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MBA 600.01: The Contemporary Organization

Clyde W. Neu

University of Montana - Missoula

Gerald E. Evans

University of Montana - Missoula, jerry.evans@umontana.edu

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THE CONTEMPORARY ORGANIZATION

MBA 600 Syllabus 2002 Section # 1

SYLLABUS (Section #1: Fall 2002)

COURSE INFORMATION:

Instructors:	Dr. Clyde W. Neu	Dr. Gerald Evans
Office:	GBB 361	GBB 358
Office Phones:	243-2097 & 800 252-3581	243-6531 & 800 252-3581
Fax:	243-6718	243-2086
E-mail:	<u>clyanu@business.umt.edu</u>	<u>jerry.evans@business.umt.edu</u>

Class Meetings:

September 5 – December 17

Bldg. Room

Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:40AM – 11:00 AM

GBB 108

September 6 & 7 Weekend Session

GBB 122

Friday 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM followed by a hosted barbecue dinner until 8:00 PM

Saturday 8:00 AM – 11:00 followed by UM Griz Tailgate Party and Football Game

COURSE SUMMARY:

MBA 600 explores the role of business strategy and information systems as integrating themes for the functional areas of business. A resource-based view of strategy is studied in contrast to a market view with illustrations of successful strategy implementation drawn from a variety of emerging, American and global companies. At the same time, the role of information within organizations is studied and compared to the role that organizations themselves play in defining the need for information systems.

The strategy aspect of MBA 600 is designed to introduce students to some of the more significant research and writings on *Business Strategy*. A new text, ***Strategy: A View From the Top*** by Cornelis DeKluyver and John Pearce, Prentice Hall, © 2003 will be used in part of the course. In addition, selected articles from ***The Harvard Business Review*** will be assigned to provide students with insights to *Strategy Formulation*.

The information systems aspect of MBA 600 focuses on how information technology impacts business strategy. This goal will be addressed initially by reading and discussing the book ***Blown to Bits: How the New Economics of Information Transforms Strategy*** by Philip Evans and Thomas S. Wurster. The second book is ***dot Vertigo: Doing Business in a Permeable World*** by Richard Nolan. Permeable, or fully networked, organizations take advantage of the capabilities of technology to gain sustained competitive advantage.

Several business cases will be used throughout the semester in an “experiential” setting to allow students to apply the concepts covered in the readings. The cases will progress from analyzing a start-up organization to assessing the strategy of a large, well-established company approaching maturity. Several cases will allow students to explore the nature and structure of information systems used to support the chosen business strategy. Finally, the difference between a “Business Model” and the underlying, dynamic nature of a changing “Business Strategy” will be explored.

MBA 600 is one of two "integrated" courses in the MBA curriculum at UM. As such, the course requires completion of an independent research paper representing an "integrated project." Students must select a company for which ample research data are available (most likely a public company) and must develop their paper around: (1) an analysis of the "business strategy" that characterizes the company and (2) a description of the structure and role of an "information system" or "systems" used in support of that strategy. The strategy and systems employed by Dell Computer Corporation will be covered in detail during the semester as an illustration of these "integration" issues.

MBA 600 is a four credit-hour course. Thus, in addition to scheduled class times each Tuesday and Thursday, a mini-weekend component is built into the course on Friday and Saturday, September 6 & 7. This weekend session is a required part of the course, and part of the final course grade will be based on an assignment completed by the student after the weekend session.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

MBA 600 is intended to be a highly *interactive* class. Students are expected to learn from one another as well as from the instructors and the assigned reading material. Enrollment in UM's MBA program is characterized by a diverse audience of individuals, many with several years of work experience from which unique viewpoints can emerge. Students should use this to their advantage and question other students as well as the instructor.

EVALUATION:

Students' final grades in MBA 600 will be based on scores recorded for two midterm examinations, six written case assignments, the assignment following the September 6/7 weekend session, and the Integrated Project assignment. The following weights will apply:

Integrated Project:	20%
Midterm One:	15%
Midterm Two:	15%
Weekend Session Assignment:	10%
Six Cases:	10% each with two lowest discarded.

At the end of the semester, letter grades will be assigned based on the *weighted value* of the evaluation measures outlined above:

A	90% and above
B	80% to 89%
C	70% to 79%
F	Below 70%

WRITING SKILLS:

This course contains several short written assignments and a more extensive "Integrated Project" assignment. These will be graded not only for *content*, but also for *writing style*. The Instructors will provide students with a document titled *Comments on Writing Style* with guidelines for preparing written assignments. Writing skills "worthy of publication" are expected of MBA students at The University of Montana; students will not receive "A" grades if these skills are not evident.