

Course Syllabus: Winter 2011

This elective course covers the nature of projects, project management tools, techniques, and organizational and interpersonal issues in project management, within the context of the different kind of projects in the information professions. The course will cover project management principles in general, project scope, the organizational, leadership, interpersonal and political aspects of project management, and tools and techniques that support planning, budgeting, resource allocation and the other technical aspects of project management.

Recommended Preparation: INF/FIS1230

Exclusions: Students who have already taken MGMT 6700.030 at York University cannot take INF2040 for credit toward their M.I.St. or M.I. degree.

Sessions: LEC0101 - Mondays, 18:30 (6:30 pm) to 21:30 (9:30 pm)

Location: Bissell 224/5

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Teaching Assistant: Steven Chuang

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Office Hours: by appointment, via email.

Textbook: *Successful Project Management*, 4th ed., Jack Gido & James P. Clements

Copies are on reserve in the Inforum.

A word on textbooks. Books in the project management space are extremely expensive, as they are generally purchased by large organizations for internal use in developing staff. They typically also come with a useful CD-ROM filled with project plan samples, etc. that can act as a "starter set" for future use. We recommend this particular text as the included materials are likely to serve for the next 10-20 years of your working life. We also recognize that many of you will look at the list price of this book and decline to purchase it. Reading in the Inforum from the copies available there should be sufficient to complete the course!

Lab work: Although the course is taught in an electronic classroom, we will not be depending on computers during the class. Group work may be facilitated by using the available software and computers, or by using your own laptops in the room, but are not essential for the purposes of the weekly lectures and discussions.

Questions: Questions posted to the course's bulletin board on the Blackboard portal, or sent by email to the Instructor or TA, will be answered within two working days. Answers given by students to student questions are positively encouraged and will be noted.

Course Overview

Project management techniques are used in every industry today, ranging from planning charitable fundraisers, to the development of state-of-the-art Web, pad, phone or e-commerce applications. Government bodies have strengthened their focus on project management, and evidence of competence in this area is increasingly a key differentiator in gaining funding for exhibitions, etc. Recent articles note the importance of these skills in IT-related careers – and increasingly users of technology are involved in the creation of the technology-based tools and systems that are part of their jobs. Indeed, a quick perusal of job openings, such as in the American Library Association's JobLIST, shows a large number of jobs requiring project management skills and prior project experience.

Whereas in the past project managers were generally thought of as “located” in specific types of organizations or departments within enterprises, today it is generally expected of most employees in any type of organization that they have the ability to participate effectively in, and lead, projects. This is as true in volunteer efforts or home projects such as renovations as it is within a career. Whatever the situation, formal project management techniques aid the individual in coping with risk, dealing with people, keeping things on track, recognizing emerging problems earlier, and delivering results.

There are no prerequisites for this course. INF1230 does present complementary topics on management in organizations.

In addition to the textbook (*Successful Project Management*) noted above, there are additional readings and handouts that will be a part of this course. *Successful Project Management* is being used to provide the “technical framework” of project management in a well-organized manner. (You can think of project management as a set of techniques, or disciplines, that, if followed consistently and coherently, aid in planning, organizing the work of others, assessing risks, communicating effectively, integrating work toward a goal, delivering an end product, coping with the inevitable external factors that require planning revision and structured improvisation to achieve the goals, and learning from the experience. *They*, not any supporting software tools, are the “technology” involved.) The other readings will tend to focus on people matters, and process issues, around the successful ideation, launch, execution, completion and change issues embedded in turning an idea into a completed change (which is essentially why we do projects).

Lectures in this course will focus on project histories & case studies as well as material associated with the readings. Student contributions of relevant prior experiences are welcomed!

“What is a Project?”

Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_management) defines *project management* as follows:

“Project management is the discipline of planning, organizing, and management resources to bring about the successful completion of specific project goals and objectives. ... A project is a temporary endeavor, having a defined beginning and end (usually constrained by date, but can be by funding or deliverables), undertaken to meet particular goals and objectives, usually to bring about beneficial change or

added value. The temporary nature of projects stands in contrast to business as usual (or operations), which are repetitive, permanent or semi-permanent functional work to produce products and services. In practice, the management of these two systems is often found to be quite different, and as such requires the development of distinct technical skills and the adoption of separate management.”







(links removed; see full citation for links)

High Level Course Description

In this course, we will move through three major sections in the current organizational framework for project management. We will begin with some of the more recent “scaffolding” that is being built by organizations in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to deal with the sheer number of projects that exist, to identify missing projects and essential changes, to bring and keep the relevant leaders within the organization “at the table” contributing to project success, and to the management of risks. Coupled with that are models for understanding the impact of change on people, the types of preferred work different individuals might evidence (and its impact on project success), and on the structuring of organizational knowledge, capabilities and work affecting project delivery. We will then turn to the principles, techniques and methods used by project managers to define, scope, plan, integrate and deliver results in connection with their projects. Group work where students have played roles in the formation of a project will assist in consolidating this section. We will then return at the end to post-project learning, recognition of a failing project and either taking recovery action or termination options, and undertake a case study of a typical modern project situation where all of the factors discussed in the course come together.

Learning Objectives

The presumption throughout is that students taking this course will undertake a career in one or another of the information professions, where much of the work is organized into project work conducted by designated project teams. The goal is to prepare the student to function well in such environments. At the end of this course, students should be able to:

-  Apply project management principles and practices in a variety of contexts, including those where the organization does not have the necessary support mechanisms in place (demonstrated through all three assignments).
-  Describe the role and importance of project management in an organization.
-  Demonstrate an understanding of the roles that exist within and around the project team structure, and to the challenges of planning, delivering, and managing a project (demonstrated through assignment 2).
-  Explain and interpret the social dynamics of teamwork and how people work individually and in teams (through assignment 2).
-  Apply and describe the management and communication techniques that lead to successful project outcomes (through all assignments).
-  Determine when and under what circumstances to apply specific techniques (via assignment 1).

- 🎧 Identify the roles of time, cost and quality/completeness in successful projects and determine trade-offs (via all assignments) in projects.
- 🎧 Explain the role of communication, especially in framing an information project (via assignment 3).

This is a professional Masters programme course and most students in the class will bring some (if not extensive) experience working on or leading projects. As such, we will learn together, from each other, within the class. In particular, there is an expectation that students will learn as well from the experiences of students and their work experience from outside their current streams of study within the Faculty.

Class Topics to be Discussed

The table below is the expected order of materials in the class. With the sole exception of the case study to be distributed to you, I am not assigning specific readings for each week. Instead, you have a pool of readings to work from. You will profit from rereading earlier readings again later in the course, so select materials to facilitate the use of your own experience, your assignments, and to link to what is being discussed. (Information professionals ought to be able to find and prioritise readings in this manner.)

Date	Topics Covered	
03.01.2011	Introduction, Core Concepts, Handy's Four Styles of People and Work	
10.01.2011	Portfolio Management, Prioritization Schema, Satir's Change Inflection Model	Guest Lecturer John O'Brien
17.01.2011	The Enterprise Architecture & Strategy Process, The Project Management Office, Ordered Domains in Snowden's Cynefin Framework	
24.01.2011	Steering mechanisms, Governing Principles and Boards, Unordered Domains in Snowden's Cynefin Framework	
31.01.2011	Risk Management and Risk Assessment Techniques, Tying the "Scaffolding" together, Client Management	Guest Lecturer Steve Szigeti
07.02.2011	Introduction to PM Toolsets, Project Accounting, Work Breakdown Scheduling	
14.02.2011	Finding the Schedule Breakers: Scheduling Work	Group 1 Presentation

Date	Topics Covered	
28.02.2011	Plan-v-Actual and Plan Modification, Scope Change	Group 4 Presentation
07.03.2011	Agility, Releases, Once Down the Waterfall: When to Use Different Styles of Project and Why; The Process as Project	Group 5 Presentation
14.03.2011	Mid-Course Corrections: When the Project is Stalled, Radically Changed & Determined Unacceptable	Group 2 Presentation
21.03.2011	“These Aren’t My People, but I Still Have to Manage Them”	Group 3 Presentation
28.03.2011	Failures and Recovery Actions; Forcing Governance to Occur	Case Study
04.04.2011	Learning Post-Project; Working with Outsourcers	

Please Note: A number of the project examples that will be discussed throughout this course are drawn from prior research I or former colleagues have done. In some cases I do not have the original client’s permission to cite their firm by name. In all cases, the specific company names that may be revealed should be treated appropriately, i.e. the example may be cited in your assignments, but should not be shared by you with the world at large. At some point in your career you will undoubtedly be involved with a project that does not end well (heavily over-budget, delivered very late, only a portion of the scope is delivered, the delivery occurs but the affected users won’t touch it and don’t use it, etc.). You would not want your reputation “sullied” by association: treat others the same way.

Assignments

There are three assignments for the purposes of grading within this course:

Assignment Type	Description	Due	% of Grade
1,500 word (minimum) essay	<p>In this paper, you will analyse and discuss which project management tools, reports, etc. you are convinced would be the most useful <i>minimal</i> structure to put into effect to deliver as a project manager. Two sample projects are given to focus your thinking, and it is perfectly reasonable that your analysis may conclude that these require a different mix of items to compose a suitable minimal set to manage and communicate to clients, affected users and their managers, and the team, associated with each project. I do not need “a plan”: I need your evaluation.</p> <p>The first project to consider is that of mounting an exhibit at an art gallery. If you are unfamiliar with this, I suggest you visit the U of T Art Centre (UTAC) and simply observe the types of things in play. Are there electrical connections (e.g. lights)? Are there free-standing items or are only the walls used? Has painting take place? This type of project is one in which the “completion date” is inflexible, and in which various aspects of it may be done by people external to the centre itself (which will need to be coordinated across organizational boundaries.</p> <p>The second project to consider is one that is going on around you: the improvements being made to the Campus-Wide Network in our building. Ignore the fact that this is “IT work” and consider the following: people are using this network (either via computers that are wired to it, or via WiFi to their smartphone, netbook, computer, etc.) at the same time that the project team is replacing equipment. Unlike the first sample in the gallery, here the challenge is a project that affects people while the work is going on.</p>	18.02.2011 4:30pm	30%

Assignment Type	Description	Due	% of Grade
Group Presentation, where every individual fulfils their portion of the presentation & subsequent Q&A in class by playing a role	<p>In this assignment, your group will need to construct a <i>pro forma</i> plan for a project of your choice. Each of you fulfils a different “role”: one is the client, one is the project manager, one a team member, one an affected user, one an affected user manager & if you have another person in your group, an external consultant. You will present your plan and explain how you’ve analysed risks and managed them, set the schedule, dealt with uncertainty, dealt with requirements, service interruptions, workplace change, and how you are governing for project change. Once you have presented your plan, your team will take questions about that plan and the project processes as you see them unfolding.</p> <p>What I shall be looking for in this is twofold: first, I want to see that you have acquired some mastery of the tools described in your text (you will present using them), and second that you have anticipated some of the difficulties in achieving a successful outcome and have thought about how you’ll deal with the inevitable challenges that come up in defining, executing and delivering a project. Clients should demonstrate their understanding of what a good client must contribute; Project Managers must show their understanding of the challenge they’ve got responsibility for; Team Members must show how they integrate their project work into their “other work”; etc. In answering the questions of the class try to “be” the person in the role you are playing as much as demonstrate what you have learnt and put to work in making your plan as likely to succeed as possible.</p>	<p>Group 1: 14.02.2011</p> <p>Group 4: 28.02.2011</p> <p>Group 5: 07.03.2011</p> <p>Group 2: 14.03.2011</p> <p>Group 3: 21.03.2011</p>	30%

Assignment Type	Description	Due	% of Grade
2,000 word (minimum) essay	<p>Information professionals are amongst those most likely to be handed an idea to implement that is poorly defined, affects a wide number of people, and thus serves “everyone and no-one”. (Examples would be an “enterprise content management service”, a wide range of “support resources” online in a research or school library, a “experience the museum and all that it offers” programme to be developed, etc.</p> <p>Most organizations have a leadership group at the top, be it the Board of Directors in a not-for-profit, or an executive management committee. For this essay, you shall write from the presumption that a poorly defined idea like “get the information to everyone who needs it whenever they need it” (the animating idea behind many of these types of projects) has been handed to you. You are expected to come back in a month to this executive body and tell them what to expect. They think you will give them a cost, a timeframe, etc., in other words a plan.</p> <p>But can you plan with this little information? What risks are you running? How could you start (saying “I can’t start” won’t be an option from a career point of view) and protect the project? Can you deliver a bit at a time, or will you just have too much rework to do as requirements emerge?</p> <p>The point of this essay is to allow you to bring your reading to bear. Have you found analyses of failed projects you can draw upon? What will you recommend and why? The odds are you will face this real world situation: it is the acid test of the information business that you can deal with this.</p>	08.04.2011 4:30pm	40%

In addition, students should come to class on 28.03.2011 prepared to discuss the case study which will be provided after Reading Week. This case is part of the pedagogy for the course and designed in particular to assist students in finalizing a top-quality paper for the last assignment.




Groups for the Group Presentation will be set in class on 17.01.2011 and the order of presentation will be made by random draw. This version of the syllabus reflects the results of that drawing. Note that each individual group member will receive an individual grade reflecting their contribution to both the presentation (in other words, every member should speak) and their Q&A participation.

The other two assignments (essays) are individual efforts and individually graded, even where work deriving from the second assignment (group presentation) is cited or amplified as a part of these essays.

General Expectations

Grading Guidelines: For all work in this course, I shall be following the Faculty of Information grading system, which is [available on the Faculty's website](#). (Look for Course Assignments and Evaluation under Programs and Courses.)

Late Assignment Policy: It is expected that students will practise project management principles and thus deliver “on time, on cost, on scope/quality”. If you cannot complete an assignment on time, you must submit a formal request to me at least one business day in advance of a due date. You must tell me, in this request:

-  What progress has been made on this assignment;
-  What is left to do to complete it;
-  How much estimated time you need to complete it.

If your request is submitted as above, contains all of the above information (just as a real project manager or team member would be required to supply), and I agree and *confirm that to you by return email*, you will have your late assignment marked with full marks.

If, however, you fail to make your request in time, or it does not have the above form, or it is not confirmed as approved (I shall not confirm those that fail to demonstrate good project management reporting as above but will *acknowledge* all requests regardless), then marks will be deducted. During the first week the assignment is late, I shall deduct a grade (e.g. A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, B+ becomes B, etc.) during the first 7 calendar days following the missed due date. Two letter grades (e.g. A becomes B+, A- becomes B, B+ becomes B-, etc.) will be deducted from the earned result for items late by 8 to 14 calendar days. Past 14 days, the assignment will receive a failing grade (FZ). Comments providing feedback may be attenuated or omitted depended on the degree of lateness at my or the teaching assistant's discretion.

Students should note that *I shall be at work during Reading Week* and thus late papers for Assignment 1, due the Friday before Reading Week begins, may be turned in during Reading Week and thus the “calendar day” provisions shall apply to that week as it would for any other.

Please note that extensions beyond the end of the term in which the course is taken are subject to guidelines established by the School of Graduate Studies, in their [policies on coursework](#). In particular: “The authority to grant an extension for the completion of work in a course beyond the original SGS deadline for that course rests with the graduate unit in which the course was offered, not the instructor of the course” (as stated in that policy) means that I am unable to grant extensions for Assignment 3, which is due on the final day of the course. Please follow the process for petitioning the Faculty of Information for an extension required after 08.04.2011, by using the SGS Extension to Complete Coursework form, on the SGS website (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/>)

Participation and Attendance: Classroom interaction, discussion, etc. are keys to learning. In addition, it is my intention to bring to your attention a number of items of recent research protected by rights that do not allow to distribution of all relevant documents, i.e. “if you miss the lecture, you miss the information”, and will periodically introduce guests to speak who may join us electronically (e.g. via Skype or other tools for which recordings will not be provided). I shall start each class on time, and expect you to make a concerted effort to be there on time as well.

Mid-Course Review: On 14.02.2011, at the beginning of the class, a mid-course review form will be handed out which I hope everyone will fill out and turn in that night. It is a standard technique in project management to periodically receive feedback on the processes being followed. Suggestions for improvement either in this review or by commenting to me at any time are most welcomed!

Academic Integrity: Your conduct as a student at the University of Toronto is covered in detail in the [Resources for Students on Academic Integrity](#). Acting with integrity and respect for an individual’s ideas and rights is not only required in your academic career, but will be essential to your future success at work and in life. Consistent use of an approved academic citation style (review “Cite It Right” if you are in doubt) in your submissions is expected, and on your presentation slides for the second assignment.

Students with Special Needs or Health Considerations: All students are welcome in this course. I shall make every effort to ensure a meaningful, respectful and positive learning experience for everyone. If you have special considerations I need to take in to account in order to achieve that, please feel free to see me at any time, or the Faculty of Information Student Services staff, and/or contact the [Accessibility Student Office](#) as soon as possible so that we can all ensure you are able to successfully meet the learning objectives for this course. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment where they will assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations.

Please note that there the scheduled room (224/5) can provide some difficulties for students sitting in the back on either side to clearly hear students on the other side of the room when they speak. I shall do my best to repeat the *gist* of a student interaction, but the responsibility to ensure that you can hear your fellow students rests with *you*.