COURSE NUMBER: ISTM 6209 (online), Spring 2017
COURSE TITLE: WEB AND SOCIAL ANALYTICS
COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces the concepts, techniques, and tools of collecting, analyzing, and reporting digital data on how users interface with an organization through the web and social media. The course will also cover general concepts and techniques in the Business Intelligence (BI) field.
PREREQUISITES: N/A
CONTACT HOURS: Instruction time will be on average 1 hour per week for online discussion and live sessions. Students will spend an average (per week) of 2.5 hours reading and 4.5 hours working on case analysis, analytics assignments and projects. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 15 hours in instructional time and 105 hours on their assignments and preparing for class. Instructional time includes discussions and hands-on activities in class.
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- Understand the importance and benefits of web analytics in modern business
- Interpret and analyze web data to derive actionable customer intelligence
- Evaluate the measurements from various sources of data to use, and seeing the relationship between the actions you take and their results
- Understand and assess the impact and key strategies used by firms in digital advertising and measure the key metrics and economic values.

COURSE STRUCTURE: This is a 100% online course. Students in the class come from the DC area and around the world. The course is organized according to each weekly session. The course materials are divided into two types of content: asynchronous, on-your-own content (Digital Sessions) and synchronous learning experiences (Live Sessions) where students gather together in an assigned moment in time to learn via Blackboard’s Collaborate feature. The synchronous sessions will be run in an interactive format, consisting primarily of case discussions and interactive lectures/problem solving. There is also a substantial group assignment (Group
Project) that requires on-your-own research and writing as well as synchronous group work conducted at times that are determined by the group members themselves.

Everything that you need to complete the course is on Blackboard (including a link to where to purchase a small course packet of materials from Harvard Publishing).

We have worked hard to make this the most effective and convenient educational experience possible. The Internet may still be a novel learning environment for you, but in one sense it is no different than a traditional college class: how much and how well you learn is ultimately up to YOU. You will succeed if you are diligent about keeping up with the class schedule, and if you take advantage of opportunities to communicate with us as well as with your fellow students through office hours, on-line discussion boards and synchronous sessions.

READINGS

& MATERIALS:
Lecture slides and handouts distributed by the instructors (available on Blackboard)

- [Required] Harvard Business School Cases
  o Electronic Harvard Coursepack
  o Register on the Harvard Business Publishing Education site
  o Use the following unique link to purchase the cases
    http://ch.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/57660642

- [Optional] Books:

- Analytics Software:
  o We will use this semester is R and Excel.
  o To start learning R and find more information, please refer to the website
    (Quick R: http://www.statmethods.net/index.html)

GRADING:
The course grade will be a weighted average of assignments, a project, and two exams. The relative importance of the different components is given below.

Online Class Participation 10%
- Discussion Board Participation 4%
- Live Session Participation 6%

Assignments 25%
- Individual Written Case Analysis (2x) 10%

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- Web Analytics Homework (2x)  15%
  *(Self-selected team up to 2)*
Midterm Exams (2x)  40%
Group Project  25%

SESSION

PREPARATION: A quick note as we get started: This course is organized by episodes within each week’s session. I would like you to begin each Session by watching the first overview videos (episode). From there, you should view the In-depth materials and read the related materials and assignments (as needed). We will use the discussion board very frequently to talk about any issues you have with the cases and hands-on exercises. Please check the discussion board frequently – both to post any questions that you have and to help your classmates answer their questions. For some of the synchronous session, we will use cases. Case-based learning means it is important be adequately prepared. I recommend that you prepare for these sessions by ensuring that you are keeping up with the course, doing the background reading in the text, and preparing the case. To get the most out of the cases, it is necessary that you come to these sessions ready (and willing) to share your comments.

COURSE ACTIVITIES: Lectures and Participation: All lecture notes, including PowerPoint slides, will be available on Blackboard. In order for us to learn the fullest amount, it is necessary for everyone to come ready to participate regularly. This means thoughtful participation in discussion boards, beyond a mere “I agree.” I will assess participation after each Session, based on quality of your comments and questions in the case-based synchronous sessions, as well as participation in the discussion boards. To pull your weight, you should be participating regularly, be prepared, and contribute substantively to the discussions in the discussion boards and the synchronous sessions. I will sometimes call on volunteers in synchronous classes, but I also might “cold call.” When called upon, I don’t expect that you necessarily have “the” answer. I do expect you to indicate a familiarity with the issues being discussed and a willingness to share your opinion with your colleagues. I encourage you to ask classmates to offer advice on how to improve your communication effectiveness. Additionally, I reserve the right to adjust your individual participation grade downward at the end of the semester to reflect absences in our online course space.

Midterm Exams: There will be TWO midterm exams in this course, which will be given on the weeks scheduled in the course calendar. Exams will cover material from lecture notes, text, cases, exercises and homework. The exams will include multiple choice and/or short answer questions, and problems and exercises. There will be NO make-up exam, except for documented medical reasons.

HBR Case Discussion: All HBR cases will be discussed in different live sessions. Students are also required to participate in interactive case studies which include responding to specific questions via the discussion board found under ‘Discussions’ on Blackboard. Active participation in the discussion board requires at least ONE posting per question/topic, responses to specific comments made by other participants, including well-informed arguments and integration of concepts.
***If you are unable to participate in a live case discussion session, you are required to submit a written HBR case analysis in addition to the two required case analysis (see below and Appendix I) BEFORE the live session is scheduled to begin.

**Written Case Analysis:** Each student is also required to submit any TWO (2) out of the SIX (6) assigned written Harvard case analyses (AmazonAppleFBGOOG, BBVA, AirFrance, NewYorkTimes, HubSport, and UnitedBreaksGuitar). Individual written case analysis must be submitted (in the appropriate Blackboard dropdown) at the TUESDAY evening 11:59pm EST when the week that the case is scheduled to be discussed. We will discuss these cases during the synchronous sessions we will have during our time together. These are meant to enhance your learning and to help you better prepare for the exam (See Appendix I).

**Assignments:** Assignments will be based on material covered in lecture notes, cases, exercises, and other reading materials. Assignments may include case analysis and problem solving using techniques learned in class. Homework assignments will be due at the TUESDAY evening 11:59pm EST of the specified week submitted in the appropriate Blackboard dropdown. Late assignments will not be accepted.

**Group Project:** Students will have the opportunity to further sharpen their skills and acquire hands-on experience with practical web analytics problems through a team project. Students will form groups consisting of between 3-5 people depending upon the size of class. Each group will design a web analytical solution that will be applied to a specific business that operates in a specific industry. Each team will give a brief class presentation on the project during the last week of classes. (See Appendix II)

**Getting Help:** Unless your question is of a confidential nature, you are strongly encouraged to pose questions via posts to the discussion board. More than likely someone else in the class has the same question, and we can all benefit as a community by a group conversation. Confidential questions should be sent to the professor and the teaching assistant. PLEASE INSERT THE PHRASE “WEB AND SOCIAL ANALYTICS” IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF YOUR EMAIL, which will help the professor prioritize the response.

****This course outline is intended as a basic guide, but deviations from it are possible. Additional assignments may be given, and the order and emphasis of topics may be changed. Please ensure that you check the Blackboard website regularly for updates.

**OTHER NOTES & TIPS:**

1. You can e-mail me 24 hours a day for extra help; I am your **first level** of assistance
2. Save a BACK-UP copy of all of your work. So many people lose their work. Also, remember to save your work periodically while completing the assignments.
3. **DO NOT** leave printing or editing until the last minute.
4. Notices and announcements will be broadcasted via electronic mail through
Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check your e-mail at least once daily!

5. To adapt the concepts of this course to the students of this particular section, I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any time, including, but not limited to assignments, class meetings, procedures, and/or grading criteria.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: The code of academic integrity applies to all courses in the George Washington School of Business. Please become familiar with the code. All students are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity throughout the course of the semester. Please note that acts of academic dishonesty during the course will be prosecuted and harsh penalties may be sought for such acts. Students are responsible for knowing what acts constitute academic dishonesty. The code may be found at: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Religious Accommodation
Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

Disability Support Services (DSS)
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

Mental Health Services 202-994-5300
The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. counselingcenter.gwu.edu/
APPENDIX I

A FRAMEWORK FOR CASE ANALYSES

Your assignment is to analyze the situation facing the firm at the time of the case and make detailed suggestions for future action. You should assume that you are taking the role of a web and business analytics consultant that your professor is the client who has provided you with the case study as a way to familiarize you with the situation. This is NOT an exercise in repeating the facts in the case. The very best case analyses are those that incorporate key concepts from the course.

Format for this assignment is a Word document or PDF that should be no longer than 4-6 pages, single-spaced (not including attachments). Some questions to be answered will be provided beforehand.

SAMPLE CASE ANALYSES STRUCTURE

1. **Executive Summary (10%)**: This section summarizes the major problems facing the company and the proposed solution. It also outlines some of the methods used to arrive at the recommended actions. This should be short but structured so that your client would be satisfied with the summary would not need to look through the body of the analysis. In addition, this section should summarize the answers to any specific questions asked at the end of the case, and be sure to include any supporting analyses (e.g. spreadsheets).

2. **Assessment of Current Situation (20%)**: Here one examines critically the current history of the firm to determine its strengths and weaknesses and how these derived from past actions of the firm. This assessment may include an analysis of customers, competitors, and environmental threats facing the company as well as any distinctive advantages it may have in competing in such a situation. Here, DO NOT REPEAT CASE FACTS unless they are relevant to your point. You should assume that the audience is your client and therefore the ones who provided you with the case information. In other words, they are very familiar with the information since they have been living the case up until the time that they engaged your agency. You should use various analytical techniques (e.g., SWOT, BCG Grid, Porter Five-Forces model) to make your points. You should include a slide “Big Rock Issue” in this section – what is the main task you need to solve in this case analysis.

3. **Strategic Options (30%)**: This includes a list of the general directions the firm might go which could resolve its problems. With each option should be an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages to the firm. You should highlight your chosen option and why it was preferred above the others presented.

4. **Tactical Plan (20%)**: This section outlines the implementation of the preferred option. The tactical plan involves (but is not limited to) such issues as the actual size and composition of the promotional budget, contingency plans in the event of competitor response, or the timing and implementation of your plan.

5. **Grammar, Argument Strength, Organization (20%)**

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2 Source: Professor Vanessa G. Perry, The George Washington University

APPENDIX II
GROUP PROJECT

You are appointed as the new members of the data analytics team for a company!

The newly appointed CEO believes in the power of data analytics and wants to make a big impact to the company’s competitive positioning and the bottom line. He/she asked your group to come up with a detailed plan that will transform the company into a data-driven analytic enterprise as outlined in our course material.

The group must first come up with an appropriate business that incorporates the need for tactical web and social analytics strategies. The project should achieve two goals: First, it is an unbiased and objective analysis of projected costs required to achieve expected benefits. The second objective is to convince your CEO to accept your recommendations. Specific details for the project report should include, but are not limited to:

- Assess companies’ current capabilities: May include the following: What is your business? How do you make profit? Who are your customers? What demographics? Current Market analysis: size, major players, market share, product differentiation, and etc.
- Identifying all applicable internal and external data sources for the enterprise such as current traffic data analysis and KPI.
- Making the actionable data available to management and the executive team.
- Describing the analytical framework for how this data will be utilized to help with business decision making.
- Outlining the specific analytics driven online strategy that will be deployed to increase company sales
- Making recommendation on company website, structure, and its content.
- Making recommendation on web analytics tools and vendors.
- SEO/SEM/Display and Social Networks Strategy. You may propose a search engine per-click campaign and evaluate your campaign effectiveness using KPIs.
- Web-Analytics implementation

We will have several groups of 3-5 Students (depending on the final count). Each group will select a company for this project. The assignment is to develop a detailed Analytics Roadmap that addresses the specific items listed above.

You will be expected to complete the following:

- A detailed project report (20-25 Pages, single-space) including all tables and figures (excluding executive summary).

The final Project Report is due on Friday, 4/28/2017 11:59pm.