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**Syllabus/Class Overview Template**

**Required Components**

**General Class Information**

**Instructor Name and Contact Information:** William Yates, wy7r@virginia.edu

**Subject Area and Catalog Number:** PSPM 5280

**Year and Term:** 2016 Spring

**Class Title:** Special Topics in Project Management

**Level (Graduate or Undergraduate):** Graduate

**Credit Type:** Credit Hours 3.0

**Class Description** (Use the SIS 400 characters from catalog description):

Topics in Project Management (PSPM 5280) is designed to provide the student with the opportunity to deepen their awareness, understanding, and practitioner capability on special topics related to the “human side” of project management. Project management, as a professional discipline, is more than just an aggregation of planning tools, techniques, or specialized principles and practices, as important as those are for project success. The ability to work with and influence others is best accomplished when we understand those with whom we interact. This includes organizational leaders, project team members, co-workers, and other stakeholders. It also includes us.

Topics integrated into this course include:

* (Project Leadership) Critical factors associated with the theory and practice of leadership including styles, skills, organizational context, and development;
* (Power of Questions) An effective problem-solving, human and organizational learning approach, as well leadership development technique is introduced;
* (Chaos/Complexity) Making sense of the emergence of new business environment realities facing the project manager in the second decade of the 21st century;
* (Political Skills and Teaming) Consideration of the positive aspects of political skills and building influence for the project manager;
* (Human dynamics in project management) Examining adult development factors that shed light on human interactions and motivations directly impacting the project;
* Implications and practical applications of the above for the project manager.

This course is treated as one should expect to find in graduate-level academic work. The approach will seem deceptively easy because the reins of learning are very much turned over to the actual center of the learning process: the student. The objective of an authentic learning experience for the student will result from a creative act within the mind of each learner. The course approach is designed to promote this, and there is no better candidate for this than the project manager.

**Required Text** (Include ISBN, specific edition):

Course materials will consist of:

* Text 1: Jackson, B. & Parry, K. (2011). A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about studying leadership. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd. ISBN: 978-1849207393
* Text 2: Marquardt, M. (2014). Leading with questions: How leaders find the right solution by knowing what to ask. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

ISBN: 978-1118658130

* Text 3: Frame, J. (2002). The new project management: Tools for an age of rapid change, complexity, and other business realities. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 978-0787958923

**Learning Outcomes**:

The objective of this course is to help each student increase their awareness, understanding, and practitioner capability in relationship to the select topic areas of study. This will be accomplished through the reading, semi-structured online group discussions (synchronous and asynchronous modes), and through associated rational dialog to find ways to link what has been learned back to practice. Weekly discussion (some of which is initiated by a question posted on Sunday evenings for the week) will provide ample opportunity for each student to contribute to the discussion as well as to learn from the contributions of their peers.

There is an extensive reading component with this course. Students are expected to read the assigned materials associated with the course in a timely fashion.

**Assessment Components**:

Four basic assessment components:

* Weekly online group discussion (asynchronous, threaded)

Each week (by Sunday evening) there will be a question or comment posted by the instructor for the purpose of initiating an online Monday thru Saturday group discussion. The theme of the question or comment will be consistent with the current reading assignment. This “virtual” group discussion will be an asynchronous threaded discussion with student input driving the content direction. The instructor will also provide input and moderate as needed but sessions are intended to be student-centric. As students interact, they should keep in mind that graduate level education is not necessarily supplying answers as much as it is learning how to ask the right questions. Assessment will be based on commentary substance, question thoughtfulness, and any meaningful text reference(s) that may be used to reinforce a comment. Students are expected to stay on topic and avoid “sidebar” discussions not relevant to the course.

* Required readings and associated Reaction Papers (note: not book report)

Students are required the assigned texts. In addition, there will be several articles that will distributed by the professor at various intervals through the course. The readings were chosen for the purpose of developing an understanding of the topical areas, relate that understanding to the professional discipline of project management, with consideration for both implications and applications back into their organization or work space. A reaction paper (not book report or reflection paper), *no more* than five double-spaced pages plus reference page will be required for each of the sections (total of five). The due date for each reaction paper will be the last Friday of the period associated with the specific reading assigned.

* Integration Paper (this acts as “the final”)

A final “integration” paper that integrates all four sections including the three assigned texts plus instructor handouts associated with Reaction Paper #5 will be due no-later-than the last Tuesday in the course calendar. The Integration Paper should *not be longer* than 8 pages plus reference page. The purpose of the integration paper is to consider all of the areas covered in the course, collectively, and in the context project management. It is not picking out a favorite one or two to write about, but rather considering the meaning of all together.

Note: Unless there is a preceding understanding with the instructor, any delays beyond the due dates for the Reaction or Integration papers will result in a grade deduction.

* Sectional Collaborative Discussion

Associated with each section’s Reaction Paper (5) and the final Integration Paper (1) will be a collaborative discussion utilizing the UVA Blackboard Collaborate “Live Online Meeting” tool. (There will also be one session scheduled the second week of the course for member introductions and individual system checks.) The link to this tool will be found at the online site for the course. The discussion will immediately follow the due the date of the paper, but the exact date and time will have to be worked out together with students. Assessment for this is participation.

Evaluation Standards

The course grade will be based on: (a) reaction and integration paper assessments; (b) weekly reading and “virtual” group threaded discussion participation; (c) and sectional collaborative discussion participation. The percentage breakouts of these are:

Category Percentage Total Max Points Available

Weekly “virtual” group discussion 21% 210

Required reading 1 and Reaction Paper 11% 110

Required reading 1 and Reaction Paper 11% 110

Required reading 1 and Reaction Paper 11% 110

Required reading 1 and Reaction Paper 11% 110

Required reading 1 and Reaction Paper 11% 110

Final Integration Paper 15% 150

Collaborative Discussions (6) 11% 90

Total 1,000 Points

**Delivery Mode Expectations** (Classroom/Internet and Web-based classes, specify any live (synchronous) meetings, dates, times, and location of delivery):

The course is delivered online, primarily in asynchronous mode, utilizing the school’s online course site for distribution and reception of resource materials, assignments, weekly discussion forum, and access to the live online feature associated with the (synchronous) collaborative discussions. Specific times for the collaborative discussions will be determined after the first week in conjunction with student scheduling.

**Required Technical Resources and Technical Components:**

Students must be able to have online access sufficient to submit the weekly assignment(s), review what other classmates have submitted, and submit the reaction and integration paper assignments on time. This includes the following:

* Computer with basic audio/video output equipment sufficient for online meetings
* Internet access (broadband recommended)
* Microsoft Word