MONASH University
Information Technology

FIT4007
Advanced topics in information systems

Unit Guide

Semester 2, 2010

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FIT4007 Advanced topics in information systems - Semester 2, 2010

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Introduction

Welcome to FIT4007: Advanced Topics in Information Systems. This six-point unit will develop your capabilities to undertake research in the information systems field. You will learn various research methods and study published research papers in which these research methods have been used. As a class, we will evaluate how well the research methods have been used in the published research papers we study. You will also develop an understanding of some of the exciting, leading-edge research in the information systems field. This understanding may enable you to identify research topics that you would like to pursue, perhaps in an honours, masters, or PhD thesis.

Unit synopsis

This unit will develop students capabilities to undertake research in the information systems field. Students will learn various research methods and study published research papers in which these research methods have been used. Students will learn to evaluate how well the research methods have been used in published research papers. Students will also develop an understanding of some of the exciting, leading-edge research in the information systems field. This understanding may enable students to identify research topics that they would like to pursue, perhaps in an honours, masters, or PhD thesis.

Learning outcomes

At the completion of this unit students will have:

- develop capabilities to undertake research in the information systems field;
- learned various research methods and study published research papers in which these research methods have been used;
- learned to evaluate how well the research methods have been used in published research papers.

Contact hours

2 hrs seminar/wk

Workload

Workload commitments are:

- weekly two-hour seminar;
- on average, a minimum of ten hours of personal study each week to complete reading assignments, prepare for the weekly seminar, and complete assessment material.

Unit relationships

Co-requisites

FIT4005

Teaching and learning method

Teaching approach

The basic approach we will use to learning in this unit is to first study the nature of and procedures involved in a particular research method and then to evaluate how well it has been used in some published piece of research. Our understanding of each research method will be enhanced if we examine how it has been used in published research. We will also develop our critical abilities as researchers when we examine how well the research method has been used in published research.

You must do the assigned reading *before* coming to class. During each class meeting, one or two members of the class will lead the class discussion on the readings. All members of the class are expected to contribute actively to the class discussion. By engaging with the class discussion, you will develop your communication skills. You will also reach a deeper understanding of the research methods we study and their application in the field of information systems.

You must also keep a reflective diary, which can be an exercise book. After each class, you should reflect on fundamental principles you have learned from the readings for the week and the class discussion for the week. During the class discussion on the following week, you should be prepared to share your learnings with other members of the class.

Timetable information

For information on timetabling for on-campus classes please refer to MUTTS, http://mutts.monash.edu.au/MUTTS/

Tutorial allocation

On-campus students should register for tutorials/laboratories using the Allocate+ system: http://allocate.its.monash.edu.au/

Unit Schedule

Week	Date*	Topic	Key dates
1	19/07/10	Introduction	22 July 2010
2	26/07/10	Choosing the Research Problem	29 July 2010
3	02/08/10	Theory Building - I	5 August 2010
4	09/08/10	Theory Building - II	12 August 2010
5	16/08/10	Experiments - I	19 August 2010
6	23/08/10	Experiments - II	26 August 2010
7	30/08/10	Case Study Research - I	2 September 2010
8	06/09/10	Case Study Research - II	9 September 2010 (Assignment 1 due 10 September 2010 at 5.00pm)
9	13/09/10	Design Science Research - I	16 September 2010
10	20/09/10	Design Science Research - II	23 September 2010
Mid semester break			

11	04/10/10	Action Learning - I	7 October 2010
12	11/10/10	Action Learning - II	14 October 2010
13	18/10/10	Review	21 October 2010

*Please note that these dates may only apply to Australian campuses of Monash University. Off-shore students need to check the dates with their unit leader.

Unit Resources

Prescribed text(s) and readings

A reading list is available on the FIT4007 web site. Copies of papers to be read can also be accessed via the FIT4007 web site.

There is no textbook for FIT4007.

Recommended text(s) and readings

Required software and/or hardware

There are no software requirements for FIT4007.

Equipment and consumables required or provided

Students studying off-campus are required to have the minimum system configuration specified by the Faculty as a condition of accepting admission, and regular Internet access. On-campus students, and those studying at supported study locations may use the facilities available in the computing labs. Information about computer use for students is available from the ITS Student Resource Guide in the Monash University Handbook.

Study resources

Study resources we will provide for your study are:

The FIT4007 website on Moodle where weekly requirements including readings, assignment specifications, and supplementary materials will be posted.

Assessment

Overview

Examination (3 hours): 50%; In-semester assessment: 50%

Faculty assessment policy

To pass a unit which includes an examination as part of the assessment a student must obtain:

- 40% or more in the unit's examination, and
- 40% or more in the unit's total non-examination assessment, and
- an overall unit mark of 50% or more.

If a student does not achieve 40% or more in the unit examination or the unit non-examination total assessment, and the total mark for the unit is greater than 50% then a mark of no greater than 49-N will be recorded for the unit.

The unit is assessed with via weekly performance in class, one assignment, and one three-hour open-book examination. To pass the unit you must

- achieve no less than 50 percent in class performance
- achieve no less than 40 percent on the assignment
- achieve no less than 40 percent on the examination

Assignment tasks

Assignment coversheets

Assignment coversheets are available via "Student Forms" on the Faculty website:
http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/resources/student/forms/
You MUST submit a completed coversheet with all assignments, ensuring that the plagiarism declaration section is signed.

Assignment submission and return procedures, and assessment criteria will be specified with each assignment.

Assignment submission and preparation requirements will be detailed in each assignment specification. Submission must be made by the due date otherwise penalties will be enforced. You must negotiate any extensions formally with your campus unit leader via the in-semester special consideration process: http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/resources/student/equity/special-consideration.html.

- **Assignment task 1**

  Title:
  Critical evaluation of a published paper in an information systems journal.
  Description:
  The specific task will be distributed at the appropriate time in the semester.
  Weighting:
  35%
  Criteria for assessment:
  The criteria used to assess the assignment are:

1. Quality of your evaluation of the researchers' choice of problem.
2. Quality of your evaluation of the theory and propositions provided by the researchers.
3. Quality of your evaluation of the research method used by the researchers.
4. Quality of your presentation, grammar, and style.

Due date:
10 September 2010, 5 pm
Remarks:
Assignment must be submitted electronically via the MUSO web site for FIT4007.

- **Assignment task 2**

Title:
Seminar participation
Description:
Students are expected to actively participate in and from time to time lead the class discussion. When students are responsible for leading the class discussion, they should prepare a brief handout (maximum one page) identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the paper to be read by the class. They should make sufficient copies of this handout to give to each member of the class at the start of the discussion on the paper.
Weighting:
15%
Criteria for assessment:
The "ability to contribute to a structured discussion of key IS issues" is one of the objectives of FIT4007. Each week the lecturer will assess the contribution of each student. The seminar participation mark will be the average of a student's best eight participation scores. Students will be notified of their participation mark each week and their overall participation mark in Week 13. A copy of the assessment proforma that will be used is available on this web site.
Due date:
At the beginning of each week's class.

Examination

-
Weighting:
50%
Length:
3 hours
Type (open/closed book):
Open book
Electronic devices allowed in the exam:
None
Remarks:
Critical evaluation of a paper published in an information systems journal.

See Appendix for End of semester special consideration / deferred exams process.

Due dates and extensions

Please make every effort to submit work by the due dates. It is your responsibility to structure your study program around assignment deadlines, family, work and other commitments. Factors such as normal work pressures, vacations, etc. are not regarded as appropriate reasons for granting extensions.

Students are advised to NOT assume that granting of an extension is a matter of course.

Students requesting an extension for any assessment during semester (eg. Assignments, tests or presentations) are required to submit a Special Consideration application form (in-semester exam/assessment task), along with original copies of supporting documentation, directly to their lecturer within two working days before the assessment submission deadline. Lecturers will provide specific outcomes directly to students via email within 2 working days. The lecturer reserves the right to refuse late applications.

A copy of the email or other written communication of an extension must be attached to the assignment submission.

Refer to the Faculty Special consideration webpage or further details and to access application forms: http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/resources/student/equity/special-consideration.html

Late assignment

Assignments received after the due date will be subject to a penalty of 10% per working day. Assignments received later than five days after the due date will not normally be accepted.

Return dates

Students can expect assignments to be returned within two weeks of the submission date or after receipt, whichever is later.

Feedback

Types of feedback you can expect to receive in this unit are:

You will received feedback each week on the quality of your participation in the class discussion. You will also receive written comments on your mid-semester assignment. The solution to the assignment will be discussed in class after all assignments have been graded and returned to students. Students should also feel free to discuss their performance in class with their lecturer at any time during the semester.

Appendix

Please visit the following URL: http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/units/appendix.html for further information about:

- Continuous improvement
- Unit evaluations
- Communication, participation and feedback
- Library access
- Monash University Studies Online (MUSO)
- Plagiarism, cheating and collusion
- Register of counselling about plagiarism
- Non-discriminatory language
- Students with disability
- End of semester special consideration / deferred exams