead to low scores for that week as well as in subsequent weeks.

Understand When You May Drop This Course

It is the student’s responsibility to understand when they need to consider de-enrolling from a course. Refer to the UTRGV Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and compelling reason is required to drop from the course. Serious and compelling reasons includes: (1) documented and significant change in work hours, leaving student unable to attend class, or (2) documented and severe physical/mental illness/injury to the student or student’s family.

Inform Your Instructor of Any Accommodations Needed

If you have a documented disability and verification from the Student Accessibility Services, and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student’s responsibility to provide documentation of disability to Student Accessibility Services and meet with a counselor to request special accommodation before classes start.
Student Accessibility Services is located in room 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 or via email at sas@utrgv.edu.

**Commit to Integrity**

As a student in this course (and at this university) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class and also integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

**UTRGV Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures**

The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades.

Read more about [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#).

**Definitions**

At UTRGV, Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

“Plagiarism is a form of cheating. At UTRGV, “plagiarism is the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own academic work offered for credit.”

Source: UTRGV HOP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Note: Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may be reported to the office of student affairs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course policies are subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility to check Blackboard for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be posted in Blackboard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expectations for Discussion Question Responses**

Discussion Questions responses should be at least 100-200 words. For discussion question responses in the Unit forum, please post responses to the threads provided. To respond, highlight the appropriate thread, click on **Reply**, type your response, and send. Please do not start a new thread for the weekly discussion questions in the Unit forum.
Unlike your formal written assignments, I do not require that your discussion question responses adhere to specific formatting requirements. However, please make sure to proofread carefully. Grammar and spelling errors may impact the grading.

I expect your discussion question responses to reflect critical thought. Whenever possible, please try to relate the course content to real-world applications from your work experience.

**Final Week Requirements**

Group project report, presentation and evaluation will be required during the final week of the course. No late submissions will be accepted after the last day of class.

**Attachments**

*Please do not send assignments via email as attachments.*

**Learning Groups**

UTRGV online students are expected to work effectively in diverse groups and teams to achieve tasks. They must collaborate and function well in team settings as both leaders and followers. They should respect human diversity and behave in a tolerant manner toward colleagues and peers.

Several of the assignments in this class will be completed in Learning Groups of three to four students randomly assigned. If you experience difficulties working with your group, you are expected to resolve them within the group if possible. However, please feel free to contact me for guidance if you have concerns in this area.

Because Learning Group projects are outcome-based, all members of your Learning Group will generally earn the same grade for Learning Group projects. However, I reserve the right to report different grades for different Learning Group members if I see a substantial imbalance in individual contribution.

Learning Groups should provide a brief summary of any communication held outside the forum. Therefore, if you hold conference calls, work in a real-time chat room, or get together outside the Blackboard Learn environment in another way, please post a log, transcript, or summary in the Learning Group forum. Further, do not use any of these supplementary communication tools unless everyone on your Learning Group agrees to the method and to the schedule. If you have any questions, please contact me.
Discussion Board Guidelines

Grading for Discussions

Topic discussion posts will be graded during the week following the date that the discussions are due. 20 total points are possible for each discussion topic. In determining your grade, the following components are considered (see the Grading Rubric for Discussions in the section that follows for a complete breakdown):

Length of post (quantity)

- You are required to post one original message for each topic (i.e. “replies” to other students do not count in this regard).
- In addition to your one, original post, you must reply to at least two other classmates for each topic.
- Original posts should consist of at least 500 characters or more (not including spaces; roughly 100 words).
- Replies to other students should consist of at least 300 characters or more (not including spaces; roughly 60 words).

Quality of posts

- Each of your posts (original posts & replies) must demonstrate your understanding of the topic.
- Connections between lecture content, textbook content, and discussion should be exhibited.
- Relate new information with material previously covered in the class as well as with personal experience.
- Discuss at a critical level – don’t just recite facts from your reading, discussion, or lecture.
- Critical discussion includes your opinion of items mentioned, but also includes the reasons you hold that opinion, and why it may be inconsistent or consistent with what you’ve learned. Justify your reasoning with facts. How does what you’re presenting affect present and future situations?
- Posts that are replicates of other student’s posts will result in a lower grade.

Timeliness

- In posting your original response to the topic, post at least 3 days before the due date for the topic, to give your classmates time to respond.
- Discussion messages for a topic that are posted after the specified due date will not be graded.
- You will be given one week to respond to each topic.
Grading Rubric for Discussions

In grading discussion topics, the following rubric will be used. 20 total points are possible for each discussion topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Not Met</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td>(0 points) • No evidence of critical thinking whatsoever (or nothing posted).</td>
<td>(1 point) • Superficial posts • No valid connections made between content. • No analysis or insight. • Critical presentation of opinion not present.</td>
<td>(3 points) • Some connections made, although all might not be valid. • Analysis of content is evident, although possibly not complete. • Critical presentation of opinion is not complete.</td>
<td>(4 points) • Valid connections made. • Posts are complete with analysis and insight. • Opinions are presented at a critical level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uniqueness</strong></td>
<td>(0 points) • Originality of post is completely unacceptable (or nothing posted).</td>
<td>(1 point) • Originality of posts is not evident (ideas are not your own). • Posts consist of little more than “I agree with you …” statements. • Plagiarism may be evident. • Sources not cited.</td>
<td>(3 points) • Originality of posts might be questionable, but valid. • Some new ideas. • Plagiarism not evident. • Sources are cited.</td>
<td>(4 points) • Original ideas are presented. • Plagiarism not evident. • Sources are cited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeliness</strong></td>
<td>(0 points) • Post is made after the deadline (or nothing posted).</td>
<td>(1 point) • Original posts are added at the last minute, leaving no time for classmates to respond.</td>
<td>(3 points) • Original posts are present, but may have been posted during the last half of the discussion period. • Participation is infrequent during the discussion period.</td>
<td>(4 points) • Original posts are added during the first half of the discussion period. • Participation is evident throughout the entire discussion period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>(0 points)</td>
<td>(1 point)</td>
<td>(3 points)</td>
<td>(4 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quantity is completely unacceptable (or nothing posted).</td>
<td>• Length of all required posts do not meet requirements.</td>
<td>• Length of all required posts meets the requirements but includes considerable “fluff” or “filler.”</td>
<td>• Length of all required posts meet requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• One or more required postings are missing.</td>
<td>• All required postings are made.</td>
<td>• All required postings are made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylistics</td>
<td>(0 points)</td>
<td>(1 point)</td>
<td>(3 points)</td>
<td>(4 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Content is illegible (or nothing posted).</td>
<td>• Many spelling or grammar errors</td>
<td>• Few spelling or grammar mistakes</td>
<td>• No spelling or grammar mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Content is difficult to understand.</td>
<td>• Content is generally easy to understand.</td>
<td>• Content easy to understand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total Possible Points: 20*
Instructor Role

As the instructor, I will serve as a “guide” in terms of the Discussion Board. While I will not respond to every post, I will read what is posted, and reply when necessary. Expect instructor posts in the following situations:

- To assist each of you when it comes to making connections between discussion, lectures, and textbook material.
- To fill in important things that may have been missed.
- To re-direct discussion when it gets “out of hand”.
- To point out key points or to identify important posts.

Discussion Board Etiquette

*How* you post a message to a topic is just as important as what you post. If your behavior does not follow the course etiquette standards stated below, the grade you receive for a posting may suffer.

- The instructor reserves the right to remove any discussion messages that display inappropriate language or content. Do not use offensive language.
- Rudeness or slamming will not be tolerated.
- Show respect for your fellow students, even if you disagree with something that was stated.
- Clearly state what you believe, even if it means that you’re disagreeing with someone. Never, however, respond in anger – take care to discuss ideas, not the person.
# Project Rubric

This is the rubric to evaluate your group project deliverables, including unit and final project reports, final project presentation, as well as group discussion forum posts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>(2 points)</td>
<td>(3 points)</td>
<td>(4 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates a partial understanding of some of the concepts and processes embodied in course modules.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates a reasonable understanding of the essential concepts and processes embodied in course modules.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates a full and complete understanding of all concepts and processes embodied in course modules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contain some of the appropriate attributes but lacks convincing evidence of full comprehension of the essential ideas addressed.</td>
<td>• Contain most of the appropriate attributes, including sound approach and evidence of competence with applicable processes.</td>
<td>• Has addressed the task in a sound manner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>(2 points)</td>
<td>(3 points)</td>
<td>(4 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates a limited ability to contemplate the situation and determine what the solution should be.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates the ability to contemplate the situation carefully and determine what the solution should be.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates the ability to contemplate the situation carefully and determine what the solution should be.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is able to identify a few steps required that connects knowledge and skills acquired to project context.</td>
<td>• Shows the ability to identify steps required to connect knowledge and skills acquired to project context.</td>
<td>• Shows the ability to identify steps required to connect knowledge and skills acquired to project context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes a clear effort to apply other resources to solution and see any problems or challenges.</td>
<td>• Is able to apply other resources to solution and see any problems or challenges in a wider context.</td>
<td>• Is able to apply other resources to solution and see any problems or challenges in a wider context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>(2 points)</td>
<td>(3 points)</td>
<td>(4 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates a reasonable attempt to share ideas and strives to participate.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates a clear effort to share ideas and a strong effort to contribute.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates a clear effort to lead and an outstanding ability to share ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not facilitate group work, but does</td>
<td>• Makes a clear effort to find and share</td>
<td>• Listens well, assists others in their efforts,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving (2 points)</td>
<td>Problem Solving (3 points)</td>
<td>Problem Solving (4 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates a limited ability to select and implement relevant concepts and procedures needed to solve problem.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates the ability to select and implement most relevant concepts and procedures needed to solve problem.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates the ability to select and implement all relevant concepts and procedures needed to solve problem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is evidence of difficulty in ability to consider constraints of the problem situation.</td>
<td>• Considers most constraints of the problem situation. Solution and relevant work is generally correct.</td>
<td>• Considers all constraints of the problem situation. Implements creative problem solving to identify new solutions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Solution and relevant work is not correct.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Solution and relevant work is correct. Goes beyond solving problem to adapting the solution to changing environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication (2 points)</th>
<th>Communication (3 points)</th>
<th>Communication (4 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates the ability to establish purpose in limited and inconsistent way.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates the ability to establish and maintain a purpose.</td>
<td>• Project deliverables demonstrates the ability to develop and sustain an insightful purpose, demonstrating a sophisticated awareness of audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inconsistent awareness of the audience. Presents ideas and evidence that is vague and marginally appropriate for the audience.</td>
<td>• Provides ideas and evidence that are reasonable well elaborated, relevant, and appropriate for the audience.</td>
<td>• Ideas and evidence are challenging and insightful. Presents and interprets complex material with attention to accuracy and context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presents and interprets appropriate material with due regard for accuracy and context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Possible Points: 20