

Managing Information Technology ISQA 551e

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Location: eMBA (on line)
Residency: SBA 170
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Description & Objectives of the Course

The PSU catalog describes the course in this way:

Course participants explore information technology (IT) from an innovation-management perspective. This has two aspects. First, participants consider IT for its increasingly central role in fostering business innovation, including strategic and operational initiatives in such areas as electronic commerce, global market expansion, supply chain management, business process redesign, and knowledge management. Second, participants examine information technologies as innovations in their own right. In considering the associated management challenges, particular emphasis is placed on IT innovation as a knowledge-based process that demands careful management of business and technical partnerships within and across firm boundaries.

Management of innovation is a central theme in the SBA's MBA+ program – and for good reason. Competing in the current business environment is not just about doing things well or doing them better than your competitors. Given increasingly volatile and global marketplaces, competing is more and more about doing new things. This means that *innovation* is a crucial issue for managers and business people.

In ISQA 551 we consider, specifically, the role of information technologies in contemporary business innovation. This is why the catalog description states that we will approach the topic of “managing information technology” from an *innovation management* perspective. ISQA 551 is an important complement to other courses in the curriculum that focus on the management of innovation. But ISQA 551 is unlike courses that emphasize the development and marketing of technological products and technology-based services and, hence, situate you in the vendors' world. Instead, ISQA 551 takes the perspective of firms that are involved in the *acquisition*, *implementation*, and *use* of technologies – and in particular, technologies central to the management of information.

Since innovation has to do with new ideas and new practices, success in innovating with information technology depends on *organizational learning*, that is, the expansion of knowledge that takes place during the innovation process. In this course, we will be concerned with four knowledge-related challenges: *knowing what*, *knowing why*, *knowing how*, and *knowing who*. More specifically:

Knowing what: When we speak of innovations in information systems and the technologies that enable them, what are we really talking about? What is the proper scope of concern,

when thinking about the “IT innovation”? Also, how are new and emerging technological developments likely to affect how we think about IT innovations?

Knowing why: Why does information technology matter to organizations? How do IT innovations affect the firm’s competitive opportunities and future prospects? How is information technology changing the manner in which organizations function and the ways in which work gets accomplished?

Knowing how: How should an organization go about innovating with information technology? How does the larger environmental context help shape the opportunities for innovation and the firm’s approach to innovating? What arrangements and processes should an organization adopt for selecting, developing, implementing, operating, and maintaining information systems?

Knowing who: Evaluating, creating, implementing, and using IT innovations are complex processes that call on a wide range of expertise. Business people and technical people, both inside and outside the firm, must collaborate closely if the organization as a whole is to succeed. Who should be responsible for what aspects of IT innovation and IT management? How can the diverse actors involved work together most effectively?

In regard to *knowing who*, one of the key lessons will be that the “who” in know-who includes you. Regardless of your emphasis or specialty, you can anticipate having a significant role in the management of information technology. No longer are information technology matters the exclusive province of that technical priesthood, the information systems department. Business people today have substantial authority and accountability in the IT domain, and this can only be expected to increase in the years ahead.

The overall mission of ISQA 551, then, is to help you prepare for this larger role.

Required Materials

➤ Course Reader

Our case readings and articles from Harvard Business School Press, as well as the chapters on work system analysis from the Alter book, are available only through purchase from the on-line coursepack provider XanEdu. XanEdu has provided the following instructions, which you must follow in order to access our course packet there:

To access your CoursePack, students will need to do the following:

1. Open the XanEdu "Login/Register" page at:

<http://www.xanedu.com/login.shtml?PackId=288256>

2. If you have previously registered for another CoursePack, log in. If not, click the "register" link underneath the "Students" heading. Complete the registration page, and click Continue.

3. Confirm your CoursePack Selection, and complete the purchase form.

Choose one of these options for your CoursePack delivery:

Option 1: Digital access plus packaged print copy

Price: \$102.50 (price does not include shipping).

You will have immediate access to your Digital CoursePack.

Your personal print copy will be shipped to you within five business days from purchase of your CoursePack.

Shipping of a print copy is for valid U.S. addresses only. If you are outside the U.S., choose Option 2 below.

** NOTE: Publishers grant specific rights for different output formats. As a result, you may not be able to (re-)print some materials from your desktop if you have purchased XanEdu CoursePack that features both print and digital content. Likewise, if your XanEdu CoursePack includes materials that have been copyright-cleared for digital access only, these materials will not be included in the print copy from XanEdu.

Option 2: Digital access with desktop printing

Price: \$82.55

You will have immediate access to your Digital CoursePack.

You will not receive a printed copy of the CoursePack

You can print your CoursePack yourself, if your system hardware and connectivity supports downloading and printing very large files from the Internet. If you are not sure if your system supports this, we recommend that you select option #1 above.

4. After completing the purchase, you will be taken directly to "My XanEdu" where you can access your digital CoursePack.

Questions? Please contact XanEdu Customer Service at 1-800-218-5971.

If you have problems accessing the course reader at any time, contact the XanEdu customer service line.

Other On-Line Readings

The other course readings, which are free of charge, are provided through the Moodle course platform and either: [1] originate with the PSU Library; [2] were obtained through open access on the Internet; or [3] were authored by me.

Recommended Reference Sources

This is a management class and, as such, it does not emphasize the technological aspects of the subject matter. Nevertheless, at times (particularly as you do the assigned readings) you may feel you need some “back-up” in order to get comfortable with certain technology terms and concepts. If that happens, you will likely find the following websites helpful:

<http://www.wikipedia.org>
<http://www.howstuffworks.com>
<http://www.webopedia.com>

Learning Strategy

Some MBA+ courses are focused more on the *development of skills*, some can be said to be more about *building perspective*, and others are located somewhere in between. ISQA 551 leans heavily toward building perspective. The primary goal of this course is to give you concepts and frameworks for thinking about how you will participate, as a business professional and/or manager, in the application and management of information technologies in the firms that you will be working for.

In service to this overall objective, ISQA 551 is predominantly a course in *reading, writing, and conversation*. (Given that much of the eMBA edition of this course is on-line, writing and conversation will sometimes be indistinguishable.) The majority of the activity in the course is focused on preparing for and participating in case discussions. As currently planned, the course does include three exercises (two on-line, and one during the Residency); however, even here the work is more about frameworks and perspective than it is about acquiring skills, narrowly construed.

Performance Evaluation

The course grade will reflect the following components:

<i>Participation, on-line</i>	30%
<i>Participation, Residency</i>	20%
<i>Written case analyses</i>	10%
<i>Work System Exercise</i>	5%
<i>IT Portfolio Exercise</i>	5%
<i>Final Integrative Essay</i>	30%

Summaries of these activities appear below. Additional details will be provided during the term.

As is evident from the above list, the grade you earn will be based heavily on the quality of your writing and participation. These elements will depend, in turn, on the care with which you attend to the assigned reading.

Grades in this course generally range in the Bs and As. However, it is possible to earn a grade lower than B. This, as you likely know, can put your status as a student in the MBA program in potential jeopardy. Historically, students earning grades of B- and lower have had attendance problems or have simply failed to complete all of the required work. It is quite rare for a poor grade to result from low aptitude in the subject matter. For the eMBA edition of this course, “attendance” is reflected in contributions to the on-line class discussions, as well as participation in the Residency. Attending the Residency is a requirement for passing the course.

A final grade is, as the name suggests, final. It is not the opening bid in a negotiation. Moreover, alternative work is not available for the student seeking to compensate for poor performance on the normal class assignments, or to make up for missing work. (So-called “bonus work” of this kind puts students on different footings when it comes to grading, and is therefore patently inequitable.)

Description of Course Activities

Class Participation, On-line

On-line class participation will begin in earnest during the first week of class, with our discussion of the now infamous “IT Doesn’t Matter” article. On-line class participation will continue throughout the term and will subsequently focus mostly on case discussions.

On-line discussions will be based on a small set of focused questions that I will provide in advance for each case. Discussions will take place in small groups (typically consisting of from 5 to 7 students) that I will set up ahead of time. The membership of discussion groups will vary from case to case.

In the on-line case discussions, maximum credit will be given to students whose comments present alternative views, find common ground in apparent disagreements, question assumptions, or otherwise contribute in thought-provoking and productive ways. Such positive contributions aid other students' learning as well as your own, and will be rewarded accordingly.

Contributions based on experience and common sense are always of value. However, since a main goal of the course is to develop the use of higher-order concepts – concepts that can ultimately be applied in analyzing, comparing, and understanding future business situations – your ability to apply ideas and vocabulary from the assigned readings during case discussions will be especially noted.

Participation at a more than incidental level is important, but you also need to be mindful of the relevance and value of your contributions. Accordingly, the volume of your contributions to the on-line discussions will obviously be a factor in your associated score; after all, you can’t produce quality, if you don’t also produce a certain quantity. On the other hand, blathering, getting off the track, or simply repeating other’s contributions (in the same or different words) will be regarded poorly.

A note on my participation in the group discussions: It is tempting for the instructor of an on-line course to get too involved in discussions, and wind up – as the putative authority on the subject – sucking all of the air out of the conversation. Accordingly, my challenge in regard to participating in discussions is to find the sweet spot that lies somewhere between being neglectful and being overbearing. Accordingly, please be aware that if you haven't yet heard from me during a particular group discussion, this does not mean that I'm disinterested in what's going on. To the contrary, I will be following all of the group discussions closely, while looking all the time for that sweet spot.

Class Participation, Residency

Attendance during the Residency is a requirement of the class. If you cannot attend the Residency during this term, then you should plan on taking the course at another time.

Class participation points during the Residency will be awarded for the quality of participation in the various activities planned for that session. This includes case discussions and an exercise.

As the Residency provides our only face-to-face meeting and I will have little time to put faces with names, each student must display a name “tent” during the session. It is my understanding that the Graduate Programs Office will prepare cards for this purpose.

Written Case Analyses

For the two case discussions planned during the Residency, you will prepare relatively brief written case analyses. These analyses will be based on study questions that I will provide in advance. Both written case analyses will be due at the beginning of class on the day of the Residency.

The purpose of these written case analyses is two-fold. First, they will help to enhance the quality of your engagement in, and learning from, the in-class case discussions. Second, they will let me obtain from each of you assessable written work. (See “Course Competencies,” below.)

You must provide me with printed copy – no electronic submissions, please. Late case analyses will not be accepted.

The written case analyses are individual work; each student must prepare these independently.

Work System Exercise

Early in the course, you will carry out a Work System Exercise based on a business scenario that I will provide. As business professionals, your interest in information technology will never be merely with the technology itself, but always with *applying the technology to solve business problems*, and also with understanding *how the larger organizational and institutional context affects your strategies for deploying the technology*. The concept of the “work system” is a good way to get at this bigger picture in a systematic way.

The readings to support you in this Exercise come from Steven Alter's book on "The Work System Method," and are found in the XanEdu coursepack.

IT Portfolio Exercise

Toward the end of the term, we will explore a case in IT portfolio analysis. You will have an exercise to do, on an individual basis, based on this case. Details on this assignment will be forthcoming.

The Design Game

Earlier in this Syllabus, I noted that we would be conducting three exercises. The Design Game is an integral part of the Residency. Instructions for this assignment will be made available during the Residency. Credit for the exercise constitutes one component of the Residency participation score.

Integrative Essay

The course will conclude with your writing an essay that will give you the opportunity to apply and integrate concepts developed during your reading and participation in case discussions and exercises. This essay will focus on a new case that we did not consider previously during the course. The essay will be due no later than noon on the Friday of finals week.

You will prepare the Integrative Essay on an "open-book" and "open-notes" basis, but it must be entirely your own original and independent work. In short, there is no collaborating with others on this effort.

Course Competencies

As you know, PSU's MBA+ program involves the development of specific managerial *competencies*, in addition to disciplinary coursework. The Primary Competency associated with ISQA 551 is Writing Skills; the Secondary Competency is Strategic Thinking.

Opportunities to work on developing your skills in thinking strategically will be provided in great part through situations posed in the cases we will study. Opportunities to improve your writing will be pervasive, and include the written case analyses, the integrative essay, and contributions to on-line discussions. I will be assessing each student's written work, as the term proceeds. At the end of the term, I will report any areas for improvement to the MBA Program Director and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, so that those students can receive additional guidance and assistance in written communication.

Other Class Policies

- o **Late work is not accepted.**
- o **Laptop use is prohibited during the Residency, except during breaks.** For a period of time I had allowed computer use in my classes, in deference to students who argued that they wished to refer to and/or take notes during class sessions. However, frequent complaints from other students clearly indicated that most computer use was not related to class activities and, in fact, compromised the attention of the laptop users and created a significant distraction for the non-users.

- o Ringing cell phones also pose an unacceptable distraction in the classroom. **Phones must be turned off or muted** at all times during the Residency sessions. If you feel that a potential emergency situation warrants having an un-muted cell phone on during a session, please check with me ahead of time.
- o Students are expected to be knowledgeable of all university and SBA policies and procedures that might affect their status in the class.
- o Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have documented special needs. All accommodations must be approved through the office of Disability Services. Please notify me during the first week of class if any accommodations are needed in the course.
- o Course participants are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty. Actions including, but not limited to, plagiarism, copying another student's work (either from the current term or a prior term), and cheating on the exam, will be punished to the full extent provided for by university policies and procedures.

Working Schedule

A preliminary Working Schedule follows on the next pages. This plan is subject to change. Consult the ISQA 551e course on Moodle for an up-to-date version of the schedule.

ISQA 551e, Fall 2008
Working Schedule, Preliminary Edition
[subject to change]

FOCUS: Knowing What

Week 1 [9/29 – 10/5]

Introduction to Week 1:

What's our subject matter?

[Moodle link]

Read: "IT Doesn't Matter" (article and letters to the editor).

[XanEdu]

Activity: On-line discussion.

Week 2 [10/6 – 10/12]

Introduction to Week 2:

If it's not IT, then what is it? Work systems as a unit of analysis.

[Moodle link]

Read: Alter 1, 2 (plus 4 & 5 as reference).

[XanEdu]

Activity: Exercise in using the Work System Method.

Week 3 [10/13 – 10/19]

Introduction to Week 3:

The business manager's Big What: Architecture, standards, & integration.

[Moodle link]

Read: McAfee "Three Worlds" article.

[XanEdu]

Read: "Enterprise IT at Cisco (2004)."

[XanEdu]

Activity: On-line group discussions of the Cisco case.

FOCUS: Knowing Why

Week 4 [10/20 – 10/26]

Introduction to Week 4:

Information technology and strategic opportunity

[Moodle link]

Read: Information & Opportunity (instructor notes).

[Moodle link]

Read: "Monster.com: Success Beyond the Bubble."

[XanEdu]

Activity: On-line group discussions of the Monster.com case.

Week 5 [The Residency, Friday 10/31 (week of 10/27 – 11/2)]

Introduction to Week 5:

From knowing why to knowing how: Transforming the organization. [Moodle link]

Read: The "New" Organization. (instructor notes) [Moodle link]

Read: UC Irvine Dell case (only pp. 2-6 & Figures 1, 3, & 4). [Moodle link]

Read: "Zara: IT for Fast Fashion." [XanEdu]

Prepare: Case write-up for Zara (due at the beginning of class).

Read: Bonabeau article. [XanEdu]

Read: Brown & Duguid article. [XanEdu]

Read: "Siemens ShareNet: Building a Knowledge Network." [XanEdu]

Prepare: Case write-up for ShareNet (due at the beginning of class).

Residency, 8:00 am – noon

Activity: On-site discussion of the Zara case
(breakout groups plus full class discussion).

Lecture: "Knowing why not: A cautionary tale."

Lecture: "Knowledge management and knowledge markets."

Activity: On-site case discussion of the ShareNet case
(breakout groups discussion before lunch).

FOCUS: Knowing How

Residency, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Activity: On-site case discussion of the ShareNet case, continued
(full class discussion after lunch).

Activity: The Design Game.

Week 6 [11/3 – 11/9]

Introduction to Week 6:

The value of information (and information technology) depends on use. [Moodle link]

Read: Davenport "Competing on Analytics" article. [XanEdu]

Read: Interview with Karl Weick. [XanEdu]

Week 7 [11/10 – 11/16]

Introduction to Week 7:

Opportunity and implementation “outside the box.”

[Moodle link]

Read: IT Management & Global Context (instructor notes).

[Moodle link]

Read: Wade article.

[Moodle link]

Read: “The ITC eChoupal Initiative.”

[XanEdu]

Activity: On-line group discussions of the eChoupal case.

Week 8 [11/17 – 11/23]

Introduction to Week 8:

Choosing information-technology investments.

Read: Jeffery & Leliveld “IT Portfolio” article.

[Moodle link]

Read: “ProSight: New Millennium ... Portfolio Management.”

[XanEdu]

Activity: IT Portfolio Analysis Exercise.

Week 9 [11/24 – 11/30; Thanksgiving Holiday 11/27-11/28]

Introduction to Week 9:

Information technology from a services perspective: two aspects.

[Moodle link]

Read: Wikipedia entry on “IT service management.”

[Moodle link]

Read: itSMF’s “An Introductory Overview of ITIL V3” (1, 2, and 3, only)

[Moodle link]

Read: Sprott “Business case for SOA” article

[Moodle link]

Read: McAfee “web services” article

[Moodle link]

FOCUS: Knowing Who

Week 10 [12/1 – 12/7]

Introduction to Week 10:

Information technology governance – things now get personal.

[Moodle link]

Review: Cisco case and McAfee’s “Three Worlds” article

(see above)

Read: Weill & Ross article (SMR 2005)

[Moodle link]

Read: Jack Carlisle, CIO

[XanEdu]

Activity: On-line group discussions of the Jack Carlisle case.

Finals Week. [12/8 – 12/12]

Read: Information Technology and Innovation at Shinsei Bank.

[XanEdu]

Prepare: Integrative Essay (due noon on Friday, 12/12).