

INSS 690
PROFESSIONAL SEMINAR
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND / MARYLAND IN EUROPE

COURSE DESCRIPTION: (3 semester hours) Prerequisites: Advancement to candidacy in the MIS program and successful completion of the graduate MIS comprehensive examination. A capstone course designed to expose the student to the various areas of information systems in the organization where concepts from other core courses can be utilized. The focus is on information science research, policy formation and issues. Students produce an analytical/scientific paper within their chosen area of organizational interest.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students successfully completing this course should:

1. Have refined their research and presentation skills.
2. Be able to demonstrate greater familiarity with the literature in a particular area of information systems.
3. Be able to integrate material from past courses into a framework for discussing information systems.
4. Have a better understanding of contemporary issues and current practices in information systems.

GRADING CRITERIA:	10%	Research proposal
	10%	Draft of Research Paper
	30%	Final research paper (in html, pdf, or covertable to pdf)
	20%	Presentation of research
	10%	Midterm Examination
	10%	Active participation in discussions
	10%	Final Examination

COMPUTATION OF FINAL GRADES:

A	90-100	C	70-79
B	80-89	F	Below 70

Note: Any course participant who has not satisfactorily completed the MS in MIS Comprehensive Examination will receive an Incomplete grade, which will be changed to an appropriate letter grade after satisfactory completion of the comprehensive.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION: As a graduate seminar, the major method of instruction is the regular exchange of ideas between members of the group. A seminar is "a small group of advanced students in a college or graduate school engaged in original research under the guidance of a professor who meets regularly with them for reports and discussions". Meetings will take place using the internet, particularly a webboard, and members participating in various conference courses will be expected to react to each other's contributions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Research Proposal: The one to two page Research Proposal will contain a clear statement of:

- (a) the purpose of the research, research questions, and preliminary thesis;
- (b) the boundaries of the research area;
- (c) an outline of the research sub-topics;
- (d) the methodology used, i.e., literature or field research;
- (e) a preliminary reading list.

NOTES:

1. It is suggested that participants pick research topics that they want to know more about, i.e., topics which have not been adequately covered in past courses; furthermore, research should not merely leverage experience gained in work situations.
2. Participants are encouraged also to go outside of the literature and perform "field" research, through interview and other forms of information gathering. However, participants should be aware of the condensed time frame of the course. It can be very difficult to have field research instruments returned in a timely manner.
3. In line with current practices in industry, this will be a predominantly paperless class. The final paper will be submitted in html format and will be published to the world wide web. To see samples of previously submitted papers, participants are encouraged to visit

<http://faculty.ed.umuc.edu/~meinkej/inss690/i690home.htm>

Participants will present their research proposals to the group and will be expected to respond to each other's submissions.

Research Paper: Individually, students will write a 30 to 40 page research paper that defines the problem or research area, tutorially, clearly explains current technologies and issues, elaborates on the competitive usefulness of the technologies, and provides some indications of what will happen in the future. All sources are to be referenced. The use of extensive quotations is discouraged.

Students are expected to discuss their interim results with the group and accept/provide constructive criticism from/for other group members in the course of paper preparation.

The research report evaluations will be based on content, presentation, and quality of expression. Papers are expected to meet or exceed accepted graduate-level English and scholarship standards.

Papers should conform to the APA documentation style with minor modifications. Some general guidelines for the INSS 690 final paper can be found at <http://faculty.ed.umuc.edu/~meinkej/inss690/apaguidelines.pdf>. A power point summary of using references in the APA style can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/pp/APA2.PPT> and a more extensive description of the APA style is available at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>. The general order of items in the research paper should be: Title Page, Table of Contents, List of Tables (if used), List of Figures (if used), Abstract, body of paper, References, and Appendices (if used).

Presentation of Research: Students will present their research finding and conclusions using appropriate audio-visual means. This may involve a VCR video-tape which the instructor will then review for content, method of delivery, and whether it is appropriate for a graduate of a Master's degree program. It also could involve a presentation to the group utilizing appropriate electronic media.

Examinations: Since this is a graded course, it is necessary that examinations be included. The format of each examination (a midterm and a final) will be a paper reporting on a current issue in information technology, that issue being other than the participant's research area. The paper should be a summary paper of that current issue, and should demonstrate that the participant is aware of current issues in the field of IT.

Class Participation: The essence of a seminar is the exchange of information among peers. Thus, members of the group will be expected to interact on each other's research areas via the internet. That interaction should also involve positive comments and recommendations on how research topics can be strengthened. The medium used for classroom interaction will be a webboard.

TEXTBOOK:

Primarily articles from current journals and periodicals -- other materials as appropriate. A partial list of suggestions for possible materials includes:

<i>Business Week</i>	<i>Harvard Business Review</i>	<i>Communications of the ACM</i>
<i>IEEE Computer</i>	<i>The Economist</i>	<i>Journal of Systems Mgmt</i>
<i>MIS Quarterly</i>	<i>Scientific American</i>	<i>Sloan Management Review</i>
<i>Information Week</i>	<i>Byte</i>	<i>InfoWorld</i>
<i>Communications Week</i>	<i>LAN Times</i>	<i>Network World</i>
<i>Datamation</i>	<i>CIO</i>	<i>Computer World</i>
<i>IEEE Software</i>	<i>AT&T Technical Journal</i>	<i>IBM Systems Journal</i>

Note that the full Maryland on-line library facilities are available to registrants for University System of Maryland courses, including INSS 690. A number of the publications listed above are a small set of what is available through the ACM Digital Library accessible through <http://www.umuc.edu/library> and logging in using last name and social security number.

EXAMINATION TOPICS LIST:

Following is a [dated] list of current topics that have been used in the past. Some of the entries are necessarily broad, and a subtopic would be more appropriate. This list is in no way intended to be a final list that the participant must choose from. The current literature in the field of IT will provide a much more updated list of possible topics.

Wireless computing	Future trends
Intranets in organizations	Voice over IP
IT Careers/Opportunities	Object-oriented everything
Operating Systems releases	MP-3, copyright issues, etc.
Software quality	Current hardware trends
IT related legislation	

This is only a partial list of potential topic areas and is in no way intended to be exhaustive.

The examinations will consist of a presentation to the other registrants in the conference course utilizing the web board and whatever other electronic means appropriate. The quality of the presentation will be graded. Participants in the course will be expected to react to the presentation, and part of their participation grade for the course will be determined by reaction and participation in the resulting discussion.

The dates of examinations are determined on a participant by participant basis. Due to the format of the examinations, it is expected that the mid-term will be completed during the first half of the course, while the second will be completed in the second half of the course, whether the course is being completed within eight weeks or sixteen weeks.

INSTRUCTOR: J. Meinke

Mr. Meinke earned the BA in Mathematics and the MEd in Mathematics Education from SUNY/Buffalo, the MAT in Mathematics from the University of Montana, and the MS in Computer Science from Illinois Institute of Technology. After a period with RCA Computer Systems Division, he became involved with post-secondary education, and has been involved in teaching and curriculum development in computing for more than two decades. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Consortium for Computing in Small Colleges and on the Steering Committees of both the Eastern Small College Computing Conference and the CCSC Southeastern Conference. In addition, he serves as a consultant to the CEEB (College Board) AP (Advanced Placement) in Computer Science program. His areas of interest include curriculum development, computer architecture and operating systems.

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TENTATIVE COURSE MILESTONES:

The milestones for the completion of the course are based on the course being completed in an eight week term. Note that the eight weeks will pass quite quickly! In addition, these are milestones. The participant should be in regular contact with the course via the webboard, giving updates on the status of the milestones.

Finalized Research Proposal	1 st week — note that this is the final approved copy -- preliminary drafts should have undergone prior submission with comments incorporated
Annotated Bibliography	3 rd week
Midterm Examination	Prior to the 4 th week
Draft of Research Paper	6 th week
Final paper in html or pdf	7 th week
Presentation of final paper	8 th week
Final Examination	Prior to the 8 th week