

MIT 298: Global Teams

Fall 2008	11:00 – 12:20
Northwestern University	Monday and Wednesday
School of Communication	Room 115

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Office Hour: Tues 8:30-10 am & by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are 2 required texts for this course:

Friedman, T. (2009). *The World is Flat*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Girox

Hinds, P. & Kiesler, S. (2002). *Distributed Work*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

In addition to these two books, electronic copies of articles and cases are posted on the course's blackboard site. All readings are to be completed before coming to class each day. Be sure to bring the text and all relevant readings to class on the day they are to be discussed.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We live in an increasingly connected global world. In all aspects of life, we find ourselves connected to others who live in different geographical regions. Certainly, separation by time and space raises challenges to teams in business, government, community and other social organizations that seek to work together. By bringing together individuals from various regions, problems caused by communication mishaps, technology glitches, and cultural differences, just to name a few, make it difficult for people to work together. Yet the value of most teams comes from the successful coordination of expertise and talent amongst members.

This course will take an in-depth look at the nature of teams whose members are distributed around the globe. Such global teams are becoming ever prominent. From business organizations who establish satellite offices in other countries, to ad-hoc groups forming in virtual games like Second Life, globally-distributed team membership permeates our lives. The Middle-East, in particular, is an especially ripe domain for the use of global teams, as it continues to grow as an important nexus for global collaboration. Each week, students in this course will explore various issues that they will confront as they become members of global teams. A few such issues include:

- Bridging cultural differences
- Choosing the appropriate technologies for different types of communication
- Determining how to structure teams (do I have multiple people from each country?)
- Providing a forum for informal interaction
- The effects of distance and time differences on perceptions of team effectiveness

These issues, and many more like them, will be explored by in-depth discussions in class. As a seminar, each student will have a chance to reflect on the day's readings, share their own experiences working with teams (those that are collocated and those that are distributed) and to learn from the professor and classmates about the important role of team dynamics in a global economy.

CLASSROOM DEPARTMENT

Since our goal is to become more effective speakers and writers of English we will use only English in class.. In order not to distract classmates or negatively affect the learning environment, mobile phone and all other electronic devices should be turned off in class at all times. While computers will be used in class for specific activities, in general, computers will not be used during regular classes, so please bring note taking materials.

We will assume that each of us is coming to NU-Q with different backgrounds and that the common goals of the class are best achieved when we work together as a group and each give our best efforts both inside and outside of class.

We recognize that this is a safe place for different ideas, beliefs, and values. Students should feel free to express their opinions. We will be willing to experiment and take risks through our discussions and our writing. students are expected to always show respect for the opinions and ideas of others.

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is expected and will be taken at every class. Additionally it is important that you arrive on time, ready to learn and participate. You are allowed 3 unexcused absences, but keep in mind that these should be reserved for illness, unexpected emergencies, etc. For each absence beyond 3, your grade will be dropped one-half a grade (e.g., from B to B-). Also, three tardies equals one absence, so be sure to be on time. You are late to class if you arrive after I have finished taking attendance. If you are absent from a class you are responsible for getting all class material that was covered through classmates, Blackboard, etc.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are your opportunity to get individual help or talk about any issues or questions that you may have. I am happy to meet with you at any time to discuss your progress, help you with a specific writing assignment, a reading or go over concepts from the class. If you would like to meet, but cannot meet me during office hours, please email me at least 24 hours in advance or speak with me after class to arrange a time. I enjoy meeting with motivated students!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to comply with University regulations regarding academic integrity. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to the instructor before the assignment is due and/or examine the University web site. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam (e.g., copying others' answers, providing information to others, using a crib sheet) or plagiarism of a paper (e.g., taking material from sources without citation, copying another student's paper). Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a loss of credit for that assignment—at a minimum. Other penalties may also apply. The guidelines for determining academic dishonesty and procedures followed in a suspected incident of academic dishonesty are detailed on the university and school websites.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with Northwestern University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Request for academic accommodations need to be made during the first week of the quarter, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are required to register for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations. Students should see Dean Dun. For more information, visit: <http://www.northwestern.edu/disability/>

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

It is the policy of Northwestern University that no male or female member of the Northwestern community—students, faculty, administrators, or staff—may sexually harass any other member of the community. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made or threatened to be made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used or threatened to be used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating what a reasonable person would sense as an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, educational, or living environment.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class listed in the syllabus. **Late work will not be accepted.** The only violation of this rule is for legitimate absences (verified health condition, participation in University-sponsored activities, serious family emergencies, religious observance, etc.). If the absence is known ahead of time, you **must make arrangements before** the date the assignment is due.

You will be graded on three types of assignments in this course: Article summaries and Case analyses

Article Summaries. Twice during the semester you will be asked to summarize an empirical article that we read in class. These articles are marked by an asterisk in the “Course Schedule” section below. Your summary of the article may not exceed two double spaced pages in 12-point Times New Roman font. Your summary should include a description of the following:

1. the Author’s thesis
2. The reason the thesis is important
3. The evidence the author uses to support his/her thesis
4. An evaluation of whether the evidence is satisfactory to support the claims
5. The implications of the findings for managing global teams.

Case Analyses. Twice during the semester you will work in a team with three other classmates (four total – including you) to prepare a written analysis and oral presentation of real-world case study on global teams. The team assignment will be made by the professor. Your team will turn in one combined paper. This paper may not exceed four double spaced pages in 12-point Times New Roman font. Please see the case analysis guidelines appended to the end of this syllabus for instruction on how to prepare your paper

In addition to the written assignment, your team will present your analysis to the entire class. Presentations will be limited to 15 minutes followed by 5 minutes of question and answer. You may wish to use a powerpoint slides to aid your presentation. If you wish to do so, your team must email the presentation to me before the start of class on the day you are scheduled to present.

Reflection. You will turn in a paper reflecting on your experience working in your team for the case analyses and article summaries. IN this paper, you will detail what worked well in the team and what did not work well. You

should explain what your role was in the team dynamics. You should also consider how the team dynamics would have been different if each of your team members was distributed across different geographic contexts.

GRADES

In order to pass the class all major assignments must be completed. Failure to complete any of the major assignments will result in a failure in the course.

Your final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Article Summary 1	10 pts.
Article Summary 2	10 pts.
Case Analysis Written Summary 1	40 pts.
Case Analysis Oral Presentation 1	20 pts.
Case Analysis Written Summary 2	40 pts.
Case Analysis Oral Presentation 2	20 pts.
Reflection	20 pts.
Class Participation	40 pts.
Total	200 pts.

If you believe that I have made an error in grading your paper or presentation, I expect you to bring your concerns to my attention. **I will not discuss grades until the next class period.** I will consider only *written* appeals for grade changes on assignments or exams, and will schedule a meeting about the change you propose *after* receiving the written appeal. We shall then discuss your written appeal and your understanding of the concepts involved. This policy is intended not to provide obstacles to appeals, but rather is designed to ensure justice to all concerned and allow you to demonstrate mastery over the topics covered.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a tentative course schedule for the semester. Each day we will cover a new topic through a combination of lecture and discussion. **The items in bold text are homework assignments and are to be completed for that class period.** The readings are short and pointed, and imperative for effective class discussion and processing. Make sure you have all reading done before the start of class.

Week 1

Monday	08/18/08	Course Introduction
Wednesday	08/20/08	Background: Theory, Experimentation, and Perspectives Chapter 1: First Considerations. <i>Available from:</i> http://www.udel.edu/communication/COMM356/pavitt/chap1.htm

Week 2

Monday	08/25/08	Why Are Teams Important? Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study of Small Groups Chapter 2: The Small Group as a System Winter Survival Exercise
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Wednesday 08/27/08

Defining Communication in Groups I
Chapter 3: Human Communication Processes in Small Groups
 Skyscraper Construction

Week 3

Monday 09/01/08

Defining Communication in Groups II
 Necktie Exercise

Wednesday 09/03/08

Members of the Group I
Chapter 6: The Members
 MBTI overview

Week 4

Monday 09/08/08

Norms and Roles in the Group
Chapter 7: From Individuals to Group: Norms and Roles

Wednesday 09/10/08

Cultural Contexts for Group Interaction
Chapter 5: The Effects of Culture on Small Group Communication

Week 5

Monday 09/15/08

What makes Global Teamwork Different?
Managing distances and differences in geographically distributed work groups.
(In Distributed Work)
 What do we know about proximity and distance in work groups? A legacy of
 research. *(In Distributed Work)*

Wednesday 09/17/08

Cultural Differences
The Silent Language in Business
Cultural Intelligence
 IMD Cultural Perspectives Questionnaire

Week 6

Monday 09/22/08`

Cross-Cultural Collaboration
**Managing cross-cultural issues in global software outsourcing * (article
 summary)**
Creating value with diverse teams in global management

Wednesday 09/24/08

Preparation for Case Presentations

Eid Al Fater

Monday 09/29/08

NO CLASS

Wednesday 10/01/08 NO CLASS

Week 7

Monday 10/06/08 Case Presentations I
Intersoft of Argentina (A). *Harvard Business School* (TEAM 1)
Radical innovation without collocation (TEAM 2)

Wednesday 10/08/08 Case Presentations II
Greg James at Sun Microsystems, Inc. *Harvard Business School* (TEAM 3)
Distributed work over the centuries (In *Distributed Work*) (TEAM 4)

Week 8

Monday 10/13/08 Building Trust
Finding common ground in dispersed collaboration
Building trust: Effective multi-cultural communication processes in virtual teams.

Wednesday 10/15/08 NO CLASS

Week 9

Tuesday 10/20/08 Identification
Multiple Identities in a Multicultural World
Local Selves and Global Workers

Wednesday 10/22/08 Leadership
Cultural acumen for the global manager: Lessons from project GLOBE
Global leaders are team players

Week 10

Monday 10/27/08 Design I
Designing and forming global teams.
Structures that work

Wednesday 10/29/08 Design II
Transformational Technologies and the Creation of New Work Practices
The enemies within: Competing subgroups in geographically dispersed teams * (*article summary*)

Week 11

Monday 11/03/08 Knowledge Sharing
Tactical approaches for alleviating distance in global software development.
Cross-border transfer of knowledge: Cultural lessons from project GLOBE

Wednesday 11/05/08 Technology
Virtual teams: Technology and the workplace of the future
Going global. Using information technology to advance the competitiveness of the virtual transnational organization.

Week 12

Monday 11/10/08 To be Announced

Wednesday 11/12/08 Preparation for Case Presentations

Week 13

Monday 11/17/08 Case Presentations III
Leo Burnett: Virtual Team Management Ivey School of Business (TEAM 4)
Cathay Pacific: Doing More with Less (TEAM 3)

Wednesday 11/19/08 Case Presentations IV
Shield: Product Development in a Distributed Team (TEAM 2)
Siemens AG: Global Development Strategy (A) (TEAM 1)

Week 14

Monday 11/24/08 Are Teams the Best Strategy?
The World is Flat (chapters 1 & 2)

Wednesday 11/26/08 Globalization and the Future of Work
The World is Flat (chapters 8 & 11)

Guidelines for Writing a Summary of an Academic Article

When you write an article review, or any other critical review of a text, you are expected to analyze and evaluate, not just summarize. A summary merely reports what the text said. A critique, on the other hand, analyzes, interprets, and evaluates the text, answering the questions *how? why? and how well?* A critique does not necessarily have to criticize the piece in a negative sense. Your reaction to the text may be largely positive, negative, or a combination of the two. It is important to explain why you respond to the text in a certain way.

Your summary of the article should be no more than two double spaced pages. Before you begin writing your critique you should answer the following questions for yourself:

Step 1. Analyze the text

As you read the article you should answer the following questions:

- What theoretical arguments does the author employ?
- What is the author's hypothesis?
- What evidence does the author present to support his/her arguments?
- What are the underlying assumptions?

Step 2. Evaluate the text

After you have read the text, you can begin to evaluate the author's ideas. The following questions provide some ideas to help you evaluate the text:

- Is the argument logical?
- Is the text well-organized, clear, and easy to read?
- Have important terms or concepts been clearly defined?
- Does there appear to be sufficient evidence for the arguments?
- Do the arguments support the main point?

Step 3. Plan and write your critique

Write your critique in standard essay form. It is generally best not to follow the author's organization when organizing your analysis, since this approach lends itself to summary rather than analysis. Begin with an introduction that defines the subject of your critique and your point of view. Defend your point of view by raising specific issues or aspects of the argument. Conclude your critique by summarizing your argument and re-emphasizing your opinion.

- You will first need to identify and explain the author's ideas. Include specific passages that support your description of the author's point of view.
- Offer your own opinion. Explain what you think about the argument. Describe several points with which you agree or disagree.
- For each of the points you mention, include specific passages from the text (you may summarize, quote, or paraphrase) or elsewhere that provide evidence for your point of view.
- Explain how this evidence supports your opinion.

Guidelines for Case Analysis

Your case analyses should first analyze the situation and then analyze the decision that needs to be made:

1. Analysis of the Situation Facing the Company (often called a “SWOT” analysis):

- Strengths of the company
- Weaknesses of the company
- Opportunities in the company’s environment (conditions that are potentially favorable to the company)
- Threats in the company’s environment (conditions that are potentially harmful to the company)

2. Decision Analysis

- Identification of decisions the company needs to face
- Multiple options (alternative actions) for each of these decisions
- Your recommendations for each of these decisions
- Your rationale (reasoning) for making these recommendations

[Note: Your rationale may include the advantages and disadvantages of each of the multiple options considered above. Or, if you prefer, this part of your rationale may be included in the section on multiple options. However, note that it is important to include advantages and disadvantages of each option identified in one of these places or the other.]

Recommendations:

1. A SWOT analysis should include both the current situation and factors that are expected to occur in the future. Thus, for example, an analysis of a company’s competitive environment should include both current competitors and those companies that may become competitors in the future.
2. It is important to think creatively when analyzing the situation or developing a plan. For example, in analyzing a company’s competition, it may be wise to include companies that market substitute products as well as companies that provide direct competition (e.g., for a company that markets pens, to include companies that market pencils, as well).
3. In discussing problems facing a company (i.e., weaknesses and threats), distinguish between symptoms and causes. For example, a symptom of a problem might be declining revenues or declining net income, a cause might be declining product quality (a weakness) or the entry of a new competitor into the market (a threat).
4. Write your case analysis from the perspective of a consultant who is advising the company. Keep in mind that your clients may be demanding and skeptical. Therefore:
 - a. In order to do everything that your clients expect, you will probably need to analyze more than one decision facing the company and/or to consider more than one option for handling a particular decision.
 - b. The reasoning behind your recommendations will be very important. Also, in order to protect your credibility with these clients, be careful not to make unrealistic claims about what implementation of your recommendations will accomplish. Honestly present the disadvantages of your proposals, as well as their advantages.