

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

COURSE SYLLABUS
POLS 395-2
ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT
Fall, 2007

Instructor: Yu-Che Chen, Ph.D.
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Office: Division of Public Administration, Second floor of the IABSO building, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115
Phone: 815-753-2205
Class Location: Dusable 252
Dates/Time: Wednesdays 3:30 – 6:10 p.m.
Blackboard Site: <https://webcourses.niu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description

The use of information and communication technology in public affairs is increasingly a fact of life. Electronic filing of income taxes, the use of YouTube for political campaigning, and electronic surveillance for homeland security are just a few examples. The high penetration rate of broadband connections and a new generation of mobile devices (i.e., I-phone) and their applications provide an ever-increasing array of possibilities for integrating information technology into public affairs.

However, the advancement of information technology also creates new challenges and possibilities that require more informative and deliberate approaches to its utilization. For example, what happens to citizens who do not have fast and reliable internet access when more and more government services are moving online? One needs to understand the extent and nature of the digital divide to address it properly. Other issues include digital privacy and security, accessibility, and the development and implementation of electronic government initiatives.

This course provides the knowledge to better meet the challenges and realize the full potential of information technology in public affairs. It covers the vision, politics and policies, and the management and implementation of e-government. With an explicit emphasis on management and implementation, the course will foster knowledge and appreciation for how to translate e-government ideas into reality.

This course will engage students in both understanding and applying knowledge related to electronic government. Assignments are applied and practical in nature. The goal of these assignments is to introduce real-world problems while encouraging students to connect ideas to their implementation.

Course Objectives

The primary objective of this course is to provide an in-depth understanding of the concepts and issues related to electronic government. Upon completing this course, students should have a good understanding of concepts and tools in the following areas:

- E-government and e-governance
- Policies and politics of e-government
- Management and implementation of electronic government

Course Learning Resources

Required Textbook:

Garson, G. David. (2006). *Public Information Technology and E-Governance: Managing the Virtual State*. (paperback). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers. (ISBN: 0-7637-3468-3).

Other required readings and additional resources will be posted in the Blackboard course environment.

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Assignments, Due Dates, and Grading

Table 1. Summary Table for Assignments, Due Dates, and Grade Points

Due Date	Assignment	Grade Points
Always	Active Participation	150
Sept. 19 (Wed)	Online Forum Assignment	150
Oct. 3 (Wed)	First Midterm Exam	200
Oct. 24 (Wed)	Web Portal Evaluation	150
Nov. 14 (Wed)	Second Midterm Exam	200
Dec. 12 (Wed)	Knowledge Portfolio	150

Exams and Assignments

Course assignments aim to help develop the student's problem-solving capabilities in the area of electronic government. They are all due at the beginning of class. Below is a brief description of each assignment. More details will be forthcoming in the Blackboard course environment.

Midterm Exams

There will be two mid-term exams. The exams will have a variety of written identification and short answer questions. Prior to each exam, a study guide and specific exam format information will be made available.

Online Forum Assignment

This assignment will give students the opportunity to evaluate and participate in an online forum. Students will learn the issues related to online forums. Moreover, students will simulate the process in one of the forums in blackboard. More detailed instructions will be distributed in the classroom and forthcoming in the course's Blackboard environment.

Knowledge Portfolio

The knowledge portfolio is a collection and analysis of issues and information about a topic area of your interest. This portfolio will build on the concepts and information presented in this course and will help you to engage in-depth research and analysis of a topic. Detailed instructions will be posted on the course web site.

E-Gov't Web Site Evaluation

Web Site assessment provides the opportunity to evaluate the primary electronic interface between government and citizens. This assignment will introduce usability, accessibility, transparencies, and other design principles that are relevant to e-government portals.

Grading

The instructions for each assignment will feature a section on grading criteria. Active participation has two components: (a) in-class and (b) online. Students are expected to finish the required readings for the week PRIOR to class. The goal is to have a productive and engaging in-class session to maximize learning outcomes. Students also need to actively participate in classroom discussions and online forums. Attendance is required. For participation, the standards are: A = regular and thoughtful participation; B = occasional and thoughtful participation; C = regular attendance, but little or no participation; D = less than regular attendance; and F = little or no attendance.

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Your final grade is based on your performance in various activities.

Active Participation	150 pts
Online forum assignment	150 pts
Two midterm exams (200 each)	400 pts
E-Gov't Web Site Evaluation	150 pts
<u>Knowledge Portfolio</u>	<u>150 pts</u>
Total	1000 pts

Course Policies and General Learning Resources

Communication Requirements

Students are required to check their NIU e-mails and course Blackboard site for announcements, readings, and resources. Blackboard is the primary vehicle for course announcements and schedules, distribution of readings, submission of assignments, and online discussions and postings.

Active Participation

Active participation is critical for your learning success. Active participation includes active involvement in classroom discussions and activities, online postings, and information exchange. ***You are responsible for finishing ALL the required readings before coming to class.*** You are encouraged to share your experience and perspective.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to understand and adhere to rules and regulations on plagiarism published by the Northern Illinois University. The NIU Undergraduate Catalog states: "students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging them. Students guilty of or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university." Examples of violations include using ideas without giving proper credit; paragraphs copied from one or more sources; and a paper that quotes, summarizes or paraphrases, or cuts and pastes words, phrases, or images from an Internet source without identification and the address of the web site. Violations will result in penalty a grade of F for that specific assignment or exam. Students are advised to learn and follow the rules for proper quoting, paraphrasing, and footnoting.

Makeup Exams

Makeup examination will only be given under extraordinary circumstances. Students need to contact the instructor before the scheduled exam. Failure to do so will result in a zero for the exam. To ensure the fairness of the process, students will be asked to provide documentation for the request for makeup exams.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will ONLY be accepted within 24 hrs of the specified due date and time, with a 10 percent grade deduction. Exceptions are only made for those who have a DOCUMENTED and EXTRAORDINARY EMERGENCY.

Incomplete

This course does not give incomplete except for extraordinary circumstances. The student needs to provide proper documentation from an official source for an incomplete petition.

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Classroom Etiquette

Proper etiquette ensures a positive and conducive learning environment by minimizing interruptions and distracting activities. Students are to arrive to class on time. Students are to remain for the entire session unless excused by the professor beforehand or confronted with a serious personal emergency. All electronic devices such as I-Pod, blackberry, cellular phones must be turned off during class. With prior notification to the instructor, exceptions will be given to the student who needs to attend to a sick family member, pregnant wife, special childcare situation, and so forth. Discussions in class should be courteous and respectful of others.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that may have an impact on their coursework must register with the Center for Access-Ability Resources (CAAR). It is located on the fourth floor of the Health Services Building (753-1303). CAAR will assist students in making appropriate instructional and/or examination accommodations with course instructors. It is important that CAAR and instructors be informed of any disability-related needs during the *first two weeks* of the semester.

Department Web Site

The Department of Political Science web site <http://polisci.niu.edu/> is a wonderful resource for undergraduate students. This up-to-date, central source of information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements and syllabi, exploring graduate study, researching career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to undergraduate programs and activities. There are also scholarships available.

Course Schedule and Required Readings

DATE TOPIC/READINGS

PART I: Course Overview: E-Government, E-Governance, Public Management Information Systems

Aug. 29 Course Overview

- Gant, Gant, and Johnson, (January 2002), *State Web Portals: Developing and Financing Web Service*. Washington, D.C.: IBM Endowment for the Business of Government. *Read only the first part of the report by Gant and Gant.*

Sept. 5 E-Government: Concepts, Issues, and Challenges

- Garson, Ch. 1 & Ch. 2
- West, (2006), “State and Federal E-Government in the United States”

PART II: Politics and Policies for E-Government

Sept. 12 E-Democracy

- Garson, Ch. 3
- Rogers, Everett, Lori Collins-Jarvis, Joseph Schmitz, 1994, “The PEN Project in Santa Monica: Interactive Communication, Equality, and Political Action,” *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 45(6): 401-410.

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DATE TOPIC/READINGS

Sept. 19 Simulation of Online Forums (Class meets online)
<<Online governance forum assignment>>

Sept. 26 Digital Divide; Information Access and Transparency

- Garson, Ch. 4 & Ch. 5
- Horrigan, John. 2007. *Why It Will Be Hard to Close the Broadband Divide*. Available on Pew Internet and American Life Project. (http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/220/report_display.asp)

Oct. 3 Privacy
<<First exam starts at 4:50 p.m.>>

- Garson, Ch. 6

Oct. 10 Privacy and Security

- Garson, Ch. 7

PART III: Management and Implementation

Oct. 17 E-Government Business model

- Garson, Ch. 9
- Gant, Gant, and Johnson, (January 2002), *State Web Portals: Developing and Financing Web Service*. Washington, D.C.: IBM Endowment for the Business of Government. (*Read the entire report*).

Oct. 24 Partnering, Outsourcing, Contracting, and Procurement
<<eGov't web site evaluation assignment due>>

- Garson, Ch. 10

Oct. 31 Planning

- Garson, Ch. 11
- Fletcher, (1999), "Strategic Planning for Information Technology Management in State Government" in David Garson (Ed.) *Information Technology and Computer Application in Public Administration: Issues and Trends*. Hershey, PA, USA: Idea Group Publishing

Nov. 7 Needs assessment and Project Management

- Garson, Ch. 12
- Miller, (June/July 2006), "Limp Kites and Unfulfilled Projects", *Public CIO*, Vol. 4, Issue 3, pp. 32-37.

Nov. 14 Implementation and evaluation
<<Second midterm exam starts at 4:50 p.m.>>

- Garson, Ch. 13

Nov. 21 Thanksgiving

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DATE **TOPIC/READINGS**

- Nov. 28** Information resource management
Knowledge management
- Fletcher (2003). "The Realities of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995: A Government-Wide Strategy for Information Resources Management," in David Garson (Ed.), *Public Information Technology: Policy and Management Issues*, Hershey, USA; London, UK: IGI Global.
 - Wagner, (2003), "Knowledge Management in E-Government," in the *Proceedings of the Ninth Americas Conference on Information Systems*.

Part IV: Concluding Remarks

- Dec. 5** Electronic Government Transformation: The Road Ahead
- Accenture, (2002). "Technology in Government: Riding the Waves of Change"
- Dec. 12** Knowledge portfolio due by 3:30 p.m. at Professor Chen's office on the second floor in the IABSO building