Ag 597: Methods of Technological Change
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2012

Instructor: Leah E. Wickersham, PhD Associate Professor
Office Location: Ag/IT 229
Office Hours: Tuesday: 10-12; Thursday: 10-12 and 1-2; or by appointment (these hours will start the week of Sept. 4th)
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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Textbook(s) Required: Rogers, E.M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations.* Freepress, 5th ed.

Optional: Supplemental readings are embedded throughout the course.

Course Description: This course will focus on the processes by which professional change agents (for example, extension agents) influence the introduction, adoption, and diffusion of technological change. The interlocking relationships of technology, culture, and society and the role of the change agent in affecting those relationships will be covered. Students will learn how to predict and minimize the undesirable consequences of change and how to enhance the development of communication skills required when working with people.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Learning outcomes are what you are able to do as a result of the activities, readings, instruction, etc. that have occurred in this course - these are my expectations of you. Assignments/activities related to these outcomes are described in the assignments and assessments portion of the syllabus.

1. The learner will be an active and engaged participate in discussion forums within his/her learning community by analyzing, constructing/creating, and evaluating information presented within the textbook, external readings/resources, student research, and class activities.
2. The learner will conduct a series of three activities (such as concept mapping, interviewing, and case study analysis) via a variety of collaborations (synchronous/asynchronous, small group, one/one, individual) to demonstrate understanding of particular topics (diffusion, adopter categories, innovation decision process and being an agent of change) related to course content.
3. The learner will prepare a capstone project, either alone or in groups, to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding of all elements of the innovation-diffusion process through online discussions and a variety of activities to include:

- Elements of diffusion
- History of diffusion research and its contributions
- Innovation-development process
- Innovation-decision process
- Attributes (characteristics) of innovations and rate of adoption
- Level of innovativeness and adopter categories
- Diffusion networks
- The role of the change agent
- Innovations within organizations
- Consequences of innovations

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods / Activities/ Assessments

This course is made up of a series of assignments and assessments to assist you in achieving the course learning outcomes. Each week you will work on various combinations of assignments, activities, discussions, readings, research, etc. which will be made available to you on each Friday and close on the following Sunday - allowing for 10 days total to complete the activities.

There are three main assignments/themes for this course: the online discussions in combination with the innovation activities, and the capstone project. The following sections describe the assignments with rubrics for assessment attached.

Discussion Forums: 3 total of 10 points/discussion totaling 30 points

Learning Outcome #1: ***The learner will be an active and engaged participate in discussion forums within his/her learning community by analyzing, constructing/creating, and evaluating information presented within the textbook, external readings/resources, student research, and class activities.***

Description: The discussion forums are related to the chapter readings, external resources and activities. Upon completion or near completion of the assigned readings and activities, you are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your learning community peers. Your contributions to the discussion forums will be graded for ***quality*** not quantity, **timeliness** of your contributions, and a **detailed analysis** of linking together theory (readings) to application (activities).

One major piece of advice for this assignment....To avoid point deduction, you should have an original post (response to the question) by Friday and interact with your peers over the weekend.

Assessment Method:

5=Excellent; 4=Good; 3=Meets Expectations; 2=Needs Work; 1=Below Expectations	
Quality and thoroughness of response in original post. Must be posted on or before Friday	5 4 3 2 1
Quality and level of interaction with others in forum providing more than "I agree" statements	5 4 3 2 1

Innovation Activities: 3 total @ 10 points/activity totaling 30 points

Learning Outcome #2: *The learner will conduct a series of three activities (such as case study analysis, interviewing, and problem solving) via a variety of collaborations (synchronous/asynchronous, small group, one/one, individual) to demonstrate understanding of particular topics (diffusion, adopter categories, innovation decision process and being an agent of change) related to course content.*

Description: On occasion, we will conduct an activity to further assist you in developing an understanding of diffusion/adoption utilizing a variety of approaches such as case studies, problem solving exercises/role playing, etc. At times, these activities may be as simple as you developing a concept map that symbolizes your understanding of a point in this theory, or a synchronous activity via Classlive or asynchronous activity via a discussion forum in small groups where you will play the role of the change agent, or adopter in the innovation decision making process. Such assignments will be noted as **Activity:** and given an identifying name such as **Activity: Case Study Analysis**

Assessment Method:

5=Excellent; 4=Good; 3=Meets Expectations; 2=Needs Work; 1=Below Expectations	
Quality of activity produced	5 4 3 2 1
Addressed all of the components to the activity	5 4 3 2 1

Capstone Project: Point Breakdown: Paper/Presentation = 50; Presentation Evaluation= 25; Team member contribution evaluation=25; Totaling 100 points

Learning Outcome #3: ***The learner will prepare a capstone project to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding of all elements of the innovation-diffusion process through online discussions and a variety of activities.***

Description: The purpose of this assignment is to serve as a capstone experience for the course. Either alone or in small groups (no more than 3) you will develop and deliver a group presentation and report on the diffusion of an innovation into a particular social system. You will select, or better yet, create an innovation to be diffused into your social system. You will be required to conduct research about your system in order to effectively act as change agents to diffuse the innovation. As a group, you will develop a twelve-fifteen page paper and develop a mini presentation to complement your paper of your innovation at the end of the semester.

This is a team effort, so it is encouraged that you divide the effort for this paper among your team members, sharing resources and responsibilities within your team. This paper will be graded for clarity and grammar. Your comprehensive report will include information on why the innovation was developed, its attributes, and characteristics. In addition, you will report on the people involved in the process, from the innovator to the change agents, intended audience, power actors and opinion leaders. You will analyze the overall positive and negative effects of the innovation, the adoption process and the consequences of adoption.

Your innovation should be fun and creative. Transport your peers into the social system you have been studying. Visuals such as PowerPoint, posters, role-playing and the actual innovation (if possible) are highly encouraged.

As we progress throughout the semester you will develop a clearer understanding of what you as change agents need to research in order to effectively and successfully diffuse an innovation into a social system. Here are a few key areas that should be researched within a social system:

- Educational System

- Religion
- Technology
- Government & Politics
- Culture & Traditions
- Social Systems
- Family Structure
- Economics

You will also conduct an ongoing evaluation of your team members. Only you and the professor will see this evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation is to inform the professor of team member contributions to the project which will in turn reflect on individual grades.

Assessment Method:

Rubric will be made available in the week this activity is introduced.

Grading

Grades will be determined via a simple point system and grading rubrics. Rubrics are posted in the course syllabus under each assignment description. **You** are responsible for reviewing them prior to submitting an assignment - they tell you all you need to know in order to earn a passing grade in this course.

Total Points Possible: 160
160-144=A
143-128=B
127-112=C
111-96=D
95-0=F

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This is an online course and some obvious technological resources will be required.
Access to a computer with

- Internet access (high-speed preferred)
- Microphone for any classlive sessions throughout the semester (these run about $10)
- Speakers so you can hear me and others during any classlive sessions and other audio enhanced assignments throughout the semester.
- Word processing software (Microsoft Word preferred)

As a student enrolled at Texas A&M University-Commerce, you have access to an email account via myLeo - all my emails sent from eCollege (and all other university emails) will go to this account, so please be sure to check it regularly. Conversely, you are to email me via the eCollege email system or your myLeo email as our spam filters will catch yahoo, hotmail, etc. and I will not check for your email in spam.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

eCollege Technical Concerns: Please contact the eCollege HelpDesk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by sending an email directly to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. You may also reach the HelpDesk by calling (toll-free) 1-866-656-5511, or through the Online Chat by clicking on the "Live Support" tab within your eCollege course.

Course Concerns: If you have questions pertaining to the content of this course (e.g., questions about an exam, about course due dates, etc.), please contact me via email, through the Q&A Forums or during office hours.

Other Questions/Concerns: Contact the appropriate TAMU-C department relating to your questions/concern. If you are unable to reach the appropriate department with questions regarding your course enrollment, billing, advising, or financial aid, please call 903-886-5511 between the hours of 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Participation & Communication: I expect each of you to be active and thoughtful participants within the learning environment (eCollege) and your learning community. You are to expect the same of me. This includes completing the extensive readings related to course topics, team and/or individual research proposal topics and participation in proposal revision activities (submission of individual draft sections and evaluation of draft sections from other class members).

1. Email is the best way to reach me as I check it daily. A reply will be sent within 12 hours depending upon the time your message was received. Please do not send me panicked last minute emails with the word HELP!!!!!!!! in the subject line. ***HOWEVER.... in order to avoid duplication of questions and answers I prefer that you post all class related questions in the Q&A forum provided each week. It is likely that your peers will have the same question. Emails of a personal nature should be sent to my email address via eCollege.***

2. Or if you want to talk via the "phone" download a program called Skype - a free internet calling service that you can use to chat live or place a call to me. I have a video camera and can also transmit my video via a skype call. To download the program, go to www.skype.com and search for **drleah** as the contact to add me to your list. You may also call me on my cell phone listed above.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Citizenship: All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student 92s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

Late work: I have grown weary of stating that late work is not accepted; therefore, I have instituted a late work policy. If you elect to turn your work in late, you will be deducted 2 points/day the work is late. The late work policy ***does not*** apply to the capstone project. See course semester outline at the bottom of this syllabus.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism **WILL NOT** be tolerated and will result in an automatic **F** in the course.

Attendance: This is an online class therefore attendance is up to you! You will be required to work as a team via various activities. The quality of your contributions and regular participation activities will be considered attendance. It is strongly encouraged that you attempt to log into the course everyday and/or check your email for messages in order to not get behind.

Scholarly Expectations: All works submitted for credit must be original works created by the scholar uniquely for the class. It is considered inappropriate and unethical, particularly at the graduate level, to

make duplicate submissions of a single work for credit in multiple classes, unless specifically requested by the instructor. Work submitted at the graduate level is expected to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and be of significantly higher quality than work produced at the undergraduate level.

University Specific Procedures:

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu
Student Disability Resources & Services

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR FALL 2012

Week	Activities
1	Introductions Readings: Chapter's 1-3 Discussion – Elements of Diffusion
2	Readings: Chapter's 4 & 5 Innovation Activity – Innovation Decision Process
3	Readings: Chapter's 6 & 7 Innovation Activity – Adopter Interviews
4	Reading Chapter 8 Discussion: A Network of Diffusion Capstone project introduction
5	Reading: Chapter 9 Innovation Activity – Case Study analysis
6	Reading: Chapter's 10 & 11 Discussion: Innovations in Organizations & Consequences
7	Capstone project development
8	Final's Week Capstone project due