

**INSS 690**  
**PROFESSIONAL SEMINAR**  
**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND Education Center, Heidelberg**  
**Saturdays/Sundays, Weekend 1, Term 5 – 2001-2002**

**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.

<b>GRADING CRITERIA:</b>	15%	Research proposal
	35%	Final research paper (in pdf, or convertible to pdf)
	15%	Presentation of research
	25%	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".

**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.
- (f)

## 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> and visit the INSS 690 link.
4. Participants will present their research proposals to the group and will be expected to respond to each other's submissions. A projection device will be available for a power point presentation of the research proposal.

**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 a final examination be included. The format of the final examination will be a response to two out of four statements taken from the discussion topics conducted in the class.

**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. That interaction should also involve positive comments and recommendations on how research topics can be strengthened.

Each participant will be expected to lead two discussions on a current issue in the field of IT. It will be expected that the discussion will be not directly related to the presenter's research topic area, but will rather reflect currency in the field of IT. A presentation will be expected to lead the discussion, although the

presenter will not necessarily be expected to be the “authority” on the topic – knowledgeable enough to lead the discussion, and the discussants will be expected to participate. Some of the discussants will no doubt be more familiar with the nuances of the discussion topic due to their individual technical fields. Each discussion will be expected to be a win-win situation, enhancing both the knowledge and critical thinking of all participants in the class.

### **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&amp;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 MdUSA accessible through <http://www.umuc.edu/library> and logging in using last name and social security number.

### **POTENTIAL 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.

### **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 SCHEDULE:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> weekend 01 - 02 June Introductions; course administration details: syllabus, grading, paper/presentation expectations; discussion of available research facilities; topic list development for future classes; writing the research paper  
Presentation of research proposals and critiques of such.  
Note that facilities will be available for power point presentations.  
Participants should be prepared that first weekend to present their research proposals  
Due: Research proposal with thesis statement, preliminary outline, preliminary bibliography
- 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend 15 - 16 June In-progress research paper review; topic discussions
- 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend 29 - 30 June Due: Current thesis statement, detailed outline, annotated bibliography, and draft of research paper  
In-progress research paper review; topic discussions
- 4<sup>th</sup> weekend 20 - 21 July Due: final research paper  
Research presentations; course evaluations; examination