# PBU 1603 Spring 2017 Information Systems

## Syllabus

Instructor: M. Lynne Markus

Class Sessions: Thursdays, 2-5PM, PhD Classroom

**Course Description:**

This course introduces doctoral students to the role of information systems and technology in business and society, through an analysis of literature and theoretical arguments on a topic of student choice.

**Course Objectives**:

* ***Content*** objectives
	1. Learn something ***about information technology and systems in today’s world*** that is related to, but not necessarily directly on, your topic of research:
		1. How IT are being used in particular contexts
		2. Why IT or IT use takes the form it does in different contexts (occupations, organizations, countries)
		3. What the consequences of IT use are in different contexts
* ***Skill*** objectives
	1. Learn to work with literature
		1. Creating annotated bibliographies
		2. Conducting in-depth article analyses
		3. Writing a literature review
	2. Learn to work with theory
		1. Knowing the arguments for and against theory in academic research
		2. Modeling relationships and causal mechanisms
		3. Writing theoretical arguments

**Assessment**:

* Individual weekly assignments are assessed as check, check plus, or check minus
	1. Check minus means mandatory do-over by the next week
	2. Any do-overs will be reviewed and commented on
	3. What is consequential about these assignments is that you do them
* Overall course grading is qualitative and cumulative
	1. First half of class, two consequential assignments
		1. Group assignment—Quantitative and qualitative strategies for literature analysis—due week 7
		2. Individual assignment—Annotated bibliography of 24 works related to your area of interest
			1. To be posted on your individual blogs, also due week 7
			2. You should add a few items each week so this is not a rush job
	2. Second half of class, two consequential assignments
		1. Literature review on your area of interest—around Thanksgiving
		2. Theoretical essay or white paper on your area of interest

# Week-by-Week Schedule

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| **Week/Date** | **Topic** | **Assignments Due 5 pm the Day Before Class** |
| Week 1: Jan 19 | Information Systems as a Window on Academic Literature, Theory, Argument, and Related Professional Skills | First class assignment:* Select your initial content focus (can be one of my recommendations or your own choice)—you can refine it later as you start to read
* Start to search across disciplines/methods for relevant academic research
* Submit a document with full bibliographic information for ***4 relevant articles***
* 1. Use bibliographic software
* 2. Include the author’s abstract
* 3. Select academic journal articles\* representing
	+ Different fields (e.g., econ, sociology, management) or theoretical perspectives
	+ Different methods (e.g., lit review, theory paper, quantitative methods, qualitative methods)
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| Week 2: Jan 26 | Article Analysis | * *Course* blog assignment:
	1. Annotated bibliography (AB)
		1. What is it?
		2. What is it for?
		3. Examples of *published* ABs on topics of interest to you?
		4. Where are they published, when they are?
		5. What is the format of a publishable AB?
		6. Style sheets—what are they and why are they important?
* *Individual* blog assignment
	+ 1. Example of an article that makes a good *argument* about why some state of affairs is (why people don’t adopt x) or will be the way it is (why y predicts z)
		2. Theory of the “problem” rather than theory of the “solution” (not, why people should do q)
		3. Take a good example from your last week’s assignment or find a new example
		4. What are the guts of the argument? What’s the basis question? What are the basic assumptions? How would you diagram it? What’s missing? Can you fill it in?
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| Week 3: Feb 2 | Article Analysis (cont). | * Individual blog assignment:
	+ Review the Majchrzak template and the two examples--one with Ann's comments in caps.
	+ Complete the template for your week 2 article AND the article of your partner in the week 2 in class assignment.
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| Week 4: Feb 9 | What is Theory/Theorizing? | * Readings (posted on Blackboard:
	+ What Theory is Not?
	+ Why Break the Habit of a Lifetime?
* Course blog assignment:
	+ Comment substantively on one or more of these 3 questions and be prepared to discuss them all in class:
	+ What do YOU think about the “case *against* theory?” Look for an authoritative recent article on the same theme—are the arguments similar or different
	+ Do you agree with Sutton and Staw about what theory is *not*? Does their implicit idea of what theory *is* leave something important out, in your view? If so what is it?
	+ What kind (genre) of an academic journal article is Ortiz de Guinea and Markus? How well or poorly do it fit Sutton and Staw’s ideas of theory Justify your answer.
* Individual blog assignment:
	+ What is (as far as you know it today) the practical problem related to the research you are doing for this course?
	+ What is your *personal* theory about why the problem exists/happens/happened?
	+ What is your *personal* theory about how the problem might be solved?
	+ (*If* you are working with some “canonical theory” or “theory of provenance,” e.g., RBV, attribution theory, sociotechnical theory, technology acceptance theory) what is the relationship (if any) between your personal theories and the canonical theory (please name it)
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| Week 5: Feb 16 | Deep Assumptions, Wicked Problems, and Description as Theory | * Readings:
	+ Gregor: The Nature of Theory in Information Systems
	+ Batie: Wicked Problems
* Individual blog assignment
	+ Answer these questions about your Week 4 individual assignment:
	+ Practical problem?
	+ Personal theory of problem?
	+ Personal theory of the solution?
	+ What canonical theories are relevant?
* Course blog assignment:
	+ Comment on some of the points below and be prepared to discuss them all.
	+ Do you have any disagreements or concerns with Gregor about the types of theory?
	+ Where does your theorizing fit into Gregor's typology of theory? (pls do your individual assignment first)
	+ Do you think you and others in your field of study have an ethical obligation to study practical problems, whether wicked or tame?
	+ How (if at all) does Batie's article change your understanding of "practical problems?"
	+ Is the practical problem you are considering for this course "tame" or "wicked?” Justify your answer.
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| Week 6: Feb 23 | Systematic Reviews  | * Readings
	+ Schryen: Writing Qualitative IS Literature Reviews
	+ Sanberg and Alvesson: Ways of Constructing Research Questions
	+ Rowe: What Literature Review is Not
* Individual blog assignment:
	+ What are the major areas of agreement, if any, across these articles?
	+ What are the major areas of disagreement or divergence across these articles?
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| Week 7: Mar 2 | Quantitative and qualitative reviews and analyses of literature | * Individual assignment:
	+ Annotated bibliography due
* Team presentations
	+ Quantitative and qualitative methods for analyzing literature
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| Spring Break: Mar 9 |
| Week 8: Mar 16 | Abstracts, Annotations, and Literature Tables | * Individual blog assignment:
	+ Find a literature review on a topic related to your research interests
	+ Evaluate the paper according to criteria discussed in Week 6
	+ Post both the paper and your comments
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| Week 9: Mar 23 | Outlining the Literature Review | * Individual blog assignment
	+ Create a basic outline of your literature review paper
	+ Include one para introduction and lit summary table shells (row and column headers) and/or diagrams
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| Week 10: Mar 30 | Causal Assumptions in Theory | * Reading:
	+ Information Technology and Organizational Change: Causal Structure in Theory and Research
* Guest lecturer, Frantz Rowe, University of Nantes, to discuss literature review and causal assumptions in theorizing
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| Week 11: Apr 6 | The Theory Paper Genre | * Reading:
	+ Participation in Development and Implementation—Updating an Old, Tired Concept for Today’s IS Contexts
* Individual assignment
	+ Final (revised and expanded outline) literature review paper due
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| Week 12: Apr 13 | From Literature Review to Theory Paper | * Short presentations on literature reviews
* Clinic ideas for theory paper development
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| Week 13: Apr 20 | Comparing Literature Reviews and Theory Papers | * Reading:
	+ The Craft of Writing Theory Articles in AMR
* Individual assignment:
	+ Expanded outline of "theory paper" due. It should include section headers with brief entries for each and **shells/drafts of relevant tables and diagrams.**
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| Week 14: Apr 27 | Theory building: varied approaches to modeling relations among concepts | * Clinic theoretical models
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| Week 15: May 4  | Wrap-Up | * Individual assignment:
	+ Final (revised and expanded outline) theory paper due
	+ Final presentations and lessons learned
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