Course Syllabus
FCBE MIS 8710 – Seminar in Information Systems I
Fall Semester, 2020
3.0 Credit Hours

Instructor: Huigang Liang, PhD
Professor and FedEx Chair of Excellence in MIS
Department of BIT
Phone1: 901.678.4547
E-mail: hliang1@memphis.edu
Office: FCBE #346

Office Hours: Wed. 6:00-9:00 PM or by appointment (Zoom)
Classroom: FCB #268
Class time: Wed. 1:30-4:30 PM

Course Overview:
This is the first of two IS research seminars that together form the literature and methodological base from which you will develop your MIS research acumen. The field of MIS draws from diverse theoretical lenses, many of which are adapted from reference disciplines. It is important for doctoral students to construct their own mental schema of the field so that new knowledge can be efficiently and effectively synthesized. This seminar serves as a starting point of that journey through exposure to classic and contemporary IS research as well as key theoretical underpinnings of the discipline.

Your two IS seminars, combined with your required MIS functional courses, required research methodology classes, and your directed readings will also be the basis for questions on your written and oral comprehensive examinations.

Required Texts (and Related Materials):
The course will use journal articles and readings that are either available through the University of Memphis Library or will be provided by the professor. A schedule of weekly readings will be provided to you in class.
Course Objectives:

The primary objective of this first seminar is to provide you with a foundation for your research career and introduce many of the seminal works in MIS. Through this course you will familiarize yourself with the basic tenets of MIS research, receive an introduction to various research philosophies and approaches employed, and cover important foundational MIS articles.

At the completion of this seminar, students should:

- Understand what MIS research means;
- Comprehend the foundational systems elements of the IS field;
- Comprehend the field’s evolution and its relationship to information technologies;
- Comprehend and apply the basic tenets of theory and methods;
- Possess knowledge of key research streams in the MIS field;
- Developed skills to critically read and evaluate MIS literature;
- Be able to compare and contrast tradeoffs in conducting research;
- Be able to provide basic structure and organization to a research project;
- Be able to present and defend opinions by making judgments about validity of research and quality of research products;
- Begin to structure a mental schema of the IS field; and
- Start acquiring the ability to critically assess the IS field and take a position on moving it forward.

Fogelman College: Learning Outcomes for Your Degree

This course is designed to help you to meet the overall learning objectives for the PhD degree offered by the Fogelman College. You should take the time to become familiar with the overall learning objectives as a student in the PhD program. See: http://www.fcbeassessment.net/LearningOutcomes/PhDDegreeLearningOutcomes.pdf

Course Methodology

This course will be taught in a virtual format. We will interact both synchronously or asynchronously through eCourseware, email, and virtual meeting tools (e.g., Zoom). All of the in-class discussion will take place through Zoom meetings. I will provide more details in the first Zoom meeting of the class.

This is a doctoral seminar. While I do not expect you to fully assimilate everything you read on the first pass, I do expect significant effort and thought on your part. For my part, I will present ideas, concepts, experiences, and guidelines throughout the course. It is your responsibility to create your own understanding and notes. This can be done as a part of the class, but more importantly should be assimilated thoroughly after class. This might involve re-reading assigned articles, reading additional self-solicited material and discussions with your colleagues. The culmination of these efforts will result in a set of notes that reflect your understanding of an area. These notes can be enhanced as the learning process continues throughout your program and can be an invaluable part of your research schema. Do not hesitate to ask questions in class or after class if something is unclear. It is my job to provide you with research guidance and your responsibility to put your best effort forward to absorb it.
As a seminar, your participation is essential. You are expected to perform a major role in contributing to class discussions. This requires thorough preparation for every class. It is assumed that you have carefully read the assigned readings and are thoroughly familiar with the content of each article. The real test is in the thought process you have put into the readings, rather than merely muddling through them. Consider following the cycles of read – think – classify – think – re-read – think -- document ....

The class discussions will be directed by student discussion leaders that I will assign in the previous week. While everyone must carefully read the assigned readings, the discussion leaders should:

- PRIOR to class organize the discussion of their article(s)
- Prepare a 2-3 page handout for distribution to the class that summarizes the major points of the article(s) (see below format suggestions)
- Ensure that the class interaction is continuous and brings out the major points (takeaways) of the article(s). Be creative in stimulating class discussion. This involves preparing leading questions and discussion points and acting as master of ceremonies of a fairly informal discussion of the paper. The discussion leader should work to ensure that all attendees at the seminar get involved in the discussion (whether they want to be involved or not).
- All article write-ups should be your original work!

The class discussion should have at least four components:

1. Summary of the article.
2. Assessment of article’s contribution to the IS literature (and to practice), i.e., where it fits into your schema. Be sure to consider both the logic and clarity of the papers.
3. Discussion of article’s strengths and weaknesses, with particular emphasis on theory/methodology.
4. Assessment of future work that can build on the study.

Typically, a discussion session on a paper will be around 20-30 minutes. Also, as the first research seminar, the primary focus is on learning – how does the article enhance our understanding? As you gain research prowess through the program, there will be an increasing emphasis on critiquing articles in your respective interest areas.

Article write-ups should contain at least two major sections:

(a) A summary of the key takeaway points as discerned by the reader, and
(b) An interpretation of the article. This could include responses to questions like:

• How did this article influence thinking in the IS field at that time?
• What is its contribution with respect to contemporary IS environments?
• How does it relate to other articles and practices?
• Does it espouse a theoretical perspective that is useful to study IS phenomena and why?
• How has it influenced your thinking of the field?
• Are there aspects of the article that are unclear, make too many assumptions or could be subject to other criticism?

In addition to the questions above, for empirical articles you should consider each of the following dimensions.

- Abstract: Does the abstract highlight the significant points of the article?
- Introduction: Is the “So What” compelling? Is the background covered thoroughly and succinctly?
- Theory: Does the background include a strong theory? Does the theory form a strong basis for a casual model? Is the theoretical conceptual model clear?
- Independent Variables: Do the independent variables have conceptual and operational definitions that are reasonable?
- Dependent Variables: Do the dependent variables have conceptual and operational definitions that are reasonable?
- Hypotheses: Are the hypotheses meaningful and clearly stated? Are they reasonably deduced from the background?
- Methodology: How well does the methodology test key hypotheses?
- Analysis: Were the appropriate statistical tests applied? What alternative/complementary statistical techniques may be used?
- Results: Do the results follow reasonably from the analysis?
- Implications for Future Research: How can this research be replicated? What questions does it raise for future research that needs to be answered? How can such research be conducted?
- Implications for Practice: Does the research help MIS practitioners? How, in your opinion, will this research improve future MIS practice?

NOTE: IT IS CRITICAL THAT EVERY STUDENT READ ALL PAPERS ASSIGNED AND CONTRIBUTE THEIR PERSPECTIVE DURING OR AFTER THE LEADER’S PRESENTATION. In this regard, I will often call upon unassigned students to lead impromptu discussion or respond to question pertaining to the topic under discussion.

Finally, I expect classes to be productive and challenging. Such an environment requires that we maintain professional behavior. I expect honesty, maturity, courtesy, and sensitivity. I want you to enjoy attending class and to feel relaxed – but there is no room for unprofessional behavior. We will hopefully learn from one another and push each other to a higher level of understanding and appreciation.

Course Evaluation

Final course grades are earned according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89 - 92.9; 93 - 96.9; 97-100</td>
<td>A-, A, A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79 - 82.9; 83 - 86.9; 87 – 88.9</td>
<td>B-, B, B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69 - 72.9; 73 - 76.9; 77 – 78.9</td>
<td>C-, C, C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 68.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 59.9</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your overall grade for the semester is based on how well you perform on a mixture of formal activities. A detailed description of the assessed activities can be found after the scoring summary table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Preparation &amp; Contribution (see above)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research project</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Graded Activities

IRB Assignment:

Each student should complete the University of Memphis’ Institutional Review Board training in the protection of human subjects. The training has 8 required training modules in the Social and Behavioral Sciences track. To do this, each student must complete the online training. A copy of emails designating each module completion should be submitted to me before the Thanksgiving Break. This training is required if any survey or experiment is to be administered at the UoM.

Research Project: Proposal Development, Execution & Presentation:

The purpose of the research project is to assist you in developing and refining your research skills including written and oral communication skills. The project will involve developing testable hypotheses, preparing a proposal, and executing an empirical research study.

You may choose any behavioral science topic area, as long as your proposal represents an original empirical research project that is practically feasible. By original, I mean that the proposal should not include a study already implemented in published or unpublished work.

The paper should be double-spaced pages in a 12-point font with 1” margins on all sides. Beyond that, use the predominate format in our field (e.g., APA Guidelines). It should include references, tables, figures, or appendices (all highly recommended).

Proposal description and guidelines:

1. Abstract: 100-150 words summarizing the contents of the proposal.
2. Introduction: Describe why your topic is important for practice and research. Conclude with specific research questions you plan to address.
3. Literature Review: Concisely review relevant literature on which your research is based. The gaps in the literature motivating the need for your research should be evident.
4. Model & Hypotheses: Describe your research model. Develop a set of testable hypotheses. Briefly justify your hypotheses based upon the literature reviewed and tight logical arguments.
5. Methodology: Describe the methodology used, its rationale, and how you intend to conduct it. This section could include information on the sample, operational definition of the variables, unit of analysis, procedures, and methods to be used for validation and analysis of the data.
6. Implications of your study’s findings: Assuming your hypotheses are supported, what are the implications for theory, future research, and, to a lesser extent, practice?
7. Critique: Identify the shortcomings and problems with your research, with special attention given to methods. In this section, you will be acting as your own reviewer, so do not hesitate to be critical.
8. References: Follow APA guidelines for referencing works within the text and in the reference list.

Full Paper should include:
- Analysis
- Results
- Implications for Future Research
- Implications for Practice
We will be discussing many elements of the research project throughout the course. Read and explore literature in an area of your interest so that the project does not creep up on you. You will struggle with this, but I believe you will be better off for the experience. Alas, such is the life of a doctoral student.

**Final Examination Schedule**

The final exam (in the form of a research proposal and presentation) will be scheduled according to the Registrar’s academic calendar for final examinations unless notified otherwise.

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**Course Policies**

**E-MAIL:**

All students are required to maintain and access their University of Memphis (@memphis.edu) email account. You will receive all official course correspondence at this email account. Any inability to receive incoming mail in a timely fashion (e.g., not regularly checking your email, having a “full mailbox” condition, etc.) is the student’s responsibility.

**Attendance:**

Since this is an online class taught in both synchronous asynchronous formats, formal attendance will not be taken. However, you are expected to stay active and engaged throughout the academic term and keep up with the schedule of activities. Your full engagement in the class begins on the first day of the semester and should be maintained until the last assignment is submitted. For students receiving federal student loans, any lack of engagement in the course may be treated as non-attendance and potentially impact access to student loans in the future.

**Adding / Dropping:**

If you have questions about adding or dropping classes, please refer to this page on the Registrar’s website (opens in new window).

**Academic Integrity:**

The University of Memphis has clear codes regarding cheating and classroom misconduct. If interested, you may refer to the Student Handbook in the section on Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities for information. If you have any questions about academic integrity or plagiarism, you are strongly encouraged to review the Fogelman College’s Website on Academic Integrity (opens in new window).

**Participation:**

To be successful in this course as a student, you must stay active and involved throughout the entire semester. Students are expected to participate in all interactive aspects of the course. You should also regularly communicate with the instructor as part of your overall learning experience, check into the course website frequently for announcements (on eCourseware), and actively participate in threaded discussion events (both formal and informal). You should plan on logging into the course at least three times each week.
Classroom or Online Behavior:

All participants in the course should be considerate of the other course participants and treat them (as well as their opinions) with respect. The class will operate under the assumption that any and all feedback offered is positive in nature and that the intentions of the person(s) providing feedback are strictly honorable. Insensitivity in this area will not be tolerated. If you have any questions about online communication, you should review the Fogelman College’s Netiquette website (opens in new window).

Late Assignments:

Assignments and projects may be submitted anytime up to and including the date due. Please review all information in this syllabus and related “Course Activity Summary / Schedule” for all due dates for formally assessed work. If your work is not submitted on time, the instructor reserves the option to deduct up to 20% of the grade value for tardiness depending upon the circumstances and appropriate communication between the student and the instructor.

Extra Credit:

There may be opportunities for extra credits. The instructor will make announcement on eCourseware once such an opportunity is available.

Reporting Illness or Absence:

Due dates and deadlines have been established for each graded assignment. In this course, deadlines are taken very seriously. Please do not wait until the last day to submit assignments or to take quizzes and exams. If an emergency should arise, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor prior to the deadline to discuss the matter. A deadline extension will be considered only if all of the following conditions are met:
(1) Extreme emergency and (2) Instructor contacted prior to the due date.

Inclement Weather:

In the event that inclement weather requires the cancellation of classes at The University of Memphis, local radio and television media will be immediately notified. Additionally, The University of Memphis has established an Inclement Weather Hotline at 678-0888 as well as TigerText (opens in new window), an emergency alert text messaging service to students, faculty and staff. This optional service is used in the event of an on-campus emergency, an unscheduled university closing, or a delay or cancellation of classes due to, for instance, inclement weather. Additional information on TigerText (opens in new window).

Syllabus Changes:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to this syllabus. If changes are necessitated during the term of the course, the instructor will immediately notify students of such changes both by individual email communication and posting both notification and nature of change(s) on the course bulletin board.

Student Services

Please access the FCBE Student Services (opens in new window) page for information about:
• Students with Disabilities
• Tutoring and other Academic Assistance
• Advising Services for Fogelman Students
• Technical Assistance

COVID-19 Notice
As a student enrolled in an FCBE course, please be advised of the resource websites listed below for student accommodation requests, health and safety requirements on campus, classroom conduct, and reporting a suspected COVID-19 illness. If you have questions about the items listed, please email your instructor.

Student Accommodation Requests
The University of Memphis is taking all necessary precautions to minimize risk to include careful scheduling of classes, sanitizing and cleaning, and educational/information promotion. However, it is understood that some individuals may be unable to attend on-ground sessions this fall. The University provides a process for students with medically documented reasons (or medically documented reasons for individuals under their care) that prevent them from attending face-to-face classes to request accommodations for remote instruction.

Disability Resources for Students (DRS) is the University of Memphis department who has been given the responsibility of hearing and approving requests for modifications due to COVID-19 and the virus that causes it. Even if you do not have a disability, but are in need of a modification due to age, living with an at-risk individual or some other circumstance, you must work with DRS. Students seeking accommodations consistent with ADA guidelines must present medical documentation to the Office of Disability Resource Services which will work with the academic departments to provide reasonable accommodations. If faculty or students identify as someone who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 due to age or underlying health conditions, or have family members in the "high risk" category, accommodations will be granted to the extent feasible. (Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has provided additional information on who may be at high risk for severe illness at https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html

To start your COVID-19-related request, complete the Student Introduction Form found at https://yukon.accessiblelearning.com/Memphis/ApplicationStudent.aspx. When asked for the primary disability, use the dropdown menu to find your COVID-19 request status. Once you've completed this form, you will be contacted via your University of Memphis email about documents needed to support your request. Once documentation is received and reviewed, you will be informed regarding next steps.

For more information, browse https://www.memphis.edu/drs/covid19-info.php

The University of Memphis values diversity, and, therefore, students with diverse learning preferences and needs are welcome in this course. You are encouraged to speak with your instructor privately if there are aspects of instruction or design of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. If barriers are preventing anyone with a temporary injury or a physical, mental, or cognitive condition from participating fully in this course, please contact Disability Resources
for Students (DRS) to submit an official request for course accommodations. You may contact DRS by calling 901-678-2880, emailing drs@memphis.edu, or visiting 110 Wilder Tower.

For more information, browse https://www.memphis.edu/drs/

**Health and Safety Requirements on Campus**

Students should check their UofM email. Each student received an educational video addressing the important role that each of us play in maintaining the safety and health of our community prior to their return to campus, along with a video about how to properly wear a face covering. Students must watch both videos included in the unique link and submit their intent to comply with the expectations.

Physical distancing of at least 6 feet between individuals remains in place in all campus spaces. This includes the interior of buildings and outside. Face masks are required in all indoor and outdoor public spaces. All surfaces and computer workstations must be sanitized prior to use. Students must sit only in approved seats or lab workstations. All those on campus must abide by University social distancing and mask protocols, including any contractors or visitors.

For more information, browse https://www.memphis.edu/coronavirusupdates/plan/agreement.php

**Classroom Conduct**

Face masks or face coverings are required by all faculty, staff, and students in classrooms and on campus. Students without face coverings a first time will be asked to leave the class. Further violations will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Students who choose not to follow the face covering requirements will forfeit the right to be on campus.

For more information, browse https://www.memphis.edu/coronavirusupdates/plan/ongroundinstruction.pdf

**Report Process for Suspected COVID-19 Illness**

To protect the campus community and student health and wellness, the Student Health Center is providing virtual appointments for patients. Visit My Patient Portal to schedule a virtual appointment or call 901.443.1397 or 901.443.6438 between 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Virtual appointments are available from 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday through Friday. After you schedule an appointment on the MyPatient Portal, a provider will reach out with instructions for a Telehealth virtual appointment, which you may access through a personal electronic device.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus (persistent fever, cough, difficulty breathing) or had contact with a confirmed or suspected case of coronavirus, please call the Student Health Center at 901.443.1397 or 901.443.6438 between the hours of 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. After hours, please call the COVID-19 public information numbers, 833.556.2476 and 877.857.2945, available from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. daily, or the 24-hour COVID-19 hotline at 800.232.4636.

For more information, browse https://www.memphis.edu/health/