

**University of Kentucky**  
**School of Journalism and Media**

**MAS 355-001: COMMUNICATION AND  
INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN ORGANIZATIONS**

Spring 2017 115 Grehan Building  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 PM -- 3:15 PM

Professor: John F. Clark  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an upper-division major elective for Media Arts and Studies majors. In the scheme of things, as far as fulfilling your major requirements goes, it is designated as a "Media Industry" course, as opposed to a "Socio-Cultural Media" course or a "Media Production" course. In the MAS program, conceptual courses are intended to explain the operation of specific industry segments or they may deal with technical and human factors as they relate to the management of media systems.

Here's the description of the course in the official university bulletin: " An examination of the role of a variety of communication and information systems used in organizations. This includes the study of communication processes across a variety of systems, including the telephone, e-mail, voice mail, and audio- and video-conferencing. It also includes an examination of the uses for a variety of information systems and technologies, including computer networks, integrated voice response systems, computer/telephony integration, call centers, automated attendants, voice recognition and synthesis, database management systems, and a variety of additional hardware and software tools used in business today."

With all that said, what I hope to do for you is help you understand the theoretical underpinning of the intertwined notions of information technology and organization. It has been said, as I'm sure you're aware, that there is nothing so practical as a good theory. Then we will embark on an overview of the basic principles of telecommunications management as they pertain to technical, organizational, and human considerations. One of the ways, among others, that I plan to accomplish that goal is by introducing you in class to a number of telecommunications professionals who actually manage the various systems we will be discussing.

### **REQUIRED READING**

You're in luck. There is no required text, per se. That doesn't mean you don't have required reading, or even that you should get away without spending a little money on a book. The vast majority of the readings can be found on the MAS 355 website in PDF, RTF, or PPT format. I do recommend you purchase a book, however. It is a relatively inexpensive book (especially if you get from Amazon.com), mainly because it is such

a bestseller. You will find it invaluable and indispensable, especially after you have graduated and have to act like you know what you're talking about in the working world. Billed as the official dictionary of telecommunications and the Internet, it is:

Newton, H. (December, 2014). *Newton's Telecom Dictionary* (28<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: CMP Books.

## EVALUATION EXPECTATIONS

Your grade for this course will be based on your weighted and averaged scores for an Industry White Paper, five Motivational Enhancement Tools (METs), a midterm examination, a final examination, a current events update presentation, and your attendance in class.

White Paper	25%
METs	25%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Current Events Update	5%
Class Attendance	5%

**White Paper:** In the traditional sense, a white paper is a report issued by a government that explains and examines a domestic or foreign policy, regulatory, economic, or social issue. The notion spread to industry and now consultants, analysts, and corporations issue white papers about certain industries or segments of industries that explain the technologies and issues involved and attempt to assess the relative strength and chances for success of the particular service or product. That is what you will do for your white paper, on a topic of your choosing, subject to my approval. A more detailed description of this assignment will be given to you later this semester.

**Motivation Enhancement Tools (METs):** We will be having a few guest speakers from various organizations in to speak to us and we may encounter industry professionals on field trips. I want you to be able to speak to them. Therefore, a certain technical vocabulary is required. Five of the readings that cover important basic technology will be accompanied by METs, which exist solely for the purpose of insuring that you read the material so that we will be able to have intelligent conversations. These won't be too difficult, covering surface issues for the most part, but they will help you acquire the vocabulary that you need. They may vary in type depending on the material to be covered.

**Examinations:** Both of the exams will consist of a number of short to long essay questions. The final will not be comprehensive, and will cover only the second half of the semester. I will provide you with a general indication of the nature of potential essay questions and whatever guidance seems appropriate before each exam. These exams will be take-home. You may have full access to all the course material, but you must work alone.

**Current Events Update:** Many of you have had me as a professor before and know the value I place on keeping up with the latest news concerning network technologies. In the past, I have provided these updates and I will continue to do so, but you will also take some responsibility for that task in this class. Based on a schedule I will give you later, each class member will make a 8-10 minute presentation on a technology-related news item that is no more than 48 hours old at the time. I will give you further guidelines on this assignment as soon as we are sure that class enrollment has stabilized.

**Attendance:** Attendance for each class is strictly voluntary. It's not my responsibility to make sure you come to class. After all, each of you is old enough to drive, vote, serve in the military, think for yourself, and bear the consequences of your actions. With that said, the consequences of your actions if you miss class will be the loss of five percent of your attendance grade for every absence, unless you notify me of your absence beforehand or have a verifiable excuse after the fact.

**Grading Policy:**

- A**      Excellent work, 90 – 100
- B**      Good work, 80 – 89
- C**      Barely satisfactory work, 70 – 79
- D**      Inferior work, 60 – 69
- E**      Unacceptable work, below 60

**RESPECT FOR DIVERSE VIEWPOINTS**

As a member of the most commonly discriminated-against group throughout human history (I'm left-handed), I consider the diversity that students bring to this class a highly valuable resource and one of the benefits of your college experience. During the semester, we will discuss topics related to communication technology and social change that touch upon aspects of social and cultural diversity, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, politics, and religion. I encourage you to express your thoughts on those aspects relevant to your background, listen respectfully to your fellow students, and be open to learning from people who hold views different than yours.

**THE USUAL WARNINGS**

Make-up exams and/or METs and late papers and assignments will not be allowed without a valid and verifiable reason. The definition of valid and verifiable is left totally to my discretion. It is presumed that all work submitted for a grade is the original work of the student whose name appears on it, and that the work was prepared expressly for this course. Any use of a cell phone or digital assistant or even the appearance of these devices during an exam will be construed as cheating. Any student caught cheating or copying from another's exam or MET or in any way plagiarizing from any source, whether published or not, will be sanctioned according to University rules. At the very least, he or she will receive a failing grade for the course.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**(Note: some dates may change due to availability of speakers or facilities)**

- January 12                      Introduction to the course and to each other
  
- January 17 & 19              Theory Week Readings:  
"Conceptualizing Information Technology as Organization, and Vice Versa" and  
"Understanding Managers' Media Choices: A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective"

January 24 & 26	Telephone Week I "Telephony: Back to the Basics" and "Signaling and Switching: The 'Brains' of Communication"
Jan 31 & Feb 2	Telephone Week II – Flat Tire Day on Tuesday "Signaling System 7 (SS7)" and "Digital Loop Carrier (DLC)"
February 7 & 9	Telephone Week III – <b>MET #1</b> on Tuesday "Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL)" and "Extending Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) Services to Remote Digital Loop Carrier (DLC) Locations"
February 14 & 16	Cellular Telephony Week I – <b>MET #2</b> on Thursday "Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM)" and "Megatrends in the Wireless Industry" and "A New Paradigm – Broadband Digital Wireless"
February 21 & 23	Cellular Telephony Week II – <b>Current Event Updates</b> on Thursday "Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM)" and "Megatrends in the Wireless Industry" and "A New Paradigm – Broadband Digital Wireless"
Feb 28 & March 2	Call Center/Automated Attendant Week – <b>MET #3</b> on Thursday "Speech-Enabled Interactive Voice Response Systems" and "Call Centers and the Internet" and "CTI and the Web-Enabled Call Center"
March 7 & 9	<b>Midterm Exam</b> due in my office by 1:00 PM on Tuesday, no class <b>Current Event Updates</b> on Thursday Review of the midterm exam
March 13-18	No class – <b>Academic Holiday</b> – Spring Break
March 21 & 23	Absolutely Riveting Guest Speaker and/or Video (or not) <b>Current Event Updates</b> on Thursday
March 28 & 30	IP Telephony Week – <b>MET #4</b> on Thursday "Voice over Packet" and "The Effect of Internet Telephony on Business" <b>Industry White Paper Topic Paragraph Due</b> on Tuesday
April 4 & 6	Wireless Week – <b>MET #5</b> on Thursday "Wireless Application Protocol (WAP)" and "Echo Cancellation"
April 11 & 13	<b>Industry White Paper Outline Due</b> on Tuesday <b>Current Event Updates</b> on Tuesday <b>Current Event Updates</b> on Thursday
April 18 & 20	Absolutely Riveting Guest Speaker and/or Video (or not) <b>Industry White Paper Due</b> on Thursday

April 25 & 27

Wrapping It All Up Week

"The Wireless Stampede" and "The Twelve Commandments of the Communications Megahighway"

May 5

(Tuesday)

**Final Exam** due in my office by 3:30 PM