



<b>COURSE TITLE BLACKBOARD SITE</b>	MIS7463 Virtual Work Environments Spring 2008 – <a href="http://my.ltu.edu">http://my.ltu.edu</a> and select CRN 3715
<b>INSTRUCTOR</b>	Dr. Alan McCord Executive Director, LTU Online College Professor of Management Lawrence Technological University Office Engineering Suite E-109 Email <a href="mailto:mccord@ltu.edu">mccord@ltu.edu</a> Office Phone 248-204-2382 / Cell Phone 734-323-1559 (before 9pm) Pronto amccord / Skype amccord48104 / AOL IM amccord48104 Office hours by appointment
<b>SCHEDULE</b>	<b>On-line modules and exam period (College of Management schedule):</b> January 14 – April 26, 2008  See <a href="http://www.ltu.edu/registrars_office/calendar_final_exam.index.asp">http://www.ltu.edu/registrars_office/calendar_final_exam.index.asp</a> for LTU academic calendar information.
<b>LEVEL / HOURS PREREQUISITE</b>	Graduate Degree / 3 semester credit hours Prerequisite: MIS6013 or equivalent
<b>REQUIRED TEXT</b>  (See Blackboard for additional resources)	Garton, C. & Wegrzyn, K. (2006). <i>Managing Without Walls: Maximize Success with Virtual, Global, and Cross-cultural Teams</i> . Double Oak, TX: Mc Press. ISBN 158347062X  Available for online purchase through LTU Bookstore at: <a href="http://lawrence-tech1.bkstore.com/bkstore/TextbookSelection.do?st=489">http://lawrence-tech1.bkstore.com/bkstore/TextbookSelection.do?st=489</a>  Four e-books are used in this course and are described below. These books are available at no cost online from the LTU Library.
<b>ADDENDA</b>	LTU Online student resources <a href="http://www.ltu.edu/ltuonline/currentonline.asp">http://www.ltu.edu/ltuonline/currentonline.asp</a> Course-specific information is provided in the “Course Information” area
<b>TECHNICAL SUPPORT</b>	Technical support for using Blackboard is provided by VITRC, 248-204-3750 or <a href="mailto:vitr@ltu.edu">vitr@ltu.edu</a>

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**Course Schedule**

This fully online course begins with a partial week online course orientation period to familiarize yourself with the online learning environment and to meet online or via phone with your instructor. Each subsequent week starts on a Monday and ends on a Sunday.

Dates	Modules	Topics / Readings	Assignments Due
Prior to Start of Semester and Week of Jan 14 – Jan 16	Module 0	Overview of textbook Online Learning Orientation	Course orientation Individual Pre-Assessment
Week of Jan 17 – Jan 27	Module 1	<b>Introduction to Virtual Work Environments &amp; Computer Supported Cooperative Work</b> Garton & Wegryn (G&W) 1 – Virtual Management Dasgupta (D) – Virtual Teams Classification Overview of Bb asynchronous and synchronous tools Overview of Virtual Work Tools and Use With Assignments	Bb Forums
Week of Jan 28 – Feb 3	Module 2	<b>Trends in Virtual Work &amp; Project/Product Life Cycles and Virtual Work</b> G&W 2 – The Virtual Manager G&W 3 – Creating & Managing the Virtual Team	Bb Forums Wimba Session
Week of Feb 4 – Feb 10			
Week of Feb 11 – Feb 17	Module 3	<b>Technologies Used to Facilitate Virtual Work</b> G&W 13 – Virtual Mgt & Communication Tools McCord & Boone (filed under Bb “Syllabus” tab) Gignac (G) – Technologies Overview Overview of MS Sharepoint and Related Assignments	Bb Forums Assign 1 (opt)
Week of Feb 18 – Feb 24	Module 4	<b>Establishing Virtual Communities of Practice</b> D – Effective Virtual Working thru Communities of Practice D – Electronic Networks/Communities of Practice Overview of Scholar Bookmarking and Related Assignments	Bb Forums
Week of Feb 25 – Mar 2	Module 5	<b>Managing Your Personal Time &amp; Communication</b> G&W 6 – Time Management Overview of Outlook e-mail management functions	Bb Forums Assign 1 (opt) Mid-Term Evaluation
Week of Mar 3 – Mar 9	Module 6	<b>Using Group Collaboration Software Suites</b> G&W 7 – Virtual Teamwork G&F – Technology and Virtual Teams Overview of Selected Collaboration Suites	Bb Forums
<i>Mid-semester Break – Mar 10 – Mar 15</i>			
Week of Mar 17 – Mar 23	Module 7	<b>Designing Virtual Work Environments</b> G&F – A Model for the Analysis of Virtual Teams G – Selecting the Right Technology G – Integration Issues	Bb Forums Other assignment(s) due

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Dates	Modules	Topics / Readings	Assignments Due
Week of Mar 24 – Mar 30	Module 8	<b>Designing Virtual Work Processes</b> G&W 8 – Team Processes & Procedures G&W 4 – Managing Global Teams G&W 9 – Virtual Communication G – Dealing With Cultures	Bb Forums Other assignment(s) due
Week of Mar 31 – Apr 6	Module9	<b>Leading &amp; Facilitating Virtual Teams</b> Godar & Ferris (G&F) – Leading From Afar D – Motivation in Online Communities D – Online Group Facilitation Skills D – Improving Discussion in Virtual Communities	Bb Forums Other assignment(s) due
Week of Apr 7 – Apr 13	Module 10	<b>Managing Trust, Conflict, &amp; Risk on Virtual Teams</b> D – Establishing & Sustaining Trust in Virtual Organizations Overview of Reputation Systems G&W 11 – Managing Conflict G&W 12 – Virtual Mgt of High-Risk & Catastrophic Events	Bb Forums Assign 2
Week of Apr 14 – Apr 20			
Week of Apr 21 – Apr 27	Final Exams	Course Summary	Final Course Evaluation

**Student Evaluation**

The course has five assignments totaling 100 points (left column). Letter grades are awarded based on the total number of points achieved (right column). Points are deducted for late assignments.

Assignments	Points
Assignment 1: Academic journal/book summary related to virtual work or virtual technologies (variable due date)	20
Assignment 2: Evaluate either 1) virtual work software, or 2) virtual work device	30
Completion of virtual work tool activities and participation in Bb discussion forums	30
Final Exam	20
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

Class Points	Letter Grade
96 and above	A
90 – 95	A-
87 – 89	B+
83 – 86	B
80 – 82	B-
77 – 79	C+
73 – 76	C
70 – 72	C-
61 – 70	D
60 and below	E

**Note: Grades lower than “B” fall below the LTU graduate standard**

## **Educational Goals**

Today's work environment is becoming increasingly virtual, with workers collaborating with colleagues in different time zones, from different companies, and from different cultures. A wide range of technologies are available to support virtual work environments, and new skills are needed to implement virtual work technologies and to manage virtual teams.

The course focuses on the design and use of virtual collaboration technologies to support today's virtual work environment. The inter-disciplinary field of Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) will be introduced. Technologies used to support virtual work communication, conferencing, and collaboration will be explored, with emphasis on current research in the field. Students will gain practical experience in the effective use of virtual collaboration tools. Emphasis will be placed on the behavioral, social, and managerial aspects of adopting and using collaboration technologies, and on issues or organizational and technological readiness for successful deployment of collaboration technologies.

## **Objectives**

- Define and discuss the characteristics of the evolving virtual work environment.
- Discuss the foundations of the field of Computer Supported Cooperative Work.
- Define and discuss various virtual collaboration tools, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and the applicability of each to specific virtual work situations.
- Experiment with and assess a range of virtual work collaboration tools, and evaluate the behavioral, social, and managerial aspects associated with implanting these tools.
- Assess the virtual work characteristics of a work environment, its readiness for implementing virtual work tools, and the virtual work tools most appropriate to meet its business needs.

## **Prerequisite Skills**

Students should have a working understanding of information technology as addressed in MIS6013 Management Information Systems. Students should be able to use personal productivity and Web software.

## **Instructional Methods and Course Organization**

A variety of instructional methodologies are used in this course. List the specific methods used in your course, which may include but are not limited to:

- **Blackboard learning environment** – Blackboard at [my.ltu.edu](http://my.ltu.edu) contains the syllabus, all assignments, reading materials, streaming videos, narrated Powerpoint mini-lectures, podcasts, written lecture notes, chapter quizzes, links to Web resources, and discussion forums. You will submit all assignments via Blackboard, and are expected to participate regularly in discussion topics. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the organization of the Blackboard site. You will want to check the site frequently for announcements reminding you of new resources and upcoming assignments.
- **Collaboration environments** – A range of collaboration technologies will be used including Wimba (a Web collaboration environment integrated into Blackboard), Microsoft Sharepoint (document and process sharing), Wiki (knowledge management), Scholar (social bookmarking), Skype (VOIP and conference calling), and others.
- **Student/Instructor Conversations** – Students keep in touch with the instructor via e-mail messages, telephone conference calls, and IM conversations.
- **Self-assessments** – Pre- and post- self-assessment tools will help students measure their entering skills and progress during the course.
- **Required readings** – Textbook chapters should be read according to the schedule outlined in the syllabus. Chapters will be discussed online.

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- **Assignments** – A range of assignments provide students with the opportunity to apply theory and observe results.

### **LTU NetLibrary eBooks**

In addition to the required hard-copy text, the following chapters from these three NetLibrary eBooks may be used in MIS7463. Consult the syllabus schedule and Blackboard modules for more information. eBooks are available at no cost to students through the Lawrence Tech Library <http://www.ltu.edu/library> under the “Search the List of All Databases” link.

Author: Dasgupta, Subhasish (coded as “D” in the course schedule below)  
Title: Encyclopedia of Virtual Communities and Technologies  
Publication: Hershey, PA: Idea Group Reference, 2006. eBook ISBN: 9781591407973

Chapters:

- Effective Virtual Working through Communities of Practice
- Electronic Networks of Practice and Communities of Practice
- Establishing and Sustaining Trust in Virtual Organizations
- Improving Discussion in Virtual Communities
- Motivation in Online Communities
- Online Group Facilitation Skills
- Virtual Teams Classification

Author: Gignac, Francine (coded as “G” in the course schedule below)  
Title: Building Successful Virtual Teams  
Publication: Boston: Artech House, Inc., 2005. eBook ISBN: 9781580538794

Chapters:

- Technologies Overview
- Selecting the Right Technology
- Integration Issues
- Dealing With Cultures

Authors: Godar, Susan; Ferris, Sharmila Pixy (coded as “G&F” in the course schedule below)  
Title: Virtual and Collaborative Teams: Process, Technologies, and Practice  
Publication: Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing, 2004. eBook ISBN: 9781591402053

Chapters:

- Leading From Afar: Strategies for Effectively Leading Virtual Teams
- Technology and Virtual Teams
- A Model for the Analysis of Virtual Teams

### **Class Policies and Expectations**

I plan to offer you a valuable learning experience, and expect us to work together to achieve this goal. Here are some general expectations regarding this course:

- Each student has a LTU e-mail account. If you wish to use a different e-mail address for this course, please **change your e-mail address in Blackboard under “Student Tools”** and send an e-mail to me so I can store your address in my e-mail directory.
- Readings, discussion forum participation, and written assignments must be completed according to the class schedule. If business travel will take you away from regular participation, please clear these dates with me in advance.
- It is essential that all students actively contribute to the course objectives through their experiences and working knowledge.
- All assignments must be submitted on schedule, via Blackboard, and using Microsoft Office-compatible software. If you need to submit an assignment via e-mail, contact the instructor in advance. Late work will be reduced in value.
- Assignments must be completed to an adequate standard to obtain a passing grade. Requirements for each assignment are detailed in this syllabus and on the LTU Online web site.
- Be prepared to log into Blackboard at least once each day. Please focus your on-line correspondence within the appropriate Blackboard discussion forums so that your colleagues can learn from you.

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- At midterm and at the end of the course, you will be invited to participate in a University evaluation of this course. Your feedback is important to the University, to LTU Online, and to me as an instructor, and I encourage you to participate in the evaluation process.

It is important for you as students to know what to expect from me as your instructor:

- I will be available to you via e-mail and phone, and will promptly reply to your messages.
- I will be available to you for face-to-face appointments as requested.
- I will maintain the Blackboard web site with current materials, and will resolve any content-related problems promptly as they are reported to me.
- I will send out a weekly e-mail update to all class members to guide upcoming work and remind you of assignment due dates.
- I will return all assignments to you promptly, and will include individualized comments and suggestions with each assignment.
- I will hold our personal written or verbal communications in confidence. I will not post any of your assignments for viewing by the class without requesting your approval in advance.
- I will treat all members of the class fairly, and will do my best to accommodate individual learning styles and special needs.

If any of these points need clarification, or when special circumstances arise that require my assistance, please contact me so that we can discuss the matter personally.

### **Practical Guidelines for Class Load Expectations**

A three-credit graduate course generally requires at least nine hours per week of time commitment. Here are some practical guidelines to help schedule your time commitments for this online course:

1. A 14-week semester (the Summer “E” semester is compressed into 11 weeks) would require at least 126 hours of time commitment to successfully complete all readings, activities, assignments, and texts as described in this syllabus.
2. You should reserve at least 6 hours per week to read the required textbook chapters and resources, participate in online discussions, review presentation materials, and work through online quizzes. This effort will total at least 84 hours over the course of the semester.
3. You should organize your remaining time to roughly correspond with the point value of each major assignment. This means that you should plan to spend at least:
  - 8-9 hours preparing your case study review;
  - 24-40 hours working with your group on the three parts of your semester-long project; and
  - 8-9 hours working on the various components of your reflective consolidation (final exam).

These guidelines may not reflect the actual amount of outside time that you – as a unique individual with your own learning style – will need to complete the course requirements. The number of hours each week will vary based on assignment due dates, so please plan ahead to insure that you schedule your academic, work, and personal time effectively. The following graphic can be used to guide you in planning your weekly course work to remain on schedule:

Online Learning Schedule						
MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Read Textbook Chapter						
		Take Online Chapter Quiz				
		Participate in Weekly Blackboard Discussions				
Individual and Group Project Work - Coordinate With Colleagues						
Instructor Communication - As Needed						

## Assignment Details

Course assignments and evaluation criteria are detailed below. Please review these requirements carefully. See the section Academic Resources / Assessment Guidelines for information about assessment of written and oral presentations.

Details for all assignments are shown below. Please note that you should **not** submit any assignments to the Blackboard “Digital Drop Box.” All assignments are submitted using the Blackboard “Assignments” function. Some assignments are also posted to the Blackboard Discussion Forum for student comments.

### Assignment 1: Academic Journal / Book Evaluation (20 Points)

**Overview** – In this assignment you will develop and deliver a brief (between 3 and 5 page) critical analysis of a popular book or academic journal article related to virtual work or virtual work technologies. The focus of your review will include your interpretation of the author’s views on virtual work and its potential impact on the workplace over the next five to ten years. Please use the following outline for your review:

1. **Thesis:** A clear, coherent, and assertive statement about your inference of impact of the author’s view over the next 5 to 10 years
2. **Support:** A clear and brief statement of at least three proposed “proofs” that support your thesis
3. **Cause and Effect:** A more detailed discussion of the “proofs” introduced above which demonstrate “cause and effect” and critical thinking
4. **Conclusion:** A restatement of your thesis/argument and closing guidance for interpreting your work and applying your work to other situations

**Proposal** – Make your book / journal article / web sites review proposal to the “Assignment Proposals” discussion forum. Each book or journal article may only be reviewed once, and proposals are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Deliverables and Evaluation** – Please deliver your document to the Blackboard “Assignments” area. Note that this assignment uses the SafeAssignment plagiarism detection service. You will also post a brief item to the class Wiki site, and deliver a 10 minute presentation and discussion during a Wimba synchronous session.

Your work will be evaluated to a maximum of 20 points based on these criteria:

- Your **thesis and support (up to 6 points)**
  - Forward-looking summary of your thesis – 2 points
  - Inclusion of at least three proposed “proofs” to support your thesis – 3 points
  - Organization and writing quality – 1 point
- Your **cause and effect and conclusion (up to 6 points)**

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- Detailed discussion of your “proofs” introduced above – 3 points
- Demonstration of “cause and effect” thinking and strong closing argument – 2 points
- Use of APA citation for your article/book and other references – 1 point
- **Your Wiki bibliographic posting (up to 4 points)**
  - Posting a brief (~two paragraph) summary to the appropriate Wiki location – 2 points
  - Including an APA citation to your work and at least one appropriate Web reference to a related article or topic – 2 points
- **Your presentation/review of your work (up to 4 points)**
  - Clear and brief summary of your work – 2 points
  - Clear and thoughtful responses to in-class questions – 2 points

**Assignment 2: Evaluate Virtual Work Software or Virtual Work Device (30 Points)**

**Overview** – In this assignment you will review and evaluate either:

1. A software product or suite which enables virtual work; or
2. A hardware device or suite of devices which enable virtual work

The focus of your review will include an overview of the selected software or hardware, an overview of how the software or hardware supports virtual work, personal experiences and/or reviews of the hardware or software for use in a specific virtual work environment, and your evaluation of the issues associated with adopting the software or hardware in the workplace. Please use the following outline for your review:

1. Product: Identification of the selected software or hardware product, including web references and product data sheets
2. Application: Overview of how the software or hardware product supports virtual work
3. Reviews: Personal and/or trade journal reviews of the hardware or software in support of a specific virtual work environment
4. Implementation: Issues associated with implementing the technology in the workplace (required IT architecture, required personal technologies, costs, training, adherence to international standards, vendor positioning, product life cycle)
5. Conclusion: Your own conclusions about the potential impact of the hardware or software on virtual work environments

**Proposal** – Make your software / hardware review proposal to the “Assignment Proposals” discussion forum. Each product may only be reviewed once, and proposals are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Deliverables and Evaluation** – Please deliver your document to the Blackboard “Assignments” area. Note that this assignment uses the SafeAssignment plagiarism detection service. You will also post a brief item to the class Wiki site, and deliver a 10 minute presentation and discussion during the closing on-ground class session.

Your work will be evaluated to a maximum of 20 points based on these criteria:

- **Your review document (up to 6 points)**
  - Minimum 10 page review document – 1 point
  - Organization and writing quality – 3 point
  - Use of APA citation for your references – 2 points
- **Your “product description” and “application” sections (up to 5 points)**
  - Thorough description of the product and its capabilities (up to 2 points)
  - Thorough exploration of the use of the product to support virtual work (up to 3 points)
- **Your “reviews” section (up to 5 points)**
  - Identification and overview of at least three reviews of the product (up to 2 points)
  - Your own summary and interpretation of the reviews to form conclusions (up to 3 points)
- **Your “implementation” and “conclusions” sections (up to 5 points)**

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- Thorough exploration of implementation requirements and issues for the product (up to 3 points)
- Your own conclusion about the potential for improving virtual work by adopting the product (up to 2 points)
- Your **Wiki bibliographic posting (up to 4 points)**
  - Posting a brief (~two paragraph) summary to the appropriate Wiki location – 2 points
  - Including an APA citation to your work and at least one appropriate Web reference to a related article or topic – 2 points
- Your **presentation/review of your work (up to 5 points)**
  - Clear and brief summary of your work – 2 points
  - Accompanying PowerPoint or Web demonstration – 2 points
  - Clear and thoughtful responses to in-class questions – 1 point

**Virtual Work Tool and Blackboard Discussion Forum Participation (30 points)**

Each student is expected to actively participate in on-ground and online activities. There are many opportunities for participation in this hybrid class, and all forms of participation noted in the syllabus are counted toward your overall score. **Participation is evaluated to a maximum of 30 points** based on:

- Up to 10 points – Completing reading assignments and actively participating in Blackboard asynchronous discussion forums throughout the semester.
- Up to 10 points – Actively contributing to the Sharepoint, Wiki, and Scholar class sites as instructed in the course Blackboard “practice” modules.
- Up to 10 points – Actively participating in the scheduled Wimba synchronous work sessions scheduled during the semester.

**Final Exam (20 Points)**

**Overview** – A final examination covers all course content. This final examination consists of two components: 1) an “opening statement” submitted to the instructor; and 2) selection of specific cases focused on the use of virtual work tools to improve organizational performance. The final examination is designed to help you reflect on the key concepts and principles learned from this course, and how this learning may add value to your future learning or professional objectives.

**Deliverables and Evaluation** – Your **opening statement (approximately 2 to 3 pages) will be evaluated to a maximum of 10 points** based on the depth of your assessment, your linkage to course content, and your overall organization and writing quality (see evaluation rubrics in this document for more information). Your **case analyses to a maximum of 15 points** based on your ability to respond specifically to the questions raised in each case, to apply learning from the course to each case, and to provide APA citations for external sources used to support your conclusions.

## **Syllabus Addenda**

Please see the LTU Online “Current Students” web site <http://www.ltu.edu/ltuonline/currentonline.asp> for comprehensive information about Lawrence Tech’s academic services, library services, student services, and academic integrity standards. The content of this web site is explicitly included as syllabus requirements.

The LTU Online “Current Students” web site also includes grading rubrics used by your instructor to evaluate written assignments, discussion forum participation, and group assignments. Please note that the SafeAssign anti-plagiarism product will be used for written assignments submitted for this course. Please see the instructions included on the LTU Online web site regarding the use of the SafeAssign product.