This Course Syllabus Provides a General Plan for the Course; Deviations May Be Necessary

Instructor
Name: Mr. Debopriyo Roy
Office Hours: By appointment (appointments available during the day, thrice a week)
Instructor's Contact Information:
Phone: 518-281-1596 (mobile)
Email: royd2@rpi.edu

Course Description
In the recently evolving digital organizations, the practice of effective electronic group communication has evolved as a primary consideration for efficient management of engineering and other creative group projects, in similar lines as handled by EMAC students and in other engineering disciplines, here in RPI. As part of this course, our approach would be to address issues which are specific to working group dynamics in various disciplines. We will discuss real web project management issues through case studies and best practices in the field.

Course Materials
You would have to prepare a final report of around 10-12 single spaced pages which incorporates issues of group coordination, your iterations along the way, the decisions taken in different stages of the project, the technology used, portfolio of reports on the decisions taken in different group meetings etc. A guideline to write this report would be provided along the way.

Broad Topics
1. Issues in handling Web Projects
2. Technical Writing (writing creative briefs, project charter etc)
3. Social Designs of Electronic Group Communication (Roles of project manager, member coordination etc)
4. Computer mediated communication and working in virtual teams. (Different theories)
5. The functional dynamics of network economy (the macro perspective).

Major Text Books that would be referred
1. Real Web Project Management: Case studies and best practices from the trenches.
2. Technical Writing, A Practical Approach
3. Professional Writing and Rhetoric (Peeples)

The Web Project
Writing would be the primary form of communication between you and me, irrespective of the delivery media we use. Form a group of 2-3 members with preferably different areas of expertise. Students with different majors might consider working in the same group.

Think of a web project that would be manageable within the time frame of this course and should be manageable within the expertise of the group members. I would ask you to design an interface, throughout the length of this course, while addressing different issues. I am not asking for actual implementation of the website, but low or high fidelity prototypes. An iterative design would primarily be our plan of action and each group would write a report every week explaining the various communication issues that finally led to the design considerations.

The group members should be coordinating through e-mails, chats; etc beyond class time and discussion about the project during regular class meetings is permissible. Frame a broad outline of the project answering specific details which is part of the class notes. Every week we would reserve some time discussing the project and I would check on whether certain issues are addressed. A rework on each stage of the project would be allowed although that would mean cutting down time on the later stages.

As we go through the class, a checklist would be formed, on different areas of web project development and handling and we would jointly work on each project. Members from other groups would be asked to write a critical report of 2-3 pages for projects the other groups are working on. I believe in participatory design format and an iterative approach. So, we would need peer evaluation reports along the way.

You would have to submit a final report of your project, which we would discuss in details as we go on.

Response Papers
You would write brief response papers along the way. The response papers would be critiques on different CMC theories, based on what has been covered in class and your own research of materials (journals, books, etc), its relevance to your project for the class and how to write technical reports, for example, creative briefs, project charters, technical correspondence etc.

Final Project Deliverables
The presentation: The Seminar is the fun part. I particularly don’t call this a “presentation” or “lecture”, because you are encouraged to think beyond a “we talk and you listen” format. You have about 15 minutes to get your ideas across. The group would have 30 minutes or a bit more perhaps. A question-answer session would follow after each group presentation. Have fun. Be clever. Pick your points carefully. The goal is to leave your class mates with enough understanding of your topic so if they are asked about it in an interview, it won't be the first time they have heard the term. You might cover an explanation of the topic/concept, a key vendor or two, the history/current state of the technology, communication issues surrounding the topic, key buzz words associated with your topic, and/or examples of the technology and its use. Plan what you want to get across, then plan how to best get it across.

The Handout: Prepare a 2-3 page handout and bring enough copies to class for each classmate. This document should include all those things you wanted to include in the seminar but didn’t have time to cover. Give examples of vendors, implementations, uses of the technology and the communication issues involved in the group work. Explain why this is an important topic to know about and how did the communication issues make an impact on he various range of choices your group made. More interesting handouts in the past have included comparison tables, charts and pictures. Your handout must include a definition of your topic, an example of some real business using the technology, and at least two complete references for future research. Be sure if you directly quote a source or web page that you clearly indicate the attribution in your document.

Final Report
You would have to prepare a final report of around 10-12 single spaced pages which incorporates issues of group coordination, your iterations along the way, the decisions taken in different stages of the project, the technology used, portfolio of reports on the decisions taken in different group meetings etc. A guideline to write this report would be provided along the way.

Final or Midterm Exam
We would have a final or midterm exam which would be a combination of essay type and multiple choice questions. Questions would cover everything that would be taken up for reading and the class project. Your creativity would be tested beyond what would be present in the reading materials. I encourage you to explore the issues beyond what the text and/or journal articles suggest.

**Grading**

- Project: 30%
- Response Papers: 10%
- Class Handouts and Presentation: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Class Participation: 10%