COURSE SYLLABUS

Business 9852A – Fall 2017

Critical Analysis of Classic and Emerging Themes in IS Research

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Wednesdays 01:00 pm – 04:00 pm
Location: IVEY 3102
(12 Sessions)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide doctoral students in Information Systems (IS) a broad introduction to key issues in management, organizational, and behavioral IS research, and expose them to a variety of theoretical perspectives that have been adopted in classic and contemporary IS research streams. The course covers well established topics in IS research, such as IT Acceptance and IT-mediated communication and collaboration, as well as emerging topics such as those related to Ubiquitous Computing and the Dark Side of Information Systems. By the end of this seminar, students will have an in-depth understanding of important IS theories and perspectives that they should be able to critically assess and eventually contribute to.

This seminar is appropriate for both new and advanced doctoral students; course requirements will be tailored to fit students’ needs based on their stage of progression in their doctoral studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are the following:

• Lead students to appreciate the diversity and breadth of IS Research.
• Provide students with a clear understanding of key theories and perspectives in behavioral information systems research
• Develop students’ ability to theorize about IT related phenomena.
• Expose students to significant theoretical and methodological debates in the IS literature.
• Provide exposure and ignite interest in some of the classic and emerging topics in IS research.
• Help students develop and plan a research proposal dealing with IT enabled contemporary societal, organizational, and behavioral phenomenon.

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION

To reach the aforementioned objectives, 12 themes will be addressed in this seminar over 12 sessions, each with its own set of readings. For each session approximately five articles are assigned as mandatory readings. Additional readings are listed for each session (further readings), which are expected to
enhance students’ understanding of the topic. Although students are not required to read the additional research papers before class, they are nevertheless encouraged to do so. In some classes the professor may ask the students to read one additional paper from the list and to come to class ready to discuss it. This will be indicated at least one week in advance.

This course is a seminar and not a lecture-based class. This implies that active class participation is required to maximize students’ learning. Students are required to carefully read all papers for each class (some papers may require multiple reads to reach a good understanding of their content) and to establish links between the assigned papers.

**Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions to class discussions</th>
<th>30%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly papers</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manuscript review</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</table>

**Contribution (30%)**

Students will be graded based on their contribution to the discussion on the assigned readings. All students are expected to be ready to discuss ALL required articles on the assigned day. Effective contributions can take many forms and should serve to exhibit a student’s own comprehension of a topic and to foster a positive learning environment for the class. To make positive contributions a student is expected to build on the comments of others, redirect the discussion into critical new areas, share insights (based on previous experience: technical, industry, or other courses), constructively criticize and summarize key learning points. Effective contribution to the class incorporates a variety of behaviors:

- **Preparation** – your contributions should demonstrate that you have read the materials carefully and have come prepared with thoughtful comments and reactions.
- **Reasoning** – your arguments should be well substantiated and logical, and should demonstrate critical thinking.
- **Listening** – being attentive to what others in the class (the professor and your classmates) is essential to being an effective contributor.
- **Professionalism** – contribution to the class is about more than what you say; it is about your attitude to the learning process, your willingness to engage with the material and to accept responsibility for the progress of the class.
To prepare for the sessions students may want to ponder the following themes/questions for each of the assigned articles:

1. Motivation for the article:
   a. Practical Problem(s)
   b. Theoretical Problem(s)
   c. Existing Gap(s)
2. Research question(s)
3. Theoretical logic
4. Causal model and hypotheses
5. Research design
6. Findings
   a. Are there any plausible alternative interpretations?
7. Contribution(s) of the Article
   a. Theoretical
   b. Methodological
   c. Practical
8. Personal interest in the article
   a. Method that can be followed
   b. Theory that can be followed
   c. References to pursue
   d. Interesting opportunity for future research.

These are general guidelines to consider when reading the assigned articles. Answers to these questions are not mandatory nor are they required. However, they are here presented as possible tools that students may find helpful.

**Weekly Papers**

Students are required to hand in 10 weekly synthesis papers (maximum 3 pages) to be submitted before each session. For the first two classes, students are asked to write a summary of what they have learned from the list of readings. From session 3 to 12 (except session 7), students are expected to submit an integration paper that evaluates, integrates and synthesize the core concepts and issues across papers. A good integration paper is one that reflect a student’s own thoughts and interpretation of a subject matter, and not one that simply summarize what was advanced in the readings. For session 7, students have to develop and present a “new” relevant construct to the IS literature (more information will be provided in class). All weekly papers need to be submitted by email to the professor no later than 8 am on Wednesdays.

**Manuscript Review**

Students will be asked to act as reviewers for a manuscript submitted for consideration at a leading journal in Information Systems (senior scholar basket of 8). Students will be required to assess the
manuscript and write their review (divided into major and minor concerns) in no more than three pages. The review should tackle the contribution of the submitted manuscript, as well as the theoretical and methodological issues that are deemed relevant. As reviewers, students are also expected to include in their reviews recommendations to the authors suggesting ways/avenues to improve their manuscript.

The following references provide useful guidance on how to conduct and write a review:


Final paper/Research proposal

Each student will write and submit a research proposal on a topic related to the content of the seminar. The topic needs to be discussed with the professor for approval midway through the semester. A draft of the paper will be presented on the last day of classes, as indicated in the course schedule. The proposal should include the following elements: a research question, a clearly stated research motivation, a relevant literature review section (should not be limited to the articles presented in the syllabus), theory/theoretical foundation, hypotheses/propositions, potential research method (how would this study be empirically assessed), expected findings (if appropriate), a section discussing the study’s limitations, and a section discussing the expected contributions of the proposed research to theory and/or to practice.

PLAGIARISM / ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page http://www.music.uwo.ca, and our own McIntosh Gallery http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca.
Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html).

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/education/module.html](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/education/module.html). This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.

**SCHEDULE (tentative)**

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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>September 13, 2017</td>
<td>Introduction to the IS Field</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>September 20, 2017</td>
<td>Theory &amp; IS Research</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>September 27, 2017</td>
<td>IT &amp; Human behavior</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>October 04, 2017</td>
<td>IS Resistance</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>October 11, 2017</td>
<td>Alternative Approaches to Studying IT Effects</td>
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<td>October 18, 2017</td>
<td>Structuration</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>October 25, 2017</td>
<td>The Value of Constructs</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>November 01, 2017</td>
<td>Virtual Communication &amp; Communities</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>November 08, 2017</td>
<td>The Dark Side of Technology</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>November 15, 2017</td>
<td>Ubiquitous Communication</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>November 22, 2017</td>
<td>IT Privacy</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>November 29, 2017</td>
<td>IT Ubiquity</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>December 06, 2017</td>
<td>Research Proposals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF READINGS

Session 1: Introduction to the IS Field


Further Readings:

- Gallier, R.D., “Change as Crisis or Growth? Toward a Trans-Disciplinary View of Information Systems as a Field of Study: A Response to Benbasat and Zmud’s Call for Returning to the IT Artifact,” Journal of AIS, 4 (6), 2003, 337-351.

Rigor and Relevance of IS Research

Session 2: Theory and IS Research


Further Readings:

Diversity in IS Research


Research Methods

- Myers, M., Qualitative Research Methods, http://www.qual.auckland.ac.nz/
Session 3: IT and Individual Performance


TAM Contributions and Limitations


Session 4: IS Resistance


Further Readings:


Session 5: Alternative Approaches to Studying IT Effects


Further Readings:


Session 6: Structuration


Session 7: The Value of Constructs


Further Readings:


Examples of Construct development:


Session 8: Virtual Communities


Further Readings:


Session 9: The Dark Side of Technology


Further Readings:

Session 10: Ubiquitous Communication


Session 11: IT Privacy


Further Readings:


**Session 12: IT Ubiquity**


**Further Readings:**
